

Chimera Study Guide

About the Play

The play centres on Roy Ruggles, a journalist struggling to remake his reputation. He's got an axe to grind and he's found a likely target in his childhood friend Clare McGuire, the splashy new Minister of Justice. It's "Science on the Hill Days" and the Minister has announced in the House the anniversary of the passing of Bill C13, the Human Reproductive Technologies Act. But George Fanning, MP backbencher from White Cloud, Alberta and his conservative colleagues refer to it as the "Murdered Embryo Act". Eager to stir the pot, George has a question for the new Minister about a laboratory in Nepean where human embryonic stem cells are being implanted into developing monkey brains. When Clare evades the question, journalist Roy smells a story and begins to investigate. His search leads him to Dr. Nell Harrier, the scientist conducting the experiments in search of a cure for autism, and a furor erupts in the press and on Parliament Hill.

From Parliament Hill's question period, to university research labs, to the political backrooms where men and women lobby and struggle for power, *Chimera* explores the promise and perils of scientific research and the personal ideals that fuel politics. These are compelling characters struggling with tough questions. With the possibilities of medical advances, what are the legal limits of research? What are the ethical ramifications of cross-species genetics, the creation of chimeras? Who, or what, are the most vulnerable in our society, and how do we best protect them?

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Stem Cell Research

Scientists have been all abuzz in the last few years over "stem cells" — in December 1999, the editors of *Science*, the journal devoted to scientific and medical matters, went as far as calling stem-cell research the "Breakthrough of the Year."

What are stem cells?

Stem cells can be thought of as blank slates or cells that have yet to become specialized. They have the ability to become any type of cell to form skin, bones, organs or other body parts.

Are there different kinds of stem cells?

Yes. Stem cells come in three forms: embryonic stem cells, embryonic germ cells and adult stem cells. Embryonic stem cells come from embryos, embryonic germ cells from testes, and adult stem cells can come from bone marrow.

Embryonic stem cells can become any type of cell while adult stem cells are more limited. But recent evidence suggests it may be possible to reprogram adult stems to repair tissues.

What could stem cells be used for?

Scientists are fascinated by stem cells' ability to become any type of cell. This makes them perfect for a wide range of medical uses, from repairing tissue to treating diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Doctors can already transplant tissue and organ cells but they are limited by a lack of donors. Stem cells could allow them to grow the tissue they need, when they need it.

What has been done so far?

Stem cell research has shown benefits in many areas of health, but most of the studies have only been done on lab animals. Some examples are:

- Embryonic stem cells were used to treat a Parkinson's-like condition in mice and rats
- Scientists caused new brain cells to grow from adult stem cells in birds
- Canadian and Italian scientists transplanted adult stem cells from the brains of mice into the bone marrow of other rodents. The stem cells changed behaviour and began making blood cells.
- Movement was restored in paralyzed mice and rats by injecting stem cells into the spinal fluid.

In one of the few stem cell studies done involving humans, some people who failed to benefit from cataract surgery improved when they received corneal stem-cell transplants.

The Ethics of Stem Cell Research

Currently, the best source for stem cells is a human embryo. But using human material, such as aborted fetuses, in research is a contentious issue because it can be construed as the sacrifice of human life for scientific progress.

U.S. President George W. Bush struck down legislation to expand embryonic stem-cell research in July 2006 — the first veto of his presidency. "It crosses a moral boundary that our decent society needs to respect, so I vetoed it," said Bush. The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which passed in the Senate, would have eased limits on human embryonic stem-cell research. It is restricted to cell lines, or colonies, that were derived on or before Aug. 9, 2001, the day the policy was announced.

In March 2001, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research suggested guidelines for the use of stem cells. The guidelines limit scientists to using leftover embryos created to help couples conceive, and only if the couples agree. The embryos also wouldn't be allowed to exceed more than 14 days old.

Below are two articles from The Globe and Mail, each talking about Bill C6, Canada's law which covers issues like Stem Cell Research. One is by Preston Manning, former leader of the Reform Party and the other is by Timothy Caulfield, a leading Canadian Scientist.

Canada's Test of Faith By Preston Manning

I was a member of the standing committee on health that reviewed an earlier draft of Bill C6. In presenting it, Allan Rock (then Health Minister) recognized the potential conflict between what was scientifically possible and ethically acceptable, saying: "There must be a higher notion than science alone . . . that can guide scientific research and endeavour. Simply because we can do something does not mean that we should do it."

