

306



THE MOUNTAIN TOP

by Katori Hall

Directed by Peter Flynn

January 18—February 9, 2014

**CITY
THE
ATRE**

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

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ABOUT THE PLAY

After his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. retires to his hotel room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. He sits and questions both the success of and his purpose in the Civil Rights Movement while he waits for a pack of cigarettes and a cup of coffee. He is exhausted.

Camae, a stunning hotel maid in her twenties, enters. She is awed by Dr. King’s fame as he is by her beauty. She delivers a cup of coffee, and Dr. King invites her to stay and talk for awhile. The conversation lasts throughout the night, covering topics of the past, the future, and politics—from Dr. King’s children, to the Memphis Sanitation Strike, to a debate about a violent versus non-violent revolution.

As the evening progresses, Camae grows more mysterious, revealing thoughts and events that only Dr. King can know. It becomes increasingly clear that Camae is more than just an ordinary maid. She leads Dr. King through a powerful, vivid exploration of his life and legacy on what would become his final night on earth.

Time

April 3, 1968.

Place

Room 306, Lorraine Motel
Memphis, Tennessee

Characters

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
reverend and Civil Rights Movement leader.

CAMAE,
Lorraine Motel maid in her twenties.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

KATORI HALL is a playwright and performer from Memphis, TN. Her work has been produced on Broadway, in London's West End, and in regional theaters throughout the United States.

As an African-American growing up in a predominately white neighborhood, Hall was very aware of racial issues and the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement as a child. She was raised in a working-class household, the youngest of four daughters. In 2003, she graduated from Columbia University and continued her training at Harvard and Julliard.

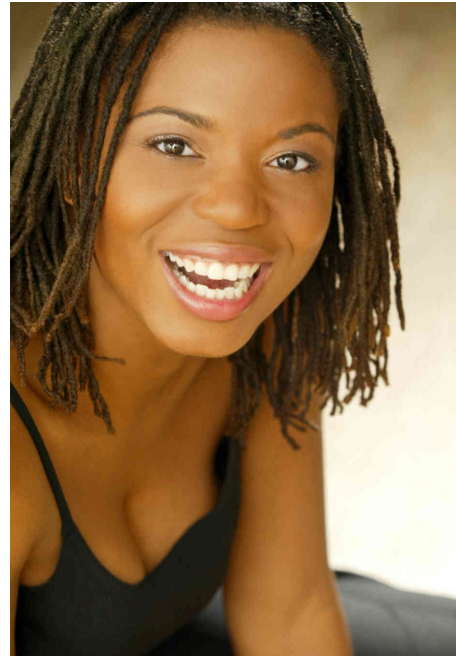
The Mountaintop was created from a piece of family history, inspired by Hall's mother, Carrie Mae Golden. Growing up around the corner from the Lorraine Motel, Carrie Mae was very much a part of the Civil Rights Movement. When she asked to go hear Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at the Mason Temple at the age of 15, Carrie Mae's mother refused.

In an [NPR interview](#), Hall explains, "Big Mama, you know, my grandmamma, her mother, was like: 'You know they going to bomb that church, girl. You know they going to bomb that church. So you need to sit your butt down, and you ain't going to that church.' So my mother didn't go, and the next day he was assassinated. And that was the biggest regret of her life."

The female character in *The Mountaintop*, Camae (short for Carrie Mae), is named for Katori Hall's mother, giving her the chance she never had to meet Dr. King.

"And I think if she had been able to hear him speak, maybe she would have lived her life a little differently. That's what she said to me. Maybe she would have decided to dream a little bigger and start that business that she wanted to start or become that lawyer that she wanted to become just by being in the presence of this magnificent man who achieved so much because he was such an inspiration, not only to her but to so many people around the world."

Today, Katori Hall's published plays include *the Mountaintop*, *Hoodoo Love*, *Hurt Village*, and *Saturday Night/Sunday Morning*.



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Angela M. Vesco, costume designer for *The Mountaintop*, discusses her inspiration for the two characters of the play. She creates an accurate portrayal of Martin Luther King, Jr. while taking a more mysterious approach to the fictional housekeeper, Camae.

The Look of the 1960's

Fashion in the 1960's greatly evolved around the social atmosphere for women. Jacqueline Kennedy was one of fashion's iconic legends, along with actresses Audrey Hepburn, Sophia Loren, and Elizabeth Taylor. Some of those styles included pastel suits with short boxy jackets and oversized buttons, simple geometric dresses, and capri trousers. As for women's hair, the bouffant was a popular style, which is a big hairstyle that curls up at the ends and uses a lot of hair lacquer to keep everything in place.

