

THE SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE AND IMPACT OF THE PLAY FAIRVIEW BY JACKIE SIBBLIES

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Abstract

This study presents the most recent research on the social perspective and impact of Jackie Sibblies Drury's play 'Fairview'. This study employed the social theory to investigate the societal impacts of the play. By applying this theory to the analysis of the play, we can gain a deeper understanding of how the themes and messages provided in the performance can influence the attitudes and behaviors of the audience. This is especially pertinent within the framework of 'Fairview', as the play seeks to confront established social conventions and motivate spectators to interrogate and delve into novel viewpoints. The play "Fairview" has been chosen for this study because of its substantial acclaim and popularity in the theatrical industry. This findings demonstrates the adverse ramifications of casual racism and aggression. By breaking this barrier, the play compels viewers to directly confront their prejudices and involvement in perpetuating racism. The play challenges the traditional passive position of viewers by actively engaging with them and inviting them to engage in the performance, there by encouraging them to become agents of change. This play stimulates viewers to critically examine their societal roles and motivates them to venture beyond their comfort zones, ultimately cultivating a feeling of empowerment and a strong desire to take action.

Keywords: Social influence theory, social conventions, societal roles, racism

Introduction

This study examines the social implications and societal impact of the play *Fairview* by Drury, with a focus on the ways in which the theatrical strategies ARE used in the production challenge and deconstruct the white gaze. By inviting the audience to actively participate and engage with the themes of racial equity and equality, the play inspires individuals to analyze their own societal positions and empowers them to initiate change.

Drury's play *Fairview* utilizes theatrical strategies, such as audience participation and the invitation for white spectators to vacate their seats and ascend to the stage. By directly involving the audience in the performance, the play challenges the passive role of spectators and encourages them to actively confront and analyze their own complicity in the structures of whiteness. This confrontational approach forces the white audience to grapple with their own privileges and compels them to consider their role in creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Several reviewers of the Nadia Latif-directed Young Vic Theatre production of *Fairview* speculated that white attendees might feel uneasy during the audience participation moment. This suggests that

the play successfully creates an intriguing tension and challenges the white audience's comfort. Additionally, the play's invitation for spectators to actively analyze their societal positions and venture outside their comfort zones has been praised for fostering a sense of empowerment and inspiring individuals to initiate change. For example, audience members have reported feeling motivated to engage in conversations about race and take action to dismantle the structures of whiteness in their own lives.

Some critics may argue that the confrontational approach used in *Fairview* alienates the white audience and creates resistance rather than fostering dialogue and understanding. While it is important to acknowledge these concerns, it is equally important to recognize that challenging and dismantling the structures of whiteness requires discomfort and willingness to confront privilege. By directly implicating the white audience and forcing them to confront their own complicity, *Fairview* creates a necessary tension that encourages self-reflection and deeper engagement with the themes of racial equity and equality. Twine and Gallagher (2008) argued that in a society where whiteness is becoming more visible, it is undergoing processes of definition, deployment, performance, policing, and reinvention. According to their research, the visibility of whiteness in society has implications for power dynamics, social hierarchies, and the construction of racial identities. They suggest that by examining these processes, we can gain a better understanding of how whiteness functions and how it shapes individual and collective experiences.

The present study employed social influence theory to examine how Jackie Sibbles Drury's play *Fairview* prompts and motivates audiences to scrutinize their existing convictions regarding their societal roles, thereby fostering a sense of empowerment and a resolute commitment to proactive engagement. In this context, empowerment refers to the increased sense of agency and self-efficacy that individuals experience as a result of critically examining their beliefs and taking action to challenge societal norms. On the other hand, proactive engagement refers to intentional and sustained effort individuals actively contribute to social change. This can include participation in activism, engaging in difficult conversations, or advocating marginalized communities.

Organization of the study

The analysis organized in the following way:

1. Introduction: This analysis explores how the play "*Fairview*" utilizes theatrical strategies to implicate the white audience in the structures of whiteness, challenging their role and encouraging critical examination of societal norms and behaviors."
2. Explanation of the theatrical strategies used in *Fairview*: The analysis can include specific examples of theatrical strategies used in *Fairview*, such as breaking the fourth wall, addressing direct audience, and subverting audience expectations. For example, the play may have a character directly addressing the white audience and questioning their complicity in maintaining systems of privilege and power.
3. Social theory: Social theory is a field of study that investigates how societal expectations and norms influence individuals, and how individuals often conform to these expectations to fit in or avoid social sanctions. In the context of *Fairview*, the play portrays characters whose actions and behaviors challenge these norms, prompting the audience to critically examine their own biases

and assumptions. Through this exploration, the play encourages a deeper understanding of how social norms impact individual behavior and the potential for societal change.

4. Theatre practice: Theatre Arts is a form of artistic expression that combines various disciplines such as drama, dance, music, speech, oral art, and poetry. It encompasses the portrayal of real-life experiences, aspirations, goals, and the socio-cultural reality of the populace. In the context of Fairview, the play portrays characters whose actions and behaviors challenge these norms, prompting the audience to critically examine their own biases and assumptions. Through this exploration, the play encourages a deeper understanding of how social norms impact individual behavior and the potential for societal change.