But what might that "higher notion" be? One of the candidates is faith... My faith tells me that our relationships -- with each other and with God -- are the most important dimension of life, and that love is the supreme ethic that ought to govern those relationships. What does the genetic revolution do to our relationships? To the extent that it helps infertile couples to have children or prevents parents from passing on inheritable diseases to their children, surely it is to be supported and encouraged. But if it encourages man to play God or reduces human reproduction to a technological process to be carried out in a laboratory or a factory -- surely those dimensions of the genetic revolution should be constrained.

Do [universal and transcendent moral] principles exist? People of faith believe they do, even though we may disagree on what they are, and all of us "see as through a glass darkly" when it comes to understanding them. What this means is that we must rededicate ourselves to the search for such principles, rather than abandoning it and settling for some inconclusive moral relativism that says, "You believe what you believe, and I'll believe what I believe, and somehow everything will work out." ... The regulatory regime to be established by Canada's new legislation will serve us well if it brings both science and faith to bear on the governance of the genetic revolution.

(The Globe and Mail, April 5, 2002)

Too Heavy a Hand on Science by Timothy Caufield, Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy at the University of Alberta, is research director of its Health Law Institute

Last week, scientists in Korea created 11 stem-cell lines from cloned human embryos and escalated the international debate about the regulation of stem-cell research. It also raised the question of when and how governments should prohibit an area of scientific inquiry...Most of the scientific community hailed the Korean research as a stunning achievement; the results were published in the respected academic journal *Science*. Yet in Canada, therapeutic cloning is criminally prohibited.

...Last March, after years of public debate, the Assisted Human Reproduction Act came into force, prohibiting therapeutic cloning. The official background reports that informed the legislation's development suggest that the ban is needed for two principal reasons: to prevent the commodification of human reproductive material; and because Canadians wanted it.

The first concern is legitimate. If the technique becomes a therapeutic option, a large number of human eggs will be required, creating significant demand. But this hardly justifies criminal prohibition of research. As with other transplantation procedures, Ottawa must simply ban the buying and selling of the tissue, not the research. The latter rationale, that Canadians want the ban, is simply untrue. All available evidence suggests that most Canadians support the idea of therapeutic cloning. I believe that the primary reason for the ban can be found in the parliamentary debates that surrounded the law's enactment. There was little discussion about such complex issues as the commodification of human tissue; what dominated was political rhetoric on the moral status of the embryo.

The Korean experiments reminded us anew of how hard it is to create policies that meaningfully respond to the rapid pace of science. More legal issues are on the horizon. Therapeutic cloning has real scientific and clinical potential; most Canadians seem to approve of the regulated use of the technique; and the dominant objection is largely based on a contested moral position. Is a criminal ban really the way to handle this complex area?

(The Globe and Mail, June 3, 2005)

Evolution and Creationism: Science vs. Religion

Scientific critique of creationism

There is a fundamental difference between the scientific approach to explaining the natural world and the creationist approach. The scientific approach uses the scientific method as a means of discovering information about nature. Scientists use observations, hypotheses and deductions to propose explanations for natural phenomena in the form of scientific theories. Predictions from these theories are tested by experiment. If a prediction turns out to be correct, the theory survives. In principle, the scientific method does not seek answers that fit a certain pre-determined conclusion, but rather works to construct viable, testable, and provable theories based on a solid evidential foundation.

Creationism, on the other hand, works by taking theologically conservative interpretations of scripture as the primary or only source of information about origins. Creationists believe that since the Creator created everything and also revealed scriptures, the scriptures have pre-eminence as a kind of evidence. Consistency with their interpretations of scripture is the measure by which they judge all other evidence. They then accept or reject scientific accounts based on whether or not they agree with their beliefs, discounting that which contradicts their understanding of scriptural revelation.

Arguments against evolution

Creationists are best known for their claims that Darwin's evolutionary theory is incorrect and that evidence contradicting it has been discovered. These claims are not taken seriously by the overwhelming majority of the scientific community, where the evidence of evolution is considered to be overwhelming in quality and amount.