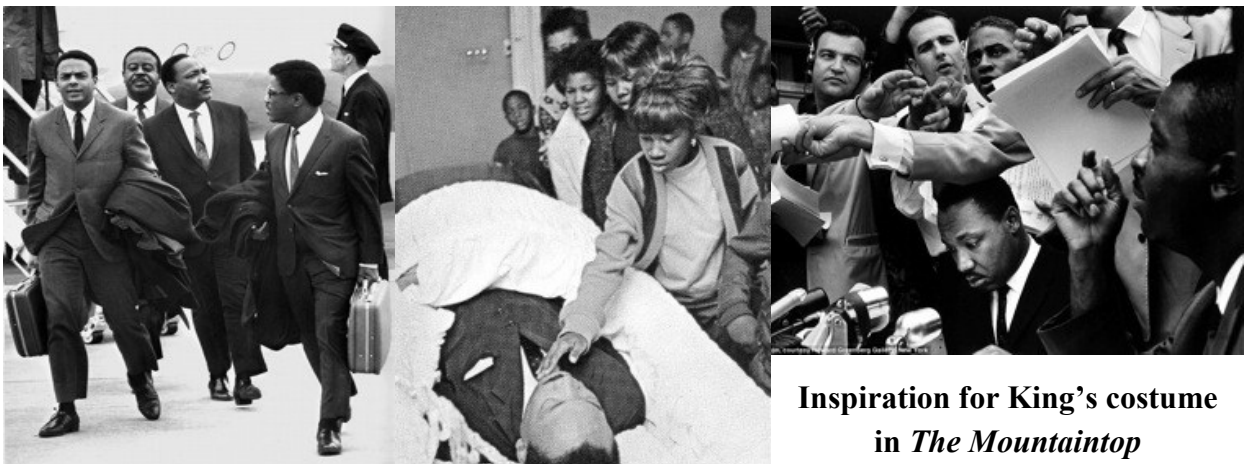
Men's fashion was not as revolutionary in the 1960's. Ties and belts got wider and "flared" pants came into style. However, men's suits change very little from decade to decade, with only slight modifications to the lapels, pleats, and fabric choices.



Jackie Kennedy, 1960's

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The costume design for King in the production comes directly from photos of the last few months of his life. Martin Luther King, Jr. was typically seen in a simple black suit, white shirt and a tie. While Katori Hall tries to change the public perception of King through character development, his physical features and costume style is replicated to mimic the leader.



**Inspiration for King's costume
in *The Mountaintop***

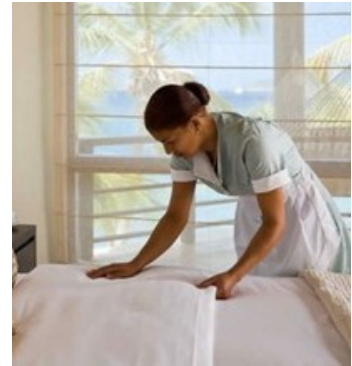
ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Camae

The first onstage appearance of Camae is a straightforward look that feels authentic to a 1960's hotel maid. Camae's hair is also styled in a 1960's look. As the play progresses, the audience learns more about Camae's character, which is represented through props emerging out of her clothing. Camae becomes almost like an angel and guiding figure for King and her costume transforms to look as such.

Regarding Camae's transformation, Angela said that "ultimately, [the director, Peter Flynn and I] had a conversation...with the notion that what [King] sees Camae as at the end has a familiar shape to him. She is his angel, his guide, so perhaps he sees her through this lens of looking like a member of his congregation in church clothes...We combined elements of what spoke to us from several photos."

Inspiration for Camae's Costumes in *The Mountaintop*



Monica Stewart - Ethereal Grace

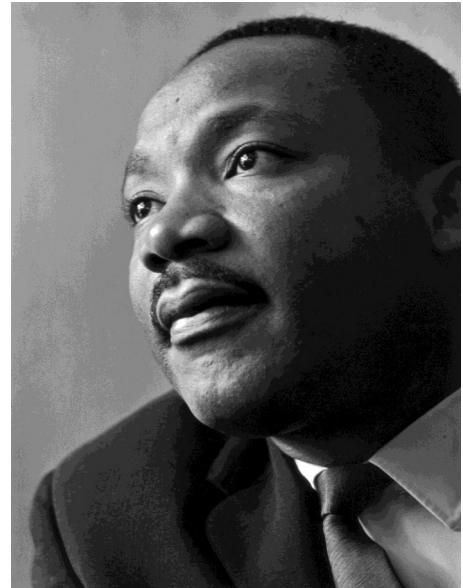


HISTORY: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. was the leader of the American Civil Rights Movement from December, 1955 to April 4, 1968. He preached a philosophy of non-violent protest, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience. His words were influenced by his childhood, family, and strongly held religious beliefs.