5. The function of drama in society: Drama and society have a complex and intertwined relationship. Drama often reflects the values, norms, and conflicts present in a society, and can be used to critique or challenge social structures. They can also serve as a form of escapism or entertainment, providing insight into human experiences and emotions. The drama "Fairview" confronts and contextualizes the intricacies of racism. From a performance perspective, it is engaging to see naturalism followed by the true breaking of the fourth wall, and students will really enjoy the use of these techniques

6. Conceptual theoretical framework: A conceptual theoretical framework is a collection of concepts, theories, and ideas that provides guidance for analyzing a specific issue. This study employs social theory as the fundamental theoretical framework to analyze the interconnections between race, power, and privilege in society. This approach is applicable to the analysis of Fairview because it facilitates the comprehension and examination of the depictions of whiteness within the play's structures. Through the utilization of this paradigm, the analysis can thoroughly examine the methods by which Fairview confronts and contests the intricacies of racism, power, and privilege.

7. Proof of Fairview's influence: The analysis may include specific quotes from viewers who feel motivated by Fairview to confront and overthrow the structures of whiteness in their own lives. It can also refer to critical reviews that highlight the play's ability to provoke thought and spark conversations about race and privilege. Including a range of evidence, such as personal anecdotes and professional reviews, will strengthen this argument and demonstrate the play's broad impact.

8. Conclusion: It is important to summarize the specific quotes from viewers, the critical reviews highlighting the play's ability to provoke thoughts and conversations, and any personal anecdotes shared. The conclusion should then emphasize the broader significance of Fairview, highlighting how it has become a catalyst for change and a powerful tool for challenging and dismantling the structures of whiteness in society.

Theoretical strategies used in the play "Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies

The play "Fairview" delves into complex themes of race, identity, and power dynamics. The play sets up a familiar and relatable setting for the audience through the use of naturalistic family drama in the first act. However, in act two, the play takes a different track by introducing a variety of white characters discussing race and racial stereotypes. This highlights the pervasive nature of these attitudes and forces the audience to confront their own biases and assumptions. In the final

act, the white characters enter the action as members of the Frasier family, breaking the fourth wall and inviting the audience onto the stage. This blurring of boundaries challenges traditional power dynamics and forces the audience to confront their own complicity in perpetuating racial inequalities. By addressing these themes in a thought-provoking and impactful manner, "Fairview" prompts important discussions on race and identity in contemporary society.

The play was divided into three acts. Act one plays out the naturalistic family drama set in the family's stylish and immaculate dining room. Beverly, the archetypal mother figure, is rushing around trying to make everything perfect, her husband Dayton is 'helping' Beverly's sister, Jasmine arrives and we feel the tension between them as they try not to parry, Keisha bounces in wanting Jasmine to help her convince her mum that she should take a gap year before college; kitchen sink drama that we can relate to in so many ways.

In act two of "Fairview," the glitch in the radio provides a unique opportunity for the audience to hear a variety of white characters discussing race and race-based stereotypes. These discussions highlight the deep-seated and pervasive nature of these attitudes in society. "Fairview" challenges the audience to critically examine their own biases and confront the systemic racism that perpetuates these stereotypes.

The final act of "Fairview" takes a bold and unexpected turn by breaking the fourth wall. As members of the Frasier family invite members of the audience onto the stage, the play challenges the traditional boundaries and power dynamics between performers and spectators. This intentional blurring of the lines forces the audience to confront their own complicity in perpetuating racial inequalities and compels them to actively engage with the issues raised in the play. By breaking the fourth wall, "Fairview" demands that the audience take a more active role in dismantling systemic racism and empowers them to be agents of change. This technique adds a layer of interactivity and urgency to the play's message, thereby leaving a lasting impact on the audience.

Fairview is fascinating this regards. From a performance perspective, it is engaging to see naturalism followed by a true breaking of the fourth wall, and students will really enjoy the use of these techniques. It would be an excellent piece for a live theatre review of exam work. In addition, Fairview offers great opportunities for students' own performance, with some excellent monologues and fast-paced dialogues. For discussion, Fairview offers a huge amount to any teacher's resources, and although it is an American text the issues raised are very relevant in the UK, especially in the light of Black Lives Matters protests.

The issues raised in "Fairview" are highly relevant in the UK, particularly in the context of the Black Lives Matter protests. The play's exploration of race, identity, and power dynamics resonates with the ongoing discussions on systemic racism and the need for social change. By tackling these themes in a thought-provoking and impactful manner, "Fairview" offers a unique opportunity for audiences in the UK to critically examine their own biases and confront the racial inequalities that persist in their society. The play serves as a catalyst for important conversations and actions, providing a platform for individuals to actively engage in dismantling systemic racism and advocating for equality and justice.

Theatre practice

Theatre arts is typically characterized as a representation of real life. It represents the desires, objectives, requirements, and current socio-cultural situation of the population. The theatre arts field encompasses various key artistic disciplines, such as dance, music, speech, oral art, and drama. Adelugba (2003) asserts that drama and other theatrical arts, including dance, music, poetry, role acting, acrobatics, costuming, make-up, masks, and spectacle, are intricately linked in performances and cannot be disentangled. Dance is frequently employed in theatrical performances to express emotions and narrate stories through physical motion, while music establishes the ambiance and heightens the entire atmosphere. Poetry and role-playing are employed to animate characters and captivate the audience on a more profound level. In addition, the incorporation of acrobatics, elaborate costumes, theatrical make-up, masks, and captivating spectacles enhances the visual allure and generates a profound sense of grandeur during the performance. Adelugba categorized traditional theatre practices into three distinct classifications following a comprehensive analysis. There are three clearly defined categories of performances: sacred ritual, ritual festival, and de-ritualizing. Sacred ritual performances encompass theatrical acts that are intricately intertwined with religious or spiritual beliefs and ceremonies. These performances frequently incorporate distinct rituals, symbols, and gestures that possess profound significance for both the players and the audience. By contrast, ritual festival performances are linked to cultural festivities and commemorations.