A famous instance of creationist evidence against evolution was the supposed human and dinosaur tracks found in Paluxy riverbed near Glen Rose, Texas which was allegedly evidence that showed dinosaurs and humans walked the Earth at the same time. Another example was an argument relating to the accumulation of lunar dust indicating an age for the moon of a few thousand years. These claims have been thoroughly discounted now and many creationists disavow them.

Creationists have also criticized the scientific evidence used to support evolution as being based on faulty assumptions, and unjustified jumping to conclusions. This includes the fossil record, which creationists claim has significant gaps that cast doubt on evolution, the emergence of new species, which creationists claim hasn't been observed directly, and radiometric dating, which creationists claim is inaccurate due to an inappropriate reliance on assumptions.

Intelligent design is the concept that "certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection." Its leading proponents assert that intelligent design is a scientific theory that stands on equal footing with current scientific theories regarding the evolution and origin of life.

The U.S. National Academy of Sciences has stated that intelligent design "and other claims of supernatural intervention in the origin of life" are not science because they cannot be tested by experiment, do not generate any predictions, and propose no new hypotheses of their own.

In *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* (2005), a United States federal court ruled that a public school district requirement for science classes to teach that intelligent design is an alternative to evolution was a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. United States District Judge John E. Jones III ruled that intelligent design is not science and is essentially religious in nature.

Chimeras

What is a Chimera? (pronounced Ky-méer-a)

1. In Greek mythology, the Chimera is a monstrous creature made of the parts of multiple animals. Descriptions vary – some say it had the body of a goat, the tail of a snake or dragon and the head of a lion; others say it had heads of both the goat and lion, with a snake for a tail. It is generally considered to have been female, despite the mane adorning its lion's head. Bellerephon was sent to slay the Chimera which he did with the help of Pegasus, the winged horse.



2. In scientific terms, a chimera is a mixture of two or more genetically distinct tissues in a single organism, produced as a result of organ transplant, grafting, or genetic engineering. Examples of human chimeras include mothers who carry some cells from each of their children in their blood and most twins carry some cells from their sibling twins.

3. A fanciful mental illusion or fabrication; impracticable plan or desire.

In the play, the experiments in question involve placing human neural (or brain and spine) stem cells, which came from embryonic stem cells, into monkey embryos. This research is called 'therapeutic' (as opposed to reproductive) because it does not involve allowing these embryos to grow beyond 6 months.

Some thoughts from a range of scientists and bioethicists about the ethics of the creation of chimeras:

"There are other ways to advance medicine and human health besides going out into the strange, brave new world of chimeric animals. One doesn't have to be religious or into animal rights to think this doesn't make sense. It's the scientists who want to do this. They've now gone over the edge into the pathological domain." Biotechnology activist Jeremy Rifkin

"Creating chimeras diminishes human dignity. It would deny that there is something distinctive and valuable about human beings that ought to be honored and protected." Cynthia Cohen, member of Canada's Stem Cell Oversight Committee

"Anybody who puts their own moral guidance in the way of this biomedical science, where they want to impose their will—not just be part of an argument—if that leads to a ban or moratorium... they are stopping research that would save human lives." Irv Weissman, director of Stanford University's Institute of Cancer/Stem Cell Biology and Medicine

Bill C6 – Assisted Human Reproduction Act

Since 1989, when the *Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies* was created by the Federal Government, Canada has been attempting to define the proper legislative and regulatory controls to govern Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR). In 1993, the Royal Commission produced its report, *Proceed with Care*, recommending immediate regulation to protect the interests of all Canadians. In 1995, the Minister of Health announced an interim voluntary moratorium on several activities of concern, such as human cloning and paying surrogate mothers. Several bills were proposed and did not pass between 1996 and 2004 until Bill C-6, *An Act Respecting Assisted Human Reproduction and Related Research* received Royal Assent in March 2004 and became law.

The Act prohibits a range of activities “deemed by many Canadians to run contrary to human dignity or societal values, while permitting certain other activities to be carried out, subject to governmental regulation and oversight” [from the report on Bill C6].