Coming from a religious family, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s father and grandfather were both pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. MLK, Jr. followed in their footsteps and attended Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania and eventually received his doctorate at Boston University School of Theology. There, he met his wife, Coretta Scott, who was studying at New England Conservatory of Music. They would have two sons and two daughters.

In 1954, MLK, Jr. became pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, and sequentially became one of the leaders of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. King was arrested and his home was bombed during the boycott, which greatly impacted his speaking and demonstrations in the non-violent movement.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - 1964

King was elected President of the newly formed Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957. He travelled for eleven years, giving motivational speeches, leading protests, and acting against injustice. He wrote "[Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)," a manifesto for the Civil Rights Movement, following his arrest during a protest in Birmingham, Alabama. He told over 250,000 people "[I Have a Dream](#)" during a march in Washington, D.C.

In April 1968, King was supporting a sanitation workers strike in Memphis, Tennessee when he was assassinated by James Earl Ray, a fugitive from the Missouri State Penitentiary. The news shook the nation.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is a symbol of non-violence across the world. He is the only non-president to have a [memorial](#) on the national mall in Washington, D.C. On behalf of MLK, Jr., his wife created the Martin Luther King, Jr. [Center for Nonviolent Social Change](#). She and the King Center lobbied to establish MLK, Jr. Day as a national holiday, which was first observed in January 1986.

HISTORY: CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

There are several events within the Civil Rights Movement, from small-scale protests to the creation of large organizations, which were influential to the progression of equality for African Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights activists, including [Rosa Parks](#) and [Malcolm X](#), used non-violent protest and civil disobedience to bring about change. They risked – and sometimes lost – their lives in the name of freedom and equality.

1954 | **Brown vs. Board of Education**

In the famous [Brown v. Board of Education](#) trial, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. However, even after the decision, less than 10 percent of black children in the south were attending integrated schools by 1960. Many southern political leaders claimed the desegregation decision violated the rights of states to manage their systems of public education. Therefore, black activism was necessary to compel the federal government to implement this decision and eventually extend its principles to all areas of public life. The pace of civil rights protests rose sharply in response.

1955 | **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

The initial phase of the black protest activity in the post-*Brown* decisions began with Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama. Parks defied a southern custom when she refused to give up her seat near the front of the bus to a white bus rider. She was sent to jail, and in response, the black community began [boycotting Montgomery's buses](#) that lasted more than a year. This act demonstrated the unity and determination of black residents that inspired social change throughout the nation.



Montgomery Bus Boycott

Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as the boycott movement's most effective leader because of his eloquent and influential oratorical abilities. The Montgomery Movement led to the creation of Southern Christian Leadership Conference ([SCLC](#)) in 1957.

1960 | **The Sit-ins and Freedom Rides**

Several protests sprouted from the Montgomery Bus Boycott, spreading throughout the south. On February 1, 1960, four freshmen at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College began a wave of student sit-ins designed to end segregation at southern lunch counters. These actions led to the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in April 1960. In contrast to the SCLC's use of large-scale local campaigns, the SNCC stressed the development of small, independent local movements to raise support.

HISTORY: CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In May 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized integrated Freedom Rides to defy segregation in interstate transportation. Freedom riders were arrested in North Carolina and beaten in South Carolina. In Alabama, a bus was burned and the riders attacked with baseball bats and tire irons. Attention to these protests raised and helped drive progress.

1963 | Birmingham and the March on Washington (Civil Rights Act)

These various small protests became larger with more impact. In the spring of 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. helped launch a campaign of mass protests in Birmingham, Alabama. These demonstrations had little impact until King spent a week in jail. There, he wrote one of his most famous meditations on racial injustice, "Letter from Birmingham Jail." The protests continued with marches of black youth and nearly one-thousand additional arrests.



"I Have a Dream" Speech, 1963

The [Birmingham protests](#) led to the March on Washington, which attracted almost 200,000 participants. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech captured the idealistic spirit of the expanding protests. "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed--we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

The Birmingham protests and the [March on Washington](#) made this growing movement impossible to ignore, prompting President John F. Kennedy to push for passage of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). This legislation outlawed segregation in public facilities and racial discrimination in employment and education. This was a crucial step in achieving the initial goal: full legal equality.

