

INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



SMART PEOPLE SYNOPSIS

Smart People takes place during the 2008 political season when Barack Obama's star was rising. The play's four characters all have a connection to Harvard University. For example, Valerie, who is African American, has just graduated with a Masters of Fine Arts degree from the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge while doing other jobs to support herself. Jackson, also African American, is a surgical intern at Harvard Medical School; bright, articulate and good-looking, he also runs a clinic for poor patients. Ginny, an Asian American tenured professor, is researching the psychology of Asian girls. Brian, an up-and-coming Caucasian neuroscientist, does research on the biological origins of racism. He assumes his interpretation of the data will be accepted as valid, but as all aspiring neuroscientists should know, it takes many years for scientists to accept any theory despite mountains of evidence. No matter how smart these people are and how much research they have done, they have difficulty dealing with the realities and relationships of life.



DENVER CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS
Theatre Company

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SMART PEOPLE

By **Lydia R. Diamond**

Directed by **Nataki Garrett**

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THE PLAYWRIGHT—LYDIA R. DIAMOND

Lydia attended Northwestern University where she switched her major from acting to playwriting. Toward the end of her college career, Diamond wrote her first play *Solitaire* that won the Agnes Nixon Playwriting Award. After graduating from college, Lydia met John Diamond who was working on his PhD. in sociology. They married in 1996.

In 2004 Lydia gave birth to their son Baylor, and John took a teaching job at Harvard. In 2006, the Huntington Theatre chose her for the Playwriting Fellowship program. Her play, *The Bluest Eye*, based on Toni Morrison's novel of a young black girl longing for blue eyes, was produced at Company One, a Boston Theatre. She also began teaching at Boston University.

Her works include:

The Gift Horse. (2001)
Voyeurs de Venus (2006)
The Bluest Eye (2007)
Stick Fly (2008)
Lizzie Stanton (2009)
Harriet Jacobs (2011)
Smart People (2016)

In an interview with *Broadway.com* she said she wrote *Smart People* because it is quirky and funny “with characters just as flawed as they always are and a play that doesn’t have an ax to grind. “

1. broadway.com
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia_R._Diamond
<http://www.broadway.com/buzz/183750/smart-people-playwright-why-she-needs-a-dictionary-and-how-obama-made-her-up-her-game/>

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Harvard University is a private Ivy League university in Cambridge, Massachusetts, established in 1636, whose history, influence, and wealth have made it one of the world's most prestigious universities.

Established originally by the Massachusetts legislature and soon thereafter named for John Harvard (its first benefactor), Harvard is the United States' oldest institution of higher learning and the Harvard Corporation (formally the President and Fellows of Harvard College) is its first chartered corporation. Although never formally affiliated with any denomination, the early College primarily trained Congregationalist and Unitarian clergy. Its curriculum and student body were gradually secularized during the 18th century and by the 19th century, Harvard had emerged as the central cultural establishment among Boston elites. Following the American Civil War, President Charles W. Eliot's long tenure (1869-1909) transformed the college and affiliated professional schools into a modern research university. Harvard was a founding member of the Association of American Universities in 1900. James Bryant Conant led the university through the Great Depression and World War II and began to reform the curriculum and liberalize admissions after the war. The undergraduate college became coeducational after its 1977 merger with Radcliffe College.

The university is organized into eleven separate academic units—ten faculties and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study—with campuses throughout the Boston metropolitan area. Its 209 acre main campus is centered on Harvard Yard in Cambridge, approximately 3 miles northwest of Boston; the business school and athletics facilities, including Harvard Stadium, are located across the Charles River in the Alston neighborhood of Boston, and the medical, dental and public health schools are in the Longwood Medical Area. Harvard's \$345 billion financial endowment is the largest of any academic institution.