Prohibited Activities include:

- Reproductive and therapeutic human cloning
- Creating in vitro embryos for any purpose other than creating a human being or improving or providing instruction in AHR procedures
- Maintaining an embryo for more than 14 days outside the body of a female person
- Sex selection, except for preventing, diagnosing or treating sex-linked disorders
- Transplanting a sperm, ovum, embryo or fetus of a non-human into a human being
- Using any human reproductive material or in vitro embryo previously in a non-human for the purpose of creating a human being
- Creating a chimera (defined as an embryo into which a cell of any non-human life form has been introduced or an embryo consisting of cells of more than one embryo fetus or human being) or transplanting a chimera into either a human being or a non-human life form
- Paying for or offering to pay for surrogate mothers, purchasing or offering to purchase sperm and ova or in vitro embryos

The bill also called for the creation of the Assisted Human Reproduction Agency of Canada which would license and protect those undergoing fertility procedures and issue licences concerning the use of embryonic stem cells. The Agency will only provide a licence if it is “satisfied that the use of such embryos is necessary for the purpose of the proposed research” and if it receives the written consent of the original gamete providers and the embryo provider.

Scopes' "Monkey" Trial

On March 13, 1925, the state of Tennessee passed the Butler Act, which forbade the teaching of "any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." This is often interpreted as meaning that the law forbade the teaching of any aspect of the theory of evolution.

The American Civil Liberties Union had offered to defend anyone accused of teaching the theory of evolution in defiance of the Butler Act. George Rappleyea, who managed a number of local mines, convinced a group of businessmen in Dayton, Tennessee, then a town of 1,800, that the controversy of such a trial would put Dayton on the map. With their agreement, he called in his friend, 24-year-old John T. Scopes, who was the Rhea County High School's football coach who had filled in teaching biology.

Rappleyea pointed out that while the Butler Act prohibited the teaching of the theory of evolution, the state required teachers to use a textbook - George Hunter's *Civic Biology* (1914) - which explicitly described and endorsed the theory of evolution, and that teachers were therefore effectively required to break the law. Scopes told the group "If you can prove that I've taught evolution and that I can qualify as a defendant, then I'll be willing to stand trial." Scopes was charged on May 25, 1925 with having taught a chapter on evolution to a class at the high school. The trial began on July 10, 1925.

The ACLU had originally intended to oppose the Butler Act on the grounds that it violated the separation of Church and State within the public education system and was therefore unconstitutional. The strategy changed as the trial progressed, and the earliest argument proposed by the defense was that there was actually no conflict between evolution and the creation account in the Bible. Defense lawyer Clarence Darrow and prosecutor William Jennings Bryan argued the interpretation of the Bible, often with the jury excluded from the courtroom. At the end of the trial, Darrow called Bryan as a defense witness, and after two hours, the judge announced that he considered the whole examination irrelevant to the case.

Darrow called the jury in, asking them to find Scopes guilty so the trial could proceed to the Supreme Court. The jury responded:

We claim that the defendant is not guilty, but as the court has excluded any testimony, except as to the one issue as to whether he taught that man descended from a lower order of animals, and we cannot contradict that testimony, there is no logical thing to come except that the jury find a verdict that we may carry to the higher court, purely as a matter of proper procedure. We do not think it is fair to the court or counsel on the other side to waste a lot of time when we know this is the inevitable result and probably the best result for the case.

Scopes was found guilty on July 21 and ordered to pay a US\$100 fine. Scopes' lawyers appealed. A year later, the Tennessee Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Dayton court on a technicality – not the constitutional grounds as Darrow had hoped. According to the court, the fine should have been set by the jury, not by the judge. Rather than send the case back for further action, however, the Tennessee Supreme Court dismissed the case. The court commented, "Nothing is to be gained by prolonging the life of this bizarre case."

The press coverage of the "Monkey" Trial was overwhelming. The front pages of newspapers like the *New York Times* were dominated by the case for days. More than a hundred newspaper reporters from all parts of the country and two from London were in Dayton. Twenty-two telegraphers sent out 165,000 words a day on the trial. Chicago's WGN radio station broadcast the trial with announcer Quin Ryan via clear channel broadcasts for the first on-the-scene coverage of a criminal trial. Two movie cameramen had their film flown out daily in a small plane from a specially prepared airstrip.

The stage play *Inherit the Wind* (1955) by Lawrence and Lee, later adapted into a film in 1960 by Stanley Kramer, was based on this trial.