Post 1960's Civil Rights Movement

Despite the civil rights gains of the 1960s, racial discrimination and repression remained a significant factor in American life. The assassination of civil rights leaders Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. caused a decline in protests near the end of the 1960s. Civil rights efforts of the 1970s and 1980s were primarily focused on defending previous gains. The greatest concern for inequality focused around the distribution of the nation's wealth when President Johnson declared a war on poverty in 1968.

The modern African-American civil rights movement serves as a model for other group advancement and group pride efforts involving women, students, Chicanos, gays and lesbians, the elderly, and many others.

CONTEXT: FACT AND FICTION

In *The Mountaintop*, Katori Hall blurs fact and fiction when depicting one evening in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. While the historical events surrounding Hall's play are genuine, most of the text in the production is her interpretation of the famous historical leader.

Hall wanted to offer a different interpretation of Dr. King as she looked at the last evening before his assassination. "During this time, he was dealing with the heightened threat of violence," said Hall. "He was tackling issues beyond civil rights – economic issues – and was denouncing the Vietnam War" (*The Root*). Hall tests boundaries in *The Mountaintop* to focus on King's vulnerability, which is not directly seen in the public eye.

The Facts

February 1st, 1968

During a heavy rainstorm in Memphis on February 1, 1968, two black sanitation workers had been crushed to death when the compactor mechanism of the trash truck was accidentally triggered. On the same day, 22 black sewer workers had been sent home without pay while their white supervisors were retained for the day with pay. The sanitation workers' strike officially began on February 11, 1968, protesting for job safety, better wages and benefits, and union recognition.

King was involved in planning with other civil rights workers the Poor People's Campaign for economic opportunity and equality. He agreed to lend his support to the sanitation workers and spoke at a rally in Memphis in front of 15,000 people on March 18. He then led the march in Memphis on March 28, which resulted in violent protestors and police brutality. A sixteen-year-old boy named Larry Payne was shot by a police officer and died, a name King reflects upon in *The Mountaintop*.

April 3rd, 1968

On April 3rd, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came back to Memphis to give a speech in support of the [sanitation workers' strike](#). When King arrived, he was exhausted and had developed a cold. King asked Ralph Abernathy to speak on his behalf, but the hundreds of people that gathered came to hear King. At the last minute, King was convinced and gave the speech known as "I've Been to the Mountaintop."



Martin Luther King, "I've Been to the Mountaintop"

CONTEXT: FACT AND FICTION

“Well, I don’t know what will happen now; we’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn’t matter with me now, because I’ve been to the mountaintop. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life – longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And so I’m happy tonight; I’m not worried about anything; I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”

- Closing Paragraph to the “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech

April 4th, 1968

In the evening of April 4, King was preparing to leave the Lorraine Motel for dinner. He stepped out onto the balcony of room 306 to meet with colleagues. At 6:01PM, an assassin fired a single shot from a balcony across the street from the Lorraine. The bullet hit King and caused severe injuries. He was rushed to St. Joseph’s Hospital for attempted surgery, but King was pronounced dead at 7:05PM. James Earl Ray, a 40-year-old escaped fugitive, confessed to and was convicted of the assassination.

The Fiction

The Mountaintop by Katori Hall begins when King returns to the Lorraine Motel after his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech. He is exhausted and suffering from a cold and long flight earlier that day. King begins to read through a draft of a new sermon called “Why America is Going to Hell,” which actually was his next speech planned for April 7.

Hall presents King as a smoker with a foul mouth and a bit of a flirtatious side. While rumored to inhabit some of the characteristics, Dr. King, Jr. had never presented himself to the public in the way depicted by Hall.

Ms. Hall also creates the fictional character, Camae, a maid at the Lorraine Motel. Hall created Camae to be the opposite of Dr. King: a “working-class, mouthy woman; honorary Black Panther Party angel who doesn’t always believe that nonviolence is the answer” (*The Root*). While several figures in Dr. King’s life are mentioned (Ralph Abernathy, Larry Payne, Malcolm X, Coretta Scott King), Hall thought it would be more interesting to see the clash between two characters who had very different opinions.

While surrounding the context of *The Mountaintop* with factual events and figures, Katori Hall creates a fictional evening that suggests a different depiction of the hero, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

THEMES TO EXPLORE: HERO VS. HUMAN

The Mountaintop uses Martin Luther King, Jr. to examine what it means to be a leader, and consequently, the demands that it places on an individual. Martin Luther King, Jr. is seen as a hero in the Civil Rights Movement - as a leader, a preacher, and a moving public speaker. But behind every public figure, there is a private person with real flaws.