The purpose of these performances is to provide entertainment and actively involve the community through storytelling, music, and dance, while safeguarding traditional customs and legacy. De-ritualizing performances entails modifying or reinterpreting conventional theatrical customs in non-religious settings. These performances frequently delve into current social issues and provoke cultural conventions through artistic manifestations. Performing arts have a vital function in society since they offer a platform for cultural expression, social critique, and community involvement. It functions as a medium for communication and introspection, enabling individuals to investigate and question cultural norms and ideals. Theatrical establishments, encompassing theatres, acting academies, and production firms, provide substantial contributions to the economy by generating employment prospects. In addition, theatre frequently engages in partnerships with religious institutions to produce performances that are connected to religious events and festivals. Additionally, it serves an instructional function by being integrated into curricula across all educational levels, with the aim of cultivating creativity, critical thinking, and empathy among students.

Theatre practice is considered a prominent institutional complex within society, alongside other vital institutions such as trade, family, religion, and education. The purpose of the theatrical arts is to direct attention to society. Furthermore, it strives to employ the conventional instruments, standards, and principles of society in order to successfully communicate its message to its target audience. The convergence of theatre arts practice and sociology is apparent in the function of performance and its surrounding milieu.

Theatre art is a form of artistic expression that combines various disciplines such as drama, dance, music, speech, oral art, and poetry. Theatre arts have a long history of reflecting on and commenting on the socio-cultural reality of the populace. For example, plays like "A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry(1959), explore the experiences of African American families in the mid-20th century, highlighting the challenges and aspirations of a marginalized community. Similarly, contemporary plays like "Hamilton" by Lin-Manuel Miranda,(2015), use hip-hop music and diverse casting to challenge traditional narratives of American history and provide a more inclusive portrayal of the socio-cultural reality of the nation. By portraying the experiences, struggles, and triumphs of different communities, theatre arts provide a platform for marginalized voices and encourages a deeper understanding of the diverse socio-cultural reality of the populace. In the context of Fairview, the play portrays characters whose actions and behaviours challenge these norms, prompting the audience to critically examine their own biases and assumptions. Through this exploration, the play encourages a deeper understanding of how social norms impact individual behaviour and the potential for societal change.

In Fairview, Beverly challenges societal norms by refusing to conform to the expectations placed on her as a black woman. She resists the pressure to perform her race in a way that is palatable to white audiences, instead asserting her own agency and challenging the audience's assumptions about how she should behave. This scene prompts the audience to question their own biases and assumptions about race and to consider the ways in which societal expectations can limit individual expression and agency. The scene serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of breaking free from societal norms and embracing one's true selves

Function of play in the society

The function of drama in society is characterized by complex and interdependent interactions. Drama frequently mirrors the values, customs, and tensions that exist within a society and can serve as a means to scrutinize or question social frameworks. For instance, Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible" (1946) published in 2003, is a powerful depiction of the Salem witch trials that serves as an allegory for McCarthyism and the Red Scare in 1950s America. Through the use of dramatic elements and compelling characters, Miller effectively critiques the social and political climate of his time. Similarly, the play "A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry tackles issues of racial discrimination and the American Dream, shedding light on the experiences of African Americans in the mid-20th century. Drama offers a temporary escape from reality and provides solace by allowing individuals to immerse themselves in fictional worlds. For example, attending a musical or comedy show can provide a much-needed break from the stresses of everyday life, offering moments of laughter and light-heartedness.

Additionally, for those facing difficult circumstances or personal challenges, watching a play that addresses similar struggles offers a sense of validation and catharsis. In "Fairview," the playwright explores racism by using a unique narrative structure that challenges the audience's preconceptions and forces them to confront their own biases. This play delves into the nuances of racial identity, power dynamics, and cultural appropriation through thought-provoking dialogue and confrontational scenes. For example, there is a powerful moment in which the fourth wall is broken

and the audience is directly confronted with their complicity in perpetuating racial stereotypes and inequalities.

Drama and society are closely related in that drama often reflects and comments on the social, cultural, and political issues of the time in which it is produced. Drama can serve as a mirror to society, portraying its values, conflicts, and changes. It can also be a tool for social commentary, challenging societal norms and sparking conversations about important issues. In turn, societal changes and events can influence the themes, characters, and narratives explored by playwrights and creators explore in their dramatic works. This relationship between drama and society allows for a dynamic and complex interplay between art and the world in which it is created.

Reflection on Society: Drama often reflects the social realities and concerns of a particular time and place. Playwrights and creators draw inspiration from their surroundings, addressing issues such as politics, social inequality, gender roles, racial relations, and other aspects of society. By portraying these issues on stage or screen, drama can provide audiences with a heightened awareness of the world in which they live.

Cultural Representation: Drama serves as a platform for representing diverse cultures and communities. It can showcase the traditions, customs, and experiences of different social groups, shedding light on their struggles, achievements, and perspectives. By giving voice to marginalized communities, drama can challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and foster empathy among audiences.

Social Commentary: Drama has long been a medium for social commentary. Playwrights often use their work to critique societal norms, challenge oppressive systems, and provoke thought and discussion about important issues. By presenting social dilemmas and conflicts in a dramatic form, creators can encourage audiences to question established beliefs and consider alternative perspectives.

Catalyst for Change: Drama has the power to inspire social change. Throughout history, theatrical works have played a significant role in shaping public opinion and in influencing political and social movements. Plays like Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House" (1879), and Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" have sparked debates and prompted reforms by highlighting issues such as women's rights and the dangers of mass hysteria.