Interview with playwright Wendy Lill

Playwright and former parliamentarian, Wendy Lill has written for radio, magazines, film, and television. Her plays have been produced internationally, and across the country, from coast to coast to coast. Her work has resulted in two Actra Awards, a Golden Sheaf Award (for her film *Ikwe*), a Chalmers Award, a Gemini Award, and four nominations for the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama (*The Occupation of Heather Rose*, *All Fall Down*, *Glace Bay Miners' Museum*, and *Corker*). She is a co-founder of the Eastern Front Theatre Company in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (1993). Wendy was the Member of Parliament for Dartmouth from 1997 until 2004. Tarragon staff member Laurie Fyffe asked Wendy about her life as an MP and how that has influenced her playwriting.

Question: Someone once said to me, there are two kinds of people that go into politics. The people who want to make things happen, and those who want to prevent something from happening. Is that true?

WENDY: That's certainly one way of looking at it. I went into politics because I wanted to stop the cuts to the arts, and I wanted to stop the cuts to services for people with disabilities. Conversely I wanted to go there (Ottawa) to try to make a difference in those areas, speak out on those two fronts, which I did ad nauseam. Like George Fanning in this play.¹ I wanted to raise important ideas and push on those two fronts.

Q: What do you think is the single biggest personal challenge one faces when entering the political arena?

WENDY: I think the biggest personal challenge arises when you come that close to power. Real power. And when you see and become a part of the way decisions are made. It's a strange dance; the different sides of issues, the role the media plays. I did find that it was stunning to see, up close, how laws are made, how these very important issues are thrashed out at the national level. It really is the biggest stage in the country. There is a huge drama going on right there. And I'm not just talking about question period. The most interesting part was to see people trying to reach consensus in committees.

Q: Does the dance get in the way? That political dance for power.

WENDY: Well, that's what it is; it's not simple. Change happens, but it happens very slowly. I found it fascinating - tracking that.

Q: Did it change you? Did you become a more hopeful, or a less hopeful person?

WENDY: Oh, it didn't make me any more cynical. It really didn't.

Q: You already had your cynicism well in place?

WENDY: Oh no. No, I can honestly say that being in Ottawa for seven years did not make me more cynical as a person. I just felt that I got behind the curtain. I got a glimpse of how power operates.

Q: And you feel that power can be utilized, that there are ways to get things done?

¹ In *Chimera*, George Fanning, MP for White Cloud, played by actor **David Fox**, has a one-track agenda regarding the subject of stem cell research.

WENDY: Absolutely. It is a process that works. Oh, it's slow, it's one step forward, three-quarters back. But I don't know the alternative. And I do believe that artists have to speak out. That never ends. You may think: I've gone to the Hill, and I've made my plea about public broadcasting or about more money for the arts, but no, you haven't done your bit, you have to keep on. We all have to keep putting our concerns into the mix, because if we don't, they will fall off the agenda.

Q: So, here you are again, at the Tarragon, writing a play about politics. And one that deals with a very topical subject, stem cell research. Obviously you feel that there is a role for the playwright in the political process?

WENDY: Well, I didn't think I was going to write a play about politics. Oh, it was always going to take place in Ottawa, but I didn't think, "I'm going to leave this place and I'm going to write about it." I went to Ottawa and I was the playwright in the house, and people thought that was neat. There is a sense that that place wants to be inclusive – they think they are anyway. They want people from all different fields, they don't just want the lawyers, they want the artists and the hard rock miners. So, I spoke up for seven years about the arts, and when I left I thought, it's important for me to use what I've learned and point out the value of this place, because Parliament has a huge value. It's not just the rabble rousing and the vitriol of question period; Parliament is a hugely significant place – because it's a threshing floor of ideas. What I want from my play is to turn a mirror back on that place in a way that is respectful - and has depth to it.

Chimera Vocabulary

PMO: Prime Minister's Office

Bill C13: the Human Reproductive Technologies Act

A fictional bill mentioned throughout Chimera, modeled after Canada's own Bill C6.

Nepean: A town located next to Ottawa, Ontario; technically part of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton

Reproductive terminology:

In organisms that reproduce sexually, once a **sperm** fertilizes an **egg** cell, the result is a cell called the **zygote** that has all the DNA of two parents. Contained in the sperm and egg are **gametes** – reproductive cells containing half of the genetic material necessary to form a complete organism. During fertilization, male and female gametes fuse, producing a diploid (*i.e.*, containing paired chromosomes) **zygote**.