Katori Hall portrays a historical figure that chain-smokes, swears, and questions his work and powerful public voice. This unexpected view of a historical figure is a purposeful attempt to show a hero with flaws – the real person behind the veil of his accomplishments as a public figure. For instance, King is portrayed as being exhausted physically and emotionally. At moments, he even seems ready to give up his fight for civil rights, which is exhibited in the following exchange with Camae:



Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream"

KING: All this rippin' and runnin', Rippin' and runnin' around this entire world and for what? FOR WHAT? White folks don't seem to want to listen. Maybe you're right. Maybe the voice of violence is the only voice white folks'll listen to. I'm tired of shoutin' and carryin' on, like you say. I'm hoarse.

- *The Mountaintop*

The Mountaintop highlights that even the greatest of heroes have weaknesses and doubts. Hall confirms this idea stating, "I think it's just so incredible that we have this extremely strong character in our history that was actually a man. For me the dramatic possibilities of fleshing him out as a human being were just boundless and I felt it would be a perfect subject matter for a play to really focus on a moment in time where he was going through a lot of changes and challenges."

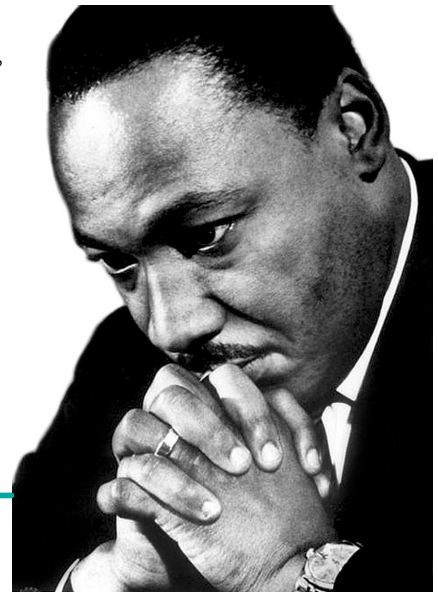
Author Gary Younge took a similar approach to discussing Martin Luther King, Jr. in his book, Heroes are Human. He contends that if young people can understand that heroes, such as King,

THEMES TO EXPLORE: HERO VS. HUMAN

were flawed human beings who chose to *try* to make changes, there is better understanding that “they are themselves historical figures and can make history depending on what they choose to do.”

Near the end of *The Mountaintop*, Camae tells King that his fears and doubts do not detract from all of his accomplishments:

CAMAE: You done brought us far. But you a man. You just a man, baby. You’re not God, though some folk’ll say you got mighty close.



MLK, Jr.—1968

The Mountaintop looks past the public figure that King presented and remembers him as a real person, giving optimism for progress and hope for future heroes in the world.

DISCUSSION:

1. What qualities make up a hero? Think of Martin Luther King, Jr. or another person you consider to be a hero.
2. What purpose do heroes serve in society?
3. What role does the media play in the making of heroes?
4. Martin Luther King, Jr. was considered a hero in a very specific period of time. Think of other heroes and public leaders from another movement in history. How could you emulate any of the heroism or leadership seen in these public figures?

ACTIVITY:

In pairs, describe a recent experience in which you didn’t accomplish what you wanted, one in which you blamed someone else or the world. Discuss the following in the group:

1. What challenge were you facing?
2. How might you have contributed (through action or inaction) to bring this about?
3. What could you have done to respond effectively and produce the result you desired?
4. What could you have done to respond with integrity and express your values?

Retell your story to your partner, this time adopting the mindset of a hero to change the outcome of the story.

THEMES TO EXPLORE: PASSING THE BATON

KING: No, it's not my time. I ain't ready. I still have work to do.

- *The Mountaintop*

In *The Mountaintop*, King is afraid that the Civil Rights Movement will end without his support and that there will be no leaders after he is gone. Katori Hall highlights Martin Luther King, Jr.'s authority and guidance in the Civil Rights Movement; however, she also asks the audience to think about how far the movement has come since his assassination.

In *The Mountaintop*, Camae tells King that it is time for him to *pass the baton*, a phrase alluding to a relay race. Camae is referring to King's leadership and dedication in the movement. "But you gone have to pass off that baton, little man. You in a relay race, albeit the fastest runner we done ever seen't. But you 'bout to burn out, super star," she says. With uncertainty of his impact and apprehension for future progress, King has a moment of acceptance, realizing that at some point, the baton does pass on.