Harvard is a large, highly residential research university. The normal cost of attendance is high, but the university's large endowment allows it to offer generous financial aid packages. It operates several arts, cultural and scientific museums along side the Harvard Library, which is the world's largest academic and private library system, comprising 79 individual libraries with over 18 million volumes. Harvard's alumni include eight U. S. presidents, several foreign heads of state, 62 living billionaires, 359 Rhodes Scholars and 242 Marshall Scholars. To date, some 150 Nobel laureates and 13 Turing Award winners have been affiliated as students, faculty or staff.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University

AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE

The American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.) is a professional not-for-profit theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, the A.R.T. is known for its commitment to new American plays and music-theatre explorations, to neglected works of the past, and to established classical texts reinterpreted in refreshing new ways. Over the past thirty years it has garnered many of the nation's most distinguished awards. The A.R.T. is housed in the Loeb Drama Center at Harvard University. The A.R.T. houses the Institute for Advanced Theatre Training in Harvard University and the Harvard-Radcliffe Drama Club.

In 2002 Robert Woodruff replaced founder Robert Brustein as the A.R.T.'s artistic Director. After Woodruff's departure in 2007, Associate Director Gideon Lester took the reins for the 2008-09 season, and in May 2008, Diane Paulus was named the new Artistic Director. Paulus, a Harvard alum,

is widely known as a director of theatre and opera. Her work includes *The Donkey Show*, which ran off-Broadway for six years, productions at the Chicago Opera Theatre and the Public Theatre's 2008 production of *Hair*, which won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical.

Since becoming Artistic Director, Diane Paulus has enhanced the A.R.T.'s core mission to expand the boundaries of theatre by continuing to transform the ways in which work is developed, programmed, produced and contextualized, always including the audience as partner. Productions such as *Sleep No More*, *The Donkey Show*, *Gatz*, *The Blue Flower*, *Prometheus Bound*, *The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess*, *Wild Swans* and *Pippin* have engaged audiences in unique theatrical experiences.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Repertory_Theatre

RACISM

Racism is discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity. Today, the term "racism" has many different aspects.

Racist ideology is rooted in the idea that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different due to their social behavior as well as the idea that they can be ranked as inferior or superior. While the concepts of race and ethnicity are considered to be separate in the social sciences, the two terms have long been used interchangeably. A United Nations convention on racial discrimination concludes that superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous.

Definitions

Racial discrimination. According to the 1965 UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

Social and behavioral science. Sociologists, in general, recognize "race" as a social construct. This means that, although the concepts of race and racism are based on observable biological characteristics, any conclusions drawn about race on the basis of those observations are heavily influenced by cultural ideologies.

While much of the research and work on racism during the last half-century or so has concentrated on "white racism" in the Western world, historical accounts of race-based social practices can be found across the globe. Thus, racism can be broadly defined to encompass individual and group prejudices and acts of discrimination that result in material and cultural advantages conferred on a majority or a dominant social group. In studies of these majority white societies, the aggregate of material and cultural advantages is usually termed "white privilege".

Implicit racism is judgment that occurs without conscious awareness towards an attitude object or the self.

Aversive racism is a form of implicit racism in which a person's unconscious negative evaluations of racial or ethnic minorities are realized by a persistent avoidance of interaction with other racial and ethnic groups. As opposed to traditional, overt

racism, which is characterized by overt hatred for and explicit discrimination against racial/ethnic minorities, aversive racism is characterized by more complex, ambivalent expressions and attitudes. Aversive racism has been shown to have potentially serious implications for decision making in employment, in legal decisions and in helping behavior.

Color blindness. In relation to racism, color blindness is the disregard of racial characteristics in social interaction, for example in the rejection of affirmative action, as a way to address the results of past patterns of discrimination. Critics of this attitude argue that by refusing to attend to racial disparities, racial color blindness in fact unconsciously perpetuates the patterns that produce racial inequality.

Cultural racism can be defined as societal beliefs and customs that promote the assumption that the products of a given culture, including the language and traditions of that culture are superior to those of other cultures. It shares a great deal with xenophobia, which is often characterized by fear of, or aggression toward, one group by members of another. Cultural racism exists when there is a widespread acceptance of stereotypes concerning different ethnic or population groups. Where racism can be characterized by the belief that one race is inherently superior to another, cultural racism can be characterized by the belief that one culture is inherently superior to another.

Historical economic or social disparity is a form of discrimination caused by past racism and historical reasons, affecting the present generation

through deficits in formal education and kinds of preparation in previous generations, and through primarily unconscious racist attitudes and actions on members of the general population.