Emotional Impact: Drama evokes emotions and empathy, allowing audiences to connect with characters and their experiences. By experiencing the joys, struggles, and triumphs of fictional characters, viewers can develop a deeper understanding of human nature and societal complexities. This emotional engagement can lead to increased awareness, empathy, and a desire for positive change.

Entertainment and Escape: While drama often engages with serious social issues, it also serves as a form of entertainment and escapism. Theatrical performances, films, and television shows provide a temporary respite from the realities of daily life. Even in fictional narratives, drama can still offer social commentary through allegory, metaphors, and symbolism.

The following are the recent examples of plays and films that address pressing social issues.

"Get Out" (2017): Directed by Jordan Peele, this horror film explores themes of racism and cultural appropriation. It tells the story of a young African American man who visits his white girlfriend's family and uncovers a disturbing secret. The film received critical acclaim for its sharp social commentary and has been widely discussed for its exploration of racial dynamics.

"The Hate U Give" (2017): Based on the novel by Angie Thomas, this film tackles issues of racial injustice and police brutality. It follows the story of a young black girl who witnesses the fatal shooting of her unarmed friend by a police officer. The film highlights the protagonist's journey as she confronts systemic racism and finds her voice in advocating for justice.

"Hamilton" (2020): Originally a Broadway musical created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, this filmed version on Disney+ examines the life of Alexander Hamilton and the founding of America. It addresses themes such as immigration, identity, and the relationship between power and accountability. The production's diverse cast and contemporary musical styles challenge the traditional narratives of history. **"Parasite" (2019):** Directed by Bong Joon-ho, this South Korean film won numerous accolades, including the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and the Academy Award for Best Picture. It explores class divisions and socioeconomic inequality through the story of a poor family which infiltrates the lives of wealthy households. "Parasite" offers a searing critique of social stratification and the inherent injustices it perpetuates. **"The Trial of the Chicago 7" (2020):** Directed by Aaron Sorkin, this historical legal drama delves into the trial of seven individuals charged with conspiracy and incitement to riot during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The film examines the issues of civil rights, free speech, and the limits of protest, resonating with contemporary discussions surrounding activism and government response.

There are many more plays and films that address pressing social issues. Artists and creators continue to use their platforms to shed light on important topics, initiate conversations, and promote social change. "Fairview" is a thought-provoking play written by Jackie Sibblies Drury. It premiered in 2018 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2019. This play examines race, identity, and the construction of representations in the context of seemingly ordinary family gatherings.

"Fairview" takes a unique approach to storytelling by challenging traditional theatrical conventions and confronting the audience's expectations. The first act presents a seemingly typical family

gathering of an African American family, portraying familiar dynamics and interactions. However, as the play progresses, it deconstructs and confronts the audience's assumptions and preconceived notions.

The social perspective of "Fairview" is deeply rooted in the exploration of racial stereotypes and the perception of Black individuals in society. It examines how Black people are often reduced to simplistic characterizations or tropes in popular media and how this impacts their experiences and agency in the world. The play questions the power dynamics surrounding representation and forces the audience to confront their own complicity in perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

Conceptual framework

Research that opens itself to social theory typically begins not with an academic question but more personally, with a sense of dissonance between what is expected or looked for and what has been experienced. Utilizing a sociological framework in literary analysis entails examining literature from the perspective of societal frameworks, institutions, and cultural conventions. This approach examines the impact of the author's social setting and the prevailing social issues of the time on the themes, characters, and storyline of literary works. Additionally, it entails analyzing how the work portrays or questions society power structures, socioeconomic conflicts, gender norms, racial interactions, and other social phenomena. In addition, sociological literary interpretation may examine the text's role in either supporting or criticizing the current social structure and ideology. Essentially, it aims to comprehend the interrelationships between literature and society, elucidating the social ramifications and significance of the work.

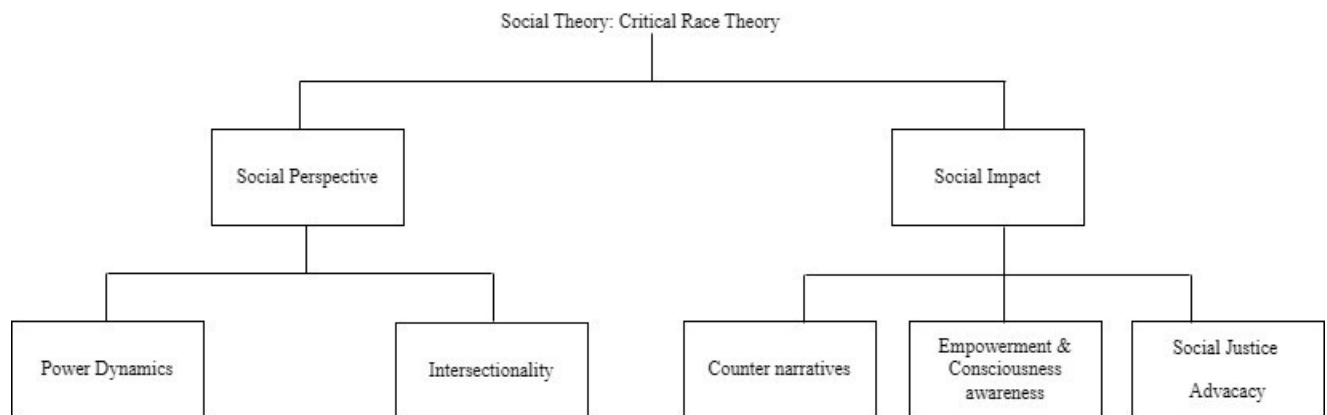


Figure:1- Conceptual framework to analyse the “Fairview “play by Jackie Sibblies

Applying a sociological approach to literary interpretation involves analysing literature through the lens of social structures, institutions, and cultural norms. This approach considers how the author's social context and the prevailing social issues of the time influence the themes, characters, and plots of literary works. It also involves examining how the text reflects or challenges societal power dynamics, class struggles, gender roles, racial relations, and other social phenomena. Additionally, sociological literary interpretation may explore how the text contributes to or critiques the existing social order and ideologies. Overall, it seeks to understand the connections

between literature and society, shedding light on the social implications and relevance of this work. In analyzing the play "Fairview" through the lens of social theory, several theoretical frameworks can be applied to deepen our understanding of its themes and social perspectives.