KING: The baton may have been dropped. But anyone can pick it back up. I don't know where in the race we are, but pick up that baton and pass, pass, pass it along. This baton is no longer the burden my image can bear. For, you are the climbers the new carriers of the cross. I beg you, implore you, don't give in and toss it off.

- *The Mountaintop*

At the end of *The Mountaintop*, Camae highlights several events after King's assassination, poetically reciting tragedies, leaders, and events that have enabled progress in America, both in the civil and human rights movements.

[Jesse Jackson](#) is one example of a leader who was *passed the baton* in the Civil Rights Movement. An apprentice to Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackson was waiting in the car at the Lorraine Motel when King was assassinated. Jackson was viewed by many black leaders as King's successor. In 1984 and 1988, he made two presidential attempts but failed to gain the democratic nomination.

In 2008, Jackson was asked how far America has come since King's assassination, to which he responded, "there is unfinished business. But...when you see 42 blacks in Congress, and Barack Obama leading in delegates and the popular vote to be presidential nominee, that is some of the Promised Land beyond the mountaintop." And with Jackson's example, progress continues as Obama was reelected to a second presidential term.

As work toward equality continues, there are always new leaders picking up the baton and making greater strides in the race to human rights.

GOING FURTHER: PASSING THE BATON

This activity was originally created by Underground Railway Theater, in residence at Central Square Theater in Cambridge, MA for their 2013 production of The Mountaintop.

Goal: For students to reflect on citizenship and their place in society; for students to consider who by and how societal change is brought about. Students can work in groups of 2-4.

1. **Choose:** Focus on one area of human rights which you feel strongly about or would like to see change in. You can choose one of the following or pick your own:

Poverty

Racial Equality

LGBT Rights

Disability Rights

Women's Rights

Religious Equality

2. **Reflect:** What are some of the challenges that people who are affected by your chosen human rights issue face in today's America?
3. **Imagine and Write:** Imagine that the area of human rights you have picked has been fought hard for and America is an almost perfect place for all people—regardless of race, sexual orientation, etc. What specific, concrete things would be different about this world? How would things look or be done differently? You might want to think about:

Education

Politics

Welfare

Transportation

Lifestyle

Housing

Architecture

Public Places

Socializing

Art

4. **Hypothesize and Write:** What could some of the steps/methods/events for getting to that point have been? You might want to think about:

Education

Politics

Policy

Law

Media/Press

Art

5. **Perform:** Tableau.

- **Reviewing your reflection in Step 2:** create a tableau (frozen picture) individually or in small groups of 2-4 that uses the body to illustrate a challenge
- **Reviewing your reflection in Step 3:** create a second tableau that illustrates an ideal world as it relates to your chosen human rights concept
- **Reviewing your reflection in Step 4:** illustrate one method that you envision would help address your chosen human rights need
- **After all three tableaus have been created, perform them in either sequence or varied order for the class,** stopping at each pose allowing for the class to reflect on what they see
- **Discuss each tableau sequence as a class**

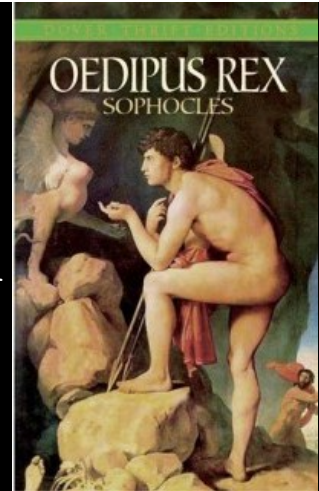
6. **Discuss:** Is anyone taking any of these steps or trying these ideas to improve human rights? Do you feel empowered to try and change society? Do you think individuals can change their communities?

THEMES TO EXPLORE: DRAMATIC IRONY

In *The Mountaintop*, Katori Hall uses dramatic irony surrounding Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. King is not aware of his imminent death, while the audience knows the significance of the date and location leading up to the assassination. Throughout the play, King talks to Camae about fear, death, and the future that drives the audience's attention to King's forthcoming assassination. "Fear has become my companion, my lover. I know the touch of fear, even more than I know the touch of my own wife," says King. "Fear, Camae, is my best friend. She is the reason I get up in the morning. 'Cause I know if I'm still afraid, then I am still alive."

When Camae arrives to King's room, she brings the local newspaper, dated April 4, 1968. In this exchange, King creates dramatic irony when reading from the newspaper that discusses the threat of violence that could end his life. King reads a quote from the mayor of Memphis, "The city said it was seeking the injunction as a means of protecting Dr. King....We are fearful that in the turmoil of the moment, someone may even harm Dr. King's life... and with all the force of language we can use, we want to emphasize that we don't want that to happen...."