Institutional racism (also known as structural racism, state racism or systemic racism) is racial discrimination by governments, corporations, religions, or educational institutions or other large organizations with the power to influence the lives of many individuals.

Othering is the term used by some to describe a system of discrimination whereby the characteristics of a group are used to distinguish them as separate from the norm. To objectify a culture as something different, exotic or underdeveloped is to generalize that it is not like 'normal' society.

Racial segregation is the separation of humans into socially constructed racial groups in daily life. It may apply to activities such as eating in a restaurant, drinking from a water fountain, using a bathroom, attending school, going to the movies, or in the rental or purchase of a home.

Supremacism. Centuries of European colonialism in the Americas, Africa and Asia were often justified by white supremacist attitudes. During the early 20th century, the phrase "The White Man's Burden" was widely used to justify an imperialist policy as a noble enterprise.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

RACISM AND DNA

"The legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, discrimination exists in institutions and casts a long shadow and that's still part of our DNA that's passed on."
Barak Obama.¹

In a PBS documentary "American Denial", the film featured a number of historians, psychologists and sociologists who offered expert insight on the fact that the basis of our racism is so deeply rooted that most people don't know it's there. They call this belief that one group is better than another "implicit bias."² This "implicit bias" seeps into every aspect of life. Thirty years of neurology and cognitive

psychology studies show that it influences the way we see other people. The psychologists point out that humans are 99.9% the same and they conclude, *there is no genetic basis for race.*

1. <http://www.opposingviews.com/columns/depth/racism-built-our-dna>
2. <http://www.latimes.com>

<http://www.opposingviews.com/columns/depth/racism-built-our-dna>

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/show/tracker/la-et-st-american-denial-independent-lens-20150223-column.html>

IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS

JANUARY

Stock markets around the world plunge amid growing fears of a U.S. recession, fueled by the 2007 subprime mortgage crisis.

APRIL

General Motors announces that it will cut production of pickup trucks and sports utility vehicles at three plants in Michigan and negotiate layoffs with the United Auto Workers.

MAY

California becomes the second state after Massachusetts to legalize same sex marriage after the State's Supreme Court rules a previous ban unconstitutional.

JUNE

Barack Obama secures the 2008 U. S. Democratic Party presidential nomination. After three decades as Chairman of Microsoft Corporation, Bill Gates steps down from daily duties to concentrate on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

AUGUST

Barack Obama and Joe Biden are declared the Democratic candidates at the 2008 National

Convention in Denver, Colorado.

John McCain secures the 2008 Republican Party presidential nomination after winning primary elections in Texas, Vermont, Ohio and Rhode Island.

McCain chooses Sarah Palin as his running mate.

SEPTEMBER

Wall Street investment bank Lehman Brothers files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average falls 777 points due to the financial panic.

OCTOBER

Global financial crisis. U. S. President George W. Bush signs the revised Emergency Economic Stabilization Act into law, creating a 700 billion dollar Treasury fund to purchase failing bank assets.

NOVEMBER

Democratic U.S. Senator Barack Obama is elected the 44th President of the United States, becoming the first African American President.

<http://www.brainyhistory.com/years/2008.html>

RACISM AT HARVARD?

The legal defense group Project on Fair Representation announced a lawsuit against Harvard University for “employing racially and ethnically discriminatory policies” in its admissions practices” according to a copy of the suit. “Harvard’s undergraduate admissions policies and procedures have injured and continue to injure Plaintiff members by intentionally and improperly discriminating against them on the basis of their race and ethnicity in violation of Title VI,” the complaint reads.¹ The complaint cites as the plaintiff Students for Admissions, Inc., a newly formed nonprofit law group that includes students and parents who wish to challenge the use of race in admissions policies, and calls for a permanent injunction on Harvard’s policies they allege are discriminatory.¹

Edward Blum, the director of the Project on Fair Representation says, “It is especially disconcerting that public data shows that Harvard has purposely limited the percentage of Asian American freshman it admits. In fact, the number of Asian Americans Harvard admits today is lower than it was 20 years ago, even though the number of highly qualified

Asian American applicants to Harvard has nearly doubled.”²

The 120-page complaint against Harvard claims that the University uses racial balancing in its admissions decisions, even when allegedly race-neutral alternatives can achieve diversity. The complaint detailed a long history of Harvard’s admissions policies, including the widely discussed discrimination against Jewish applicants in the early 20th century.