The two prominent social theories and their relevance to the play:

Critical Race Theory (CRT): Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a valuable framework for analyzing the field of arts in the context of out-of-school time (OST) and conducting research. Creswell (2009) highlights the importance of utilizing theoretical frameworks in qualitative research. These frameworks allow researchers to delve into various aspects of their studies, such as culture in ethnography or perspectives on gender, racism, or class disparities. "Fairview" aligns with CRT by challenging the audience's assumptions about race and representation. This play exposes the underlying racial biases and stereotypes that shape our perceptions and expectations. This highlights how these biases limit the agency and autonomy of Black individuals, reinforcing oppressive power structures. Through metatheatrical techniques, the play prompts viewers to reflect on their own complicity in perpetuating these biases and encourages them to challenge and dismantle them.

Symbolic Interactionism: George Herbert Mead earns wide recognition as a trailblazer in symbolic interactionism (LaRossa and Reitzes 1993), despite not publicly publishing his study on this subject. In 1934, Herbert Blumer, a student of Mead, originated the phrase "symbolic interactionism" and defined its fundamental principles. Symbolic Interactionism focuses on how individuals construct and interpret meaning through social interactions. Carter and Fuller (2015) define Symbolic Interactionism as a sociological theoretical framework that provides insight into the establishment and sustenance of societies through the recurrent behaviors of individuals.

In "Fairview," the play disrupts and deconstructs the audience's expectations and confronts them with the constructed nature of representation. The play challenges the symbols and meanings associated with race and identity by breaking the fourth wall and directly engaging with the audience. This prompts viewers to critically examine their own role in constructing meaning and to question the societal frameworks that shape their understanding of race. The play invites the audience to reflect on the ways in which their own interactions and interpretations contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and unequal power dynamics.

By applying these social theories to the analysis of "Fairview," the readers can gain a deeper understanding of the play's exploration of race, representation, and power. This allows the audience to critically examine the social structures and dynamics that shape our perceptions, challenge their assumptions, and encourages them to actively engage in dismantling oppressive systems.

Employed social theory, specifically critical race theory: (CRT) to analyse the play

"Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies Drury incorporates elements of critical race theory (CRT) to examine and challenge societal power structures and racial dynamics. Here are some ways in which the play employs social theory, specifically critical race theory:

Intersectionality: Critical race theory emphasizes the intersectionality of race with other social categories such as gender, class, and sexuality. "Fairview" explores the intersectional experiences

of the characters, highlighting how race intersects with other aspects of their identities and shaping their experiences of oppression, privilege, and discrimination.

Racial Narratives and Stereotypes: The play directly engages in the construction of racial narratives and stereotypes. It deconstructs and challenges these narratives, exposing their harmful effects on individuals and communities. By highlighting the ways in which racial stereotypes are perpetuated and consumed, "Fairview" prompts the audience to critically examine their own complicity in maintaining these narratives.

White Privilege and the White Gaze: Critical race theory addresses white privilege and the ways in which systems of power perpetuate racial hierarchies. "Fairview" disrupts the white gaze, which objectifies and reduces marginalized communities to stereotypes. By breaking the fourth wall and directly engaging with the audience, the play confronts the audience's own privilege, forcing them to question their role in perpetuating the white gaze and to reflect on their own **biases**.

Power Dynamics: Critical race theory analyzes power dynamics and the ways in which power is distributed along racial lines. "Fairview" explores power dynamics within the context of racial representation and challenges the unequal distribution of power in shaping narratives. The play prompts the audience to critically reflect on power imbalances and to consider their own positionality within these structures.

Disruption and Subversion: Critical race theory encourages the disruption and subversion of dominant narratives to challenge racial hierarchy. "Fairview" employs unconventional theatrical techniques, break traditional narrative structures, and disrupts audience expectations to challenge preconceived notions and disrupt the status quo. By subverting expectations, the play invites the audience to engage critically with their own biases and assumptions.

By incorporating these elements of critical race theory, "Fairview" engages in a critical examination of race, power, and representation. This prompts audiences to reflect on their own positions within societal structures and confront their own biases and complicity in perpetuating racial stereotypes. The play aims to challenge and dismantle these structures, offering a more nuanced and authentic understanding of racial dynamics in society.

A conceptual framework for analysing the play "Fairview" in a social perspective can involve examining various interconnected concepts and themes present in the play.

The suggested conceptual framework for understanding "Fairview":

Race and Identity: The play explores the complexities of race and identity, particularly focusing on the experiences and perceptions of Black individuals. This raises questions about how race is constructed, the impact of racial stereotypes, and the challenges faced by individuals in asserting their own agency and authentic identities within a society that often imposes limited and distorted representations.