Dramatic irony is when the audience knows something that the characters do not. The words and actions of the characters take on a different meaning for the audience than they have for the play's characters. This may happen when, for example, a character reacts in an inappropriate or foolish way or when a character lacks self-awareness and thus acts under false assumptions.



Dramatic irony is rooted in Greek mythology. For example, in the classic myth of Oedipus, he leaves his family because it has been foretold that he will kill his father and marry his mother. Oedipus doesn't know, however, that he was adopted. Although Teiresias, the blind prophet, warns the audience of his fate, Oedipus ends up killing his biological father and marrying his biological mother without realizing it. This is a tragic example of dramatic irony.

CAMAE: I'm a magician. I got more where that came from.

KING: More tricks up your sleeve?

CAMAE: Well, as you can tell... I ain't yo' ordinary ole maid.

- *The Mountaintop*

The character of Camae becomes the driving force for dramatic irony in *The Mountaintop*. She seems to know more about King than just an average hotel maid; she focuses much of the conversation on King's life and acts as a soothsayer. While King is left unaware of his fate, Camae's words and actions take on different meanings for both King and the audience.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following names and vocabulary are heard throughout THE MOUNTAINTOP:

Bougie — derived from “bourgeois”; a derogatory term describing someone who aspires to be of higher class

Catchin’ flies — behaving as though in a state of drunkenness

Diatribes — a bitter verbal attack or criticism

Incognegro — a derogatory term referring to an African-American who tries to hide their African heritage

Injunction — a legal order commanding a person or group of persons to do or not do a particular action

Larry Payne — a 16-year-old boy, shot by Memphis Police during the sanitation strike

Malcolm X — an African-American Muslim minister, public speaker, and human rights activist; he was assassinated in February 1965

Martyr - defending a principle, belief, cause, or idea

Oratorical — a characteristic of someone with eloquent and superior public speaking ability

Panther — a reference to the Black Panther Party, an African-American revolutionary group active from 1966 until 1982

Preponderance - carrying superior weight, power, or importance

Promised Land — in the Bible, the land promised by God to Abraham; also, a place or situation believed to hold ultimate happiness

Poor People’s Campaign — a campaign organized by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to address the issues of economic justice and housing for America’s poor

Siddity — a term for someone who is pretentious or conceited

Spook — a term for a spy; also, a derogatory term for an African-American

Square — a term for a cigarette

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions for post-show discussion, as well as possible journal prompts:

- Describe your impressions of Martin Luther King, Jr. before seeing this play. How has your impression of Martin Luther King, Jr. changed since seeing this play? Did Katori Hall's fictional portrayal of the man alter your understanding or perception of his life and work?
- Hall makes brief mention of the fact that the Beatles had risen to enormous fame over the same period that Martin Luther King, Jr. was spreading his word. What do you think was the purpose of juxtaposing these two cultural icons in this dramatic work? What does it say about the country at that time?
- What purpose did Camae's character serve in this play? How does the revelation of her true character change your impression of her, or of her relationship with Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- Read the full text of the "[I Have Been to the Mountaintop](#)" speech (link included at the end of the resource guide) and discuss its relevance in today's society. As a country, do you think we have reached "the mountaintop?"
- What challenges do you think an actor faces when preparing to portray a historical figure on stage? How would their preparation differ from when portraying a purely fictional character?
- What was your favorite design element of this show (set, costumes, lighting, sound)? How did these design elements contribute to the story? Did any of them detract from the story?

This Educator Resource Guide was created by Seth Laidlaw, 2013-2014 (Season) Education & Outreach Intern. Edits by Kristen Link, Director of Education & Accessibility.

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If you have any questions or comments, we'd love to hear from you! Please email Kristen Link at klink@citytheatrecompany.org.

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GOING FURTHER: ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Page 4:

Interview with Katori Hall: <http://www.npr.org/2011/04/01/135019146/broadway-to-get-a-view-from-mlks-mountaintop>

Page 7:

Letter from a Birmingham Jail: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/letter-from-birmingham-city-jail-excerpts/>

I Have a Dream - Text: <http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>

I Have a Dream - Speech: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnnklfYs>

MLK Memorial: <http://washington.org/DC-guide-to/martin-luther-king-jr-memorial>

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Rosa Parks: <http://www.biography.com/people/rosa-parks-9433715>

Malcolm X: <http://www.biography.com/people/malcolm-x-9396195>

Brown V. Board of Education: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/landmark_brown.html

Montgomery Bus Boycott: <http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/>