The **zygote** will begin to divide by mitosis to produce a multicellular organism. The result of this process is an **embryo**.

In animals, the development of the zygote into an embryo proceeds through specific stages. The blastula stage typically features a fluid-filled cavity, the blastocoel, surrounded by a sphere or sheet of cells, also called **blastomeres**.

Embryonic stem cells (ES cells) are stem cells derived from the inner cell mass of an early stage embryo known as a **blastocyst**. Human embryos reach the blastocyst stage 4-5 days after fertilisation, at which time they consist of 50-150 cells.

In vitro fertilization: a technique in which egg cells are fertilized by sperm outside the woman's womb. The process involves hormonally controlling the ovulatory process, removing ova (eggs) from the woman's ovaries and letting sperm fertilise them in a fluid medium. The fertilised egg (zygote) is then transferred to the patient's uterus with the intent to establish a successful pregnancy.

Autism: a neurodevelopmental disorder that manifests in delays of social interaction, language as used in social communication, or symbolic or imaginative play with onset prior to age 3 years.

Nanotechnology: the engineering of functional systems at the molecular scale. In its original sense, nanotechnology refers to the projected ability to construct items *from the bottom up*, using techniques and tools being developed today to make complete, highly advanced products.

“Designer Baby”: a colloquial term used in popular scientific and bioethics literature to specify a child whose hereditary makeup (genotype) would be, using various reproductive and genetic technologies, purposefully selected (“designed”) to be the optimal recombination of their parents' genetic material. The term is usually used pejoratively to signal opposition to such use of human biotechnologies.

Pollyanna: A children's book, *Pollyanna* tells the story of a young girl named Pollyanna Whittier who is adopted by her very wealthy Aunt Polly after her father's death. Upon Pollyanna's arrival, the dispirited town in which her aunt lives becomes miraculously pleasant and healthy due to the gladness the child has brought. Through the success of the book, the term "pollyanna" entered the language to describe someone who is cheerfully optimistic.

Flap: slang term for scandal

Wisdom of Solomon: In the Bible, God visits the newly crowned King Solomon in a dream, and offers him anything he pleases. Solomon asks for "an understanding heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil - for who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" Pleased with his non-materialistic wish, God tells him that not only will he receive a greater intellect than any other man who will ever live, but also great wealth, along with widespread fame and respect, "which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days".

Lesson Plans

A note to teachers:

This guide recognizes that teachers of various subjects may wish to approach their work with *Chimera* from various angles. The guide is designed to address the range of subject areas across the curriculum. Use the activities and exercises that are appropriate for your subject or discipline and your students' levels of comfort and interest. Modify the activities to reflect your strengths and the issues that you feel are pertinent. Although the listed coded expectations are specific to Dramatic Arts, you will find that the activities can be applied to other areas.

Ministry of Education Expectations

Below are some of the Ministry of Education expectations for Dramatic Arts, which are met by the activities in this guide.

CR1.01: Create the inner & outer life of a character, using a variety of strategies.

Th2.02: describe how movement & non-verbal communication can be used to portray character, to define relationships among characters, & to communicate dramatic tension.

CR2.03: create & present an original dramatic piece, choosing from a variety of dramatic forms & processes

CR1.04: reinterpret characters, using suggestions or notes provided by the director & peers, & demonstrating further insight into the characters in subsequent rehearsals & performances.

Pre-show Activity: Lesson One

The Information Question - Research and Report:

- 1) What is the formal process for making laws and decisions in the Canadian Parliament? (this can be done in flow chart form)
- 2) While there is a formal procedure, is there also an understanding among the students that “back room” procedures exist? This should be discussed and the merits and shortcomings debated.

The “How To” of Lawmaking:

This is a creative exercise which explains both the formal & informal aspects of decision lawmaking in Parliament. It may be done in writing or performance using all the characters involved in the process (Minister, Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Press, Lobbyists etc. (the interplay of the participants is most important)

For example:

- Each student represents one part of the process of making laws (either informal or formal – you can apply this activity to either).
- Each part speaks, acts, dances his/her part then the next takes over until the process has been explained.

As a precursor to this activity you might want to have the students listen to Bob Snider’s song How to Build a Fence from the album “Stealin’ Home”. Your students will know how to find this song on the net – Snider is a Canadian singer/songwriter on the East Coast but originally from Toronto – he went to Wm. Lyon McKenzie C.I. in the 60’s.