Representation and Power: "Fairview" critically examines the power dynamics surrounding representation. It challenges the audiences' expectations by deconstructing and confronting the tropes and stereotypes associated with Black characters. The play highlights the ways in which representation can reinforce existing power structures and perpetuate inequality. It prompts a

reflection on the responsibility of both creators and consumers of media in shaping and consuming representations, and the consequences of these representations for marginalized communities.

Audience and Spectatorship: The play actively engages with the audience, disrupting the traditional boundaries between performers and spectators. This forces viewers to confront their own complicity in perpetuating racial biases and stereotypes by implicating them in the act of watching and participating in the construction of meaning. This aspect of the play invites a critical examination of the audience's role in shaping and challenging societal norms and expectations.

Subversion of Theatrical Conventions: "Fairview" employs metatheatrical techniques and subverts traditional theatrical conventions. By breaking the fourth wall, blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality, and challenging audience assumptions, the play disrupts established expectations and confronts viewers with uncomfortable truths. This subversion prompts a re-evaluation of conventional storytelling methods and the potential for theater as a tool for social critique and change.

Intersectionality: The play touches on intersectionality, recognizing that individuals' experiences are shaped by the intersection of multiple social identities. It acknowledges that race is not the sole determinant of an individual's experiences and challenges simplistic understandings of identity. By portraying diverse characters with intersecting identities, "Fairview" emphasizes the importance of recognizing and understanding the complexities of social identity and the ways in which multiple systems of oppression can intersect and compound.

By employing this conceptual framework, this study analyzed and explored the social dimensions of "Fairview" in a comprehensive manner, considering the interplay of race, representation, power, audience engagement, and intersectionality. This study provides a lens through which to critically examine the play's social commentary and its implications for broader societal discussions on identity, representation, and social justice.

Themes

A prominent theme explored in "Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies Drury is the scrutiny of race and the encompassing cultural perspective on it. The play delves at the complexities of racial identity, representation, and the impact of societal norms and expectations on our understanding of race.

The Opening Scene: The play begins with a seemingly ordinary family gathering, presenting familiar dynamics and interactions. However, as the scene progresses, the audience becomes aware of the characters' heightened racial awareness and performative behaviour. This scene sets the stage for the exploration of race, representation, and the ways in which individuals navigate and perform their identities in response to societal expectations.

The Shift in Perspective: "Fairview" takes a significant shift in the second act, disrupting the audience's expectations and challenging their assumptions. The second act is presented from the perspective of a white audience watching a play about a Black family. This reversal of perspective confronts the audience with their own gaze and complicity in perpetuating racial biases and stereotypes. It forces them to critically reflect on their role as spectators and the impact of their expectations and assumptions on the representation of Black experiences.

The Fourth Wall Break: The play actively engages with the audience, breaking the fourth wall and directly addressing them. This occurs in various moments throughout the play, particularly in the second act. The characters challenge the audience's assumptions, confront them with uncomfortable truths, and implicate them in watching. This engagement prompts viewers to reflect on their own role in constructing meaning, the power dynamics between performers and audiences, and the audience's responsibility in challenging and dismantling oppressive systems.

The Culminating Dinner Scene: The climactic dinner scene in the play is a powerful culmination of the themes of race, representation, and power. It has become increasingly chaotic and confrontational, with the characters breaking into song and dance numbers that challenge stereotypical representations. The scene blurs the boundaries between reality and performance by engaging the audience in a disorienting and uncomfortable experience. It exposes the inherent violence and exploitation that can occur in the act of representation and demands a critical examination of the power dynamics at play.

These moments in "Fairview" exemplify the play's exploration of race, representation, power, and audience engagement. They provoke a re-evaluation of societal norms, challenge assumptions, and demand active participation and reflection from both the characters and the audience.

Racial awareness

In the play "Fairview," racial awareness and performative behavior are central to the exploration of race, representation, and social dynamics. The play exposes and critiques the ways in which individuals navigate and perform their identities in response to societal expectations and racial biases. Here are some ways in which "Fairview" addresses these concepts:

Heightened Racial Awareness: The opening scene of "Fairview" presents a seemingly ordinary family gathering. However, as the scene progresses, the audience becomes more aware of the characters' heightened racial awareness. They are acutely conscious of their actions, speech, and behaviors, and adjusting their behavior to align with the perceived expectations of how Black people should behave. This heightened racial awareness highlights the burdens and pressures placed on individuals to conform to racial stereotypes and the impact they have on their sense of self and agency.

Performance of Identity: Throughout the play, the characters engage in performative behavior, consciously or unconsciously altering their behavior to fit societal expectations. They present different versions of themselves in the presence of others, adhering to racial stereotypes or performing the roles assigned to them. The play reveals the ways in which individuals may feel compelled to perform their racial identity to gain acceptance or navigate societal structures. This raises questions about the authenticity of these performances and the toll they take on individuals' well-being and sense of self.

Subversion of Performative Expectations: As the play progresses, "Fairview" disrupts and challenges the expectations of performative behavior. It deconstructs and confronts the audience's assumptions about how Black characters should behave on stage. This subversion prompts a critical examination of the biases and preconceived notions that shape our expectations of racial

representation. By defying these expectations, the play exposes the limitations and harms performative behavior imposed on marginalized communities.

Audience Implication: The play directly implicates the audience in their own complicity regarding racial awareness and performative behavior. Through metatheatrical techniques and breaking the fourth wall, the play forces the audience to reflect on their own role as spectators and the impact of their expectations and assumptions. It challenges the audience to confront their own racial biases and the ways in which they contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes through their engagement with media and representation.