SCLC: http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/southern_christian_leadership_co.htm

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Birmingham Protests: <http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/civil-rights-movement-birmingham-campaign/#.UsMP8vt321s>

March on Washington: <http://life.time.com/history/march-on-washington-photos-from-an-epic-civil-rights-event/#end>

Civil Rights Act of 1964: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act/>

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Sanitation Workers' Strike: http://crdl.usg.edu/events/memphis_sanitation_strike/?Welcome

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The Root - Interview with Katori Hall: http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2011/11/katori_hall_interview_the_mountaintop_scribe_talks_inspiration.html

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Jesse Jackson: <http://www.biography.com/people/jesse-jackson-9351181>

Page 18:

"I Have Been to the Mountaintop" Speech: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>

Additional Recommended Sources:

Leading up to six:01 – Martin Luther King: <http://media.commercialappeal.com/mlk/index.html>

King Papers Project: <http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php>



City Theatre's Student Matinee Performance and Educator Resource Guide fulfills the following PA Academic Standards:

READING, WRITING, SPEAKING & LISTENING

- 1.1 Students will identify, describe, evaluate, and synthesize the essential ideas of the text, and understand the meaning of and identify key vocabulary within the text and performance.
- 1.3 Students will analyze and interpret the play based on literary elements and devices, dramatic themes, and the use of language.
- 1.6 Students listen and watch a selection of dramatic literature, analyze and synthesize the many elements of drama, and respond to post-show talkbacks and discussions with City Theatre staff, teachers, classmates, and students from other schools.

CIVICS & GOVERNMENT

- 5.1 Students will evaluate the application of Liberty/Freedom, Justice, and Equality, and analyze how the rule of law protects individual rights and promotes the common good.
- 5.2 Students will interpret the causes of conflict in society and analyze techniques to resolve those conflicts.
- 5.3 Students will evaluate the roles of political parties, interest groups, and mass media in politics and evaluate the impact in developing public policy.

GEOGRAPHY

- 7.1 Students will use geographic information to analyze the interaction between people, places, and the environment.
- 7.3 Students will analyze the significance of human activity in shaping places and regions by their population, cultural, economic, and political characteristics

HISTORY

- 8.1 Students will consider the use of fact versus opinion, multiple perspectives, and cause and effect relationships to evaluate events and sources of information.
- 8.3 Students will evaluate the role groups and individuals from the U.S. played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the world.



ARTS & HUMANITIES

- 9.1 Students will analyze works of art influenced by experiences or historical and cultural events through production and performance.
- 9.2 Students will analyze the historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.
- 9.3 Students will apply systems of classification for interpreting works in the arts and forming a critical response.
- 9.4 Students will evaluate an individual's philosophical statement in a work in the arts and its relationship to one's own life based on knowledge and experience and describe and analyze the effects that works in the arts have on groups, individuals and culture.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 10.1 Students will evaluate factors that impact growth and development during adulthood, including relationships, career choice, aging and the environment.
- 10.3 Students will assess the personal and legal consequences of unsafe practices in the home, school or community, including the loss of personal freedom and the impact on others.

BUSINESS, COMPUTER, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 15.2 Students will evaluate the impact of change, work/life balance, and lifelong learning on one's life.
- 15.3 Students will evaluate a speaker's reasoning and intent and ask questions to deepen understanding.

STUDENT INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- 16.1 Students will demonstrate and analyze how personal traits can lead to positive relationships and life achievements.
- 16.2 Students will use communication skills to effectively interact with students and members of the community, demonstrating respect, cooperation, and acceptance of differences in others with an understanding of social norms of different cultures.
- 16.3 Students will evaluate conflicts considering personal, ethical, legal, safety, and civic impact of the consequences and acceptance of final choices and express acceptance of social norms of different societies and cultures.



City Theatre's Student Matinee Performance and Educator Resource Guide fulfills the following PA Academic Standards:

PENNSYLVANIA COMMON CORE STANDARDS

On July 1, 2010, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics. The regulations pertaining to these standards took effect upon their publication in the October 16, 2010 edition of the Pennsylvania Bulletin. The transition to Common Core will begin during the 2010-2011 school year, with full implementation by July 1, 2013.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- 1.2 Students will read, understand, and respond to informational text – with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.
- 1.3 Students will respond to works of dramatic literature – with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between text with focus on textual evidence.
- 1.4 Students will write in reflection to the dramatic text, writing clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.
- 1.5 Students will demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 11-12 level an content.

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR READING
IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

- 8.5 Students will read, understand, and respond to informational text – with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.