The admissions office replied, “The College considers each applicant through an individualized holistic review having the goal of creating a vibrant academic community that exposes students to a wide range of differences, backgrounds, ideas, experiences, talents and aspirations.”³ The admissions policies are fully compliant with the law.

1. The Harvard Crimson

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

<http://www.theharvardcrimson.com/article/2014/11/18/law-suit-admissions-alleged-discrimination/>

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SMART?

Being smart used to mean one could ace an IQ test or score well on SATs. The term also was used to describe people who were good at math and science and had huge memories. But it is necessary to note many of the world's great discoveries came not through quickness but through sustained laborious thinking, hard work and creativity. For example, consider Thomas Edison who spent thousand of hours inventing the electric light bulb.

Many of the concepts about intelligence have been shaken up recently by Dr. Howard Gardner and his book *Frames of Mind*. He believes there are at least seven multiple intelligences; all are possessed by everyone, except in different proportions. The intelligences are:

Verbal—the ability to use words to write or speak.

Visual—ability to see things in patterns.

Physical—ability to use one's body well in sports or athletics.

Musical—ability to understand and use music either in performance or composition.

Mathematical and logical—ability to apply logic to systems and numbers.

Interpretive—ability to understand one's own thoughts and feelings and those of other people.

Interpersonal—ability to relate well to others.

Once one knows his or her own smarts, or another person's, one can go about learning information in the easiest way.

In an issue of *Psychology Today*, new insight about intelligence links it to a K factor, a development through evolution. Those with a high K factor have high intelligence, but not necessarily great personalities. They have verbal ability, social competence and motivation. This study concluded: "perhaps it enhances the belief that highly intelligent people feel that they can succeed in life without following the same rules that other people do."¹

Learningminds.com lists the six qualities of smart people. They can make decisions, choose a decent environment, use opportunities wisely, are open to new ideas, are continuously learning and have a good sense of humor.

1. *Psychology Today*.

<http://cathcart.com/media-press-motivation-articles?-intelligence-what-does-it-mean-to-be-smart?>
<http://psychologytoday.com/blog/unique-everybody-else/2014/what-is-an-intelligent-personality>
<http://www.learningminds.com/6-qualities-of-intelligent-people?>

CAN TENURED PROFESSORS BE FIRED?

Tenured professors can lose their jobs for malfeasance, sexual harassment of a student, or crimes committed outside the university. They can also be terminated for refusal to teach or inability to do research. A university may decide to eliminate a whole department and its faculty because of

a financial crisis. Tenured faculty cannot be fired for speaking or writing what they think, even if somebody doesn't like it.

<http://www.quora.com/Can-tenured-professors-lose-their-jobs?>

ROTATING SCHEDULES OF INTERNS

This plan supports a combination of 14 hour day shifts. The day shift and the crossover shift have the same start time (7 A. M.). The night shift starts around 10 P. M and ends at 12 noon the following day. This combination allows a day intern and a night intern to be present at the same time during

the morning rounds so they can discuss with the attending physician the treatments for the patients in the next 24 hour period.

<http://community.bmscentral.com/learns/2C/4Tr1415-1>

STUDY QUESTIONS

Pre-Performance Questions

1. What is the difference between a stereotype and an archetype? Do stereotypes only reinforce negative images or are there stereotypes that reinforce positive images?
2. When faced with a friend who holds a strong view on an important issue that is opposite of yours, is it possible to maintain and nurture that friendship? If a friendship is broken because of differing views, what can be done to restore or repair the relationship?
3. What is the difference between being intelligent and being smart? How is attraction based on intellect similar to physical attraction?
4. How would you describe the term “internalized oppression”?
5. Explain if it is or is not possible to listen aggressively?