Stereotypical Expectations: The play highlights the burden of racial stereotypes placed on the characters. The portrayal of the family conforming to exaggerated expectations of Black behavior serves as evidence of racism. This challenges the audience to reflect on their own biases and the impact of such stereotypes on marginalized communities.

Racial Awareness and Self-Reflection: The characters in "Fairview" engage in self-reflection and explicitly comment on the ways in which they feel pressured to perform racial identity. This self-awareness exposes the consequences of performative behavior driven by societal expectations and prompts the audience to consider their own complicity in perpetuating racist assumptions.

Audience Interaction: The play disrupts the traditional relationship between the audience and the performers by breaking the fourth wall and directly engaging with the audience. This interaction implicates the audience in their role as spectators and calls for their active participation in challenging racism, encouraging them to critically examine their own biases and assumptions.

Subversion of Expectations: "Fairview" subverts the audience's expectations by shifting perspectives and challenging traditional narrative structures. This subversion prompts the audience to question their preconceived notions and biases, encouraging them to react to the underlying racism that may be present in their own perspectives.

Uncomfortable Realities: The play confronts uncomfortable realities surrounding race, including implicit biases and the complexities of racial identity. By presenting these realities in a confrontational and thought-provoking manner, "Fairview" aims to incite a reaction from the public, urging them to confront and address the systemic racism ingrained in society.

"Fairview" is a play that exposes racism through theatrical devices and narrative choices, urging the public to confront societal expectations and racial awareness. It encourages critical thought, challenging assumptions, and inspiring action against racism. The play confronts racial awareness and performative behavior, encouraging viewers to examine their own biases and complicity in perpetuating harmful stereotypes. It also challenges the notion of performative behavior as a means of acceptance.

Metatheatrical Elements

The concept of metatheatrical or metaplay was initially introduced in the 1963 collection of essays titled "Metatheatrical," authored by Lionel Abel. This term is defined by Abel, (2012) as "a form of drama that is relatively philosophical in nature" (v) and is distinguished by its self-awareness.

"Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies Drury incorporates metatheatrical elements to challenge traditional theatrical conventions and engage the audience in a self-reflective and critical manner.

Theatrical Self-Awareness: "Fairview" constantly reminds the audience that they are watching a staged production. Characters break the fourth wall and directly address the audience, acknowledging their presence and even commenting on their reactions. This self-awareness disrupts the illusion of reality and prompts the audience to question their role as spectators.

Disrupting Expectations: The play initially presents itself as a conventional family sitcom complete with familiar setups, dialogue, and comedic moments. However, as the play progresses, it subverts these expectations and challenges the audience's assumptions about race, representation, and the portrayal of African American experiences in theater. This deliberate disruption of expectations reflects the metatheatrical nature of the play.

Reflection on Theater and Representation: "Fairview" raises questions about the power dynamics within theater and the representation of Black characters. The play examines how African American characters are often reduced to stereotypes or used as tokens in predominantly white theatrical spaces. It prompts the audience to reflect on their own prejudices and implicit biases, highlighting the role of theater as a medium for social commentary and change.

Audience Participation: In the final act of "Fairview," the play takes a bold and interactive turn. Without revealing too much to avoid spoilers, the audience is actively involved in the narrative, becoming part of the performance. This immersive element challenges the boundaries between the performers and the audience, and further emphasizes the metatheatrical exploration of the play.

Through these metatheatrical elements, "Fairview" invites the audience to critically engage with the play, question their own assumptions and biases, and reflect on the power dynamics within theater and society. It blurs the lines between fiction and reality, challenging traditional theatrical conventions and offering a thought-provoking experience.

Scenes and dialogues in "Fairview" that explore social issues

Scene: The Dinner Table

In the opening scene, the family gathers for a seemingly ordinary dinner. However, as the dialogue unfolds, the characters' conversations address racial stereotypes and the pressure to conform to societal expectations. The scene exposes the ways in which performative behavior and racial awareness impact their interactions and sense of self.

Scene: The Second Act Perspective Shift

In the second act, the perspective shifts, and the audience becomes the observed as they watch a play about a Black family. This scene challenges the audience's assumptions and confronts the issue of the white gaze. This prompts viewers to reflect on their own expectations and biases regarding racial representation and the objectification of Black experiences.

Scene: The Hair Salon

In a scene set in a hair salon, the dialogue delves into the complexities of Black hair and the cultural appropriation of hairstyles. The characters discuss the pressure to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards and the erasure of Black identity. This scene raises awareness about the intersectionality of race and beauty standards and encourages dialogue on cultural appreciation versus appropriation.

Dialogue: Confronting Stereotypes

Throughout the play, characters engage in dialogue that challenges racial stereotypes. They discuss the limitations and pressures imposed by these stereotypes and the impact on their personal lives and aspirations. The dialogue prompts the audience to critically examine their own biases and assumptions about marginalized communities.

Scene: Fourth Wall Breaks and Audience Interaction

"Fairview" incorporates scenes where the characters break the fourth wall and directly engage with the audience. These moments of audience interaction allow the characters to address the audience's role as spectators and challenge their complicity in perpetuating social issues such as racism and stereotyping. The scenes encourage the audience to reflect on their own responsibilities and actions.

Scene: Self-Reflection and Internalized Racism

There are scenes in which characters engage in introspection, which reveals their internal struggles with racism and self-acceptance. Through dialogue and monologues, the play explores the concept of internalized racism and the impact on individuals' self-worth and relationships. These scenes prompt reflection on the effects of internalized biases and the importance of self-empowerment.