Pre-show Activity: Lesson Two

The Emotional Question: Tempo and Rhythm

Attached are scenes from *Chimera*. They can be played in different ways. In small groups (actors & director), have the students prepare the scenes either memorized or played with script in hand, present them & then discuss the choices they have made about how to play the scene. When the students come to see the play at the theatre, they will see the choices the actors & director made about these same scenes. Following their visit to the theatre, you may want to discuss the differences between the students' choices for the scenes & those of the actors.

How would you set up the scene on stage considering the characters are in different places?

Each of these scenes shows conflict & each moves the plot along.

Here are some tips about how to explore tempo in a scene.

- How fast should it be played? (What are the emotions of the characters at various moments in the scene)
- Where in the scene does the pace pick up or slow down & why?
- What kinds of emotion are at play in the scenes & how can the emotions be shown?
- What is the emotional status of each character (who has the upper hand at which time? How, when & why does this change?)

Pre-show Activity: Lesson Two – Scenes from *Chimera*

1/1 PRESS ROOM

ROY enters, disheveled, perhaps hung over, disorganized. He sits down, starts looking through a pile of papers on his desk.

ROY (mumbles to himself) So what's the story?

ROY starts flipping through a pile of press releases.

Improvements to the RCMP pension plan; how about a decent pension plan for the rest of us; MP, Winnipeg South - Curfews for teenagers, I could get behind that...

1/2 MINISTER'S OFFICE

DOYLE enters, checking mail, carrying reports. Good mood. The phone rings.

DOYLE Hey Leah. What's up. Vaccines. Really? Linked to ADD and ADHD? Leah, we've made a decision and now because of some crap flyer you're not going to get Victoria – I gotta go. PMO's on the other line. (switches lines) Hey Jay? (listens) You thought it was too bright? I thought it was rather bold...but in a good way...good bold. He wanted women Jay, that's the new mantra, and women like...

CLARE enters in a bold stylish suit, with detail of feathers. Drops a pile of materials onto Doyle's desk.

I'll call you later. (to CLARE) How was the tour?

CLARE I don't know a gamete from a blastomere. And I look like hell in a hairnet. Other than that, it was fine. Anything I need to know?

DOYLE You've got five minutes 'til Question Period.

CLARE Oh God!

DOYLE Just relax. Take a deep breath. Loosen your shoulder muscles. And smile. We've prepared answers on gun control, same sex marriage, RCMP pensions, progress of the new Human Rights legislation. That should cover it. (*hands her another page*) And here's a press release we're putting out to note the passage of Bill C-13 one year ago today.

CLARE I've got to get a handle on these acts.

DOYLE You will. Car's out front. Laura's waiting at Members' Entrance to go in with you. Remember lipstick. Powder your nose in the car. And smile. You are a Minister!

CLARE takes a deep breath, collects herself, smiles broadly.

CLARE heads out the door. DOYLE sighs, sits down at his desk, satisfied. He has got his Minister off to the House.

1/2a PRESS ROOM

ROY *(continues)* Ban transfats in....beer. That's going over the top. Finding birth parents, leave 'em buried....

ROY throws the pile down, checks watch and turns on his TV.

ROY It's show-time.

Post-show Activity: Lesson One

After viewing the play a list of characters is written on the board. Referring to this list, present the “Role on the Wall” assignment.

Role on the Wall

“Role on the Wall” (so called because of the large image of a “gingerbread man” placed on the board or on the wall) is a way of exploring your students’ perceptions of the physical and emotional aspects of a character.

The shape of a “gingerbread man” is used as the template (see next page). The figure is drawn on experience chart paper, kraft paper or in chalk or marker on a black/white board. It is valuable to draw the figure as large as possible so that it can be seen easily from the around the classroom.

Part One:

- Around the outside of the outline of the figure, students write words which represent their impression of what the character looks like.
- On the inside space of the gingerbread man, students list words describing the character’s emotions, personality traits, fears, hopes, cares, secret longings etc.

This activity may be done individually or in small groups.

You may use any of the characters in the play as the subject of this activity.

Once the work is completed, groups should be able to talk to each other about their choices & the various perceptions of the characters.

You may wish to put the “Role on the Wall” figures up on a bulletin board or around the room as a gallery for the students to roam & view.