Post-Performance Questions

1. Although written in 2014, the play is set between 2007 through 2009. What has changed, if anything, within the last ten years in the United States in regards to racial and gender identity?
2. How are the characters’ assumptions about the other characters justified or undermined?
3. How would you describe Brian’s relationship with Jackson? What happens to the relationship?
4. How would you describe the relationship between Valerie and Jackson; the relationship between Ginny and Brian?
5. In what ways do all the characters’ lives intersect?
6. What traits connect the characters to each other? Are the same traits responsible for pulling the characters apart?
7. When you first meet the characters, where do you think the play’s plot is going? Where does the plot depart or intersect with your initial thoughts?
8. How does research factor into the play and inform its character and situations?
9. Why does the playwright use Barack Obama’s campaign in 2008 as an ongoing throughline in the play?
10. As the play ends in 2009, where do you think the characters will be physically and emotionally in 2017?

PERSPECTIVES

Make your experience unforgettable when you join us for one of these insightful, educational events:

Creative Team Perspectives

Oct 13 | 6:00pm | The Jones

Get an exclusive insider's perspective before the show when you join us for a free, professionally-moderated discussion with the creative team.

Cast Perspectives

Oct 22 | 1:30pm

Join a fun and engaging discussion with the actors after the matinee.

Perspectives: Theatre & Theology

Oct 24 | 6:30pm

Join Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod after the performance to examine each show through a theological lens.

Perspectives: Higher Education Advisory Council

Nov 12 | 1:30pm

Participate in a topical discussion led by members of our academic community after the matinee.

Smart People Talkbacks

After every performance

Join us following each performance for a moderated discussion about the themes in *Smart People*. Details will be announced at your performance.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Denver Public Library recommends: Read!

Fresh Off the Boat: A Memoir by Eddie Huang (2013) is a rowdy account of Huang's unconventional life. He's been a marijuana dealer, a corporate lawyer, a stand-up comic, and now he's the owner of New York's Baohaus, a hip Taiwanese street-food joint in the East Village. But the most remarkable parts of Huang's story took place well before his long line of careers, back when he was growing up with his Taiwanese immigrant parents and learning the harsh lessons of American culture. Full of salty wit and piercing humor, this is a story about Huang's struggle with racism, cultural identity, and forging a new American dream.

Watch!

Black-ish (Distributed by Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc. 2015). This Emmy-nominated comedic interpretation of family life centers on a father who is concerned his privileged children aren't Black enough, hence the -ish. Like *Smart People*, Obama's presidency is in the background as the children of *Black-ish* have grown up in a "post-racial" time where a Black man can be POTUS. While maintaining its something-for-the-whole-family-to-watch appeal, the show covers topics of concern to modern parents: how to listen to your child, the use of the n-word by your children's friends, interracial dating, and police brutality. We think that *Black-ish*, like *Smart People*, will start many conversations with your friends and family.

Listen!

Tears We Cannot Stop, A Sermon to White America by Michael Eric Dyson (2017). Dyson presents *Tears We Cannot Stop* as if delivering an intimate sermon to a White congregation; a sermon that is fiery in its condemnation of the insidiousness of White privilege, but is also tender, direct and constructive. Dyson's plea is a personal appeal calling on the moral and spiritual maturity of his White congregants. He calls on White America to confront what he calls the "original sin of White privilege," to overcome knee-jerk defensiveness and feigned innocence, and to recognize the role of "Whiteness" in the deep suffering of others. This sermon forms a challenge for White individuals to surrender their racial naivete and face American history with honesty, and most of all, to be present in this complicated world with clear eyes, an open heart and a deep desire for change.

Download!

Black Man in a White Coat by Damon Tweedy (2015). When Tweedy got into the competitive medical program at Duke University on an affirmative action scholarship he knew he would be facing an uphill battle. But it turned out that was just the beginning of his difficulties as a black man in the medical field. He faces discrimination from all sides, including from one particular black patient who doesn't want to see "a country ass doctor". Taking a wider view than just a personal memoir Tweedy combines statistics, anecdotes and patients' stories to show the many ways in which being black is just bad medicine. Narrator Corey Allen adeptly portrays Tweedy's working class background and humility with his rich low voice and his excellent pacing. This audio/audible book title is available for download at denver.overdrive.com.



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