These scenes and dialogues in "Fairview" provide specific examples of how the play explores social issues such as racial stereotypes, the white gaze, cultural appropriation, intersectionality, internalized racism, and audience complicity. By portraying these issues, the play aims to provoke thought, encourage dialogue, and inspire action towards a more inclusive and just society.

Overall, "Fairview" engages with social issues by subverting expectations, examining racial stereotypes, involving the audience, deconstructing whiteness, and contributing to broader conversations about race and identity. Through its unique theatrical approach, the play aims to influence audience perceptions, foster empathy, and provoke meaningful discussions about the complexities of these social issues in our society.

"Fairview" challenges traditional theatrical conventions

"Fairview" challenges traditional theatrical conventions in multiple ways, pushing boundaries and subverting audience expectations.

By challenging these traditional theatrical conventions, "Fairview" creates a disruptive and thought-provoking experience for audiences. It prompts reflection on the ways in which race is portrayed and consumed in the arts, and it pushes for a reimagining of more inclusive and authentic narratives.

Social perspective of the play "Fairview"

The play "Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies Drury offers a powerful social perspective on race, representation, power dynamics, and the complexities of racial identity in contemporary society.

Social perspectives explored in "Fairview"

1. **White Gaze and Racial Stereotypes:** "Fairview" critically examines the white gaze—the objectification and reduction of marginalized communities to stereotypes—through the portrayal of racial dynamics. This play challenges the ways in which racial identities are constructed, consumed, and commodified, highlighting the harmful effects of racial stereotypes perpetuated by the dominant culture.

2. **Power and Privilege:** The play confronts power dynamics and the privilege held by dominant racial groups. It explores how power imbalances shape individuals' experiences and relationships, emphasizing the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and influences. Through its characters and narrative, "Fairview" sheds light on the systemic nature of power and privilege.

3. **Intersectionality:** "Fairview" engages with the concept of intersectionality, recognizing that race intersects with other social categories such as gender, class, and sexuality. It portrays the complex and multifaceted experiences of the characters, highlighting the ways in which different aspects of their identities interact and influence their lives.

4. **Authenticity and Representation:** The play questions and challenges the authenticity and accuracy of representations of racial identities in theater and the media. This prompts audiences to reflect on the limited narratives and stereotypes that often prevail, advocating for more nuanced, diverse, and authentic portrayals that go beyond surface-level stereotypes.

5. **Audience Complicity:** "Fairview" prompts the audience to confront their own complicity in perpetuating racial stereotypes and maintaining existing power structures. By breaking the fourth wall and directly engaging with the audience, the play highlights the audience's active role in consuming and shaping narratives, encouraging critical self-reflection, and examine their own biases and assumptions.

6. **Deconstruction and Subversion:** "Fairview" employs deconstruction and subversion to challenge dominant narratives and provoke critical thinking. It disrupts audience expectations, subverts conventional storytelling techniques, and invites viewers to question and challenge their own preconceived notions about race, representation, and power dynamics.

From these social perspectives, "Fairview" prompts a deeper understanding of racial dynamics and invites audiences to critically examine their own roles, biases, and responsibilities in dismantling systemic injustices. This play encourages uncomfortable conversations and calls for a more inclusive, authentic, and equitable society.

Social impact of the play "Fairview"

"Fairview" by Jackie Sibbles Drury has had a significant social impact since its premiere.

Social Impact of Fairview

- "Fairview" challenges racial stereotypes, exposing their harmful effects on individuals and communities, prompting critical examination of biases and complicity, and promoting more authentic representations in arts and media.
- "Fairview" encourages critical reflection on privilege, power, and complicity in social structures, challenging audience expectations and promoting meta-theatrical techniques to question assumptions and biases.
- "Fairview" has sparked numerous discussions on race, representation, and power dynamics, fostering dialogue and introspection in theaters, educational institutions, and communities.
- "Fairview" popularizes critical race theory concepts like the white gaze and intersectionality, expanding public understanding of race and racism through its narrative.

- "Fairview" has significantly impacted theatrical practices by challenging traditional narratives, encouraging more inclusive and authentic representations, and inspiring artists to experiment with form and confront uncomfortable truths.
- "Fairview" won the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, enhancing its social impact and encouraging further engagement and discussion on its themes.
- "Fairview" challenges societal norms, sparks conversations, and promotes critical reflection on race, representation, and power dynamics, impacting theatre practices and public discourse.

Conclusion

The social perspective and impact of the play "Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies Drury is that it is a ground-breaking work that challenges traditional theatrical conventions and addresses important social issues. The play's examination of the white gaze, the deconstruction of representation, and ~~its~~ disruption of traditional narratives contribute to a thought-provoking and impactful experience for audiences.

"Fairview" prompts reflection and conversation about race, representation, and cultural stereotypes in contemporary society. By confronting audience members with their own assumptions and complicity in perpetuating harmful narratives, the play A encourages critical examination of ingrained biases and the need for more authentic and diverse representations in the arts.

The play's unconventional structure and disorienting shifts in tone and perspective contribute to its impact and ability to spark meaningful dialogue. It has raised awareness about systemic racism, cultural appropriation, and the responsibility of artists and audiences in creating and consuming art.

The social perspective and impact of "Fairview" extend beyond the theater. The play has garnered critical acclaim and HAS received numerous awards, highlighting its ability to engage audiences and contribute to broader conversations about equity, representation, and social justice.

In conclusion, "Fairview" by Jackie Sibblies Drury offers a powerful social perspective and has made a significant impact on the theater community and society at large. Through its innovative approach and thought-provoking content, the play challenges the status quo, prompts self-reflection, and contributes to ongoing discussions about race, representation, and the need for more inclusive narratives in the arts.

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Resources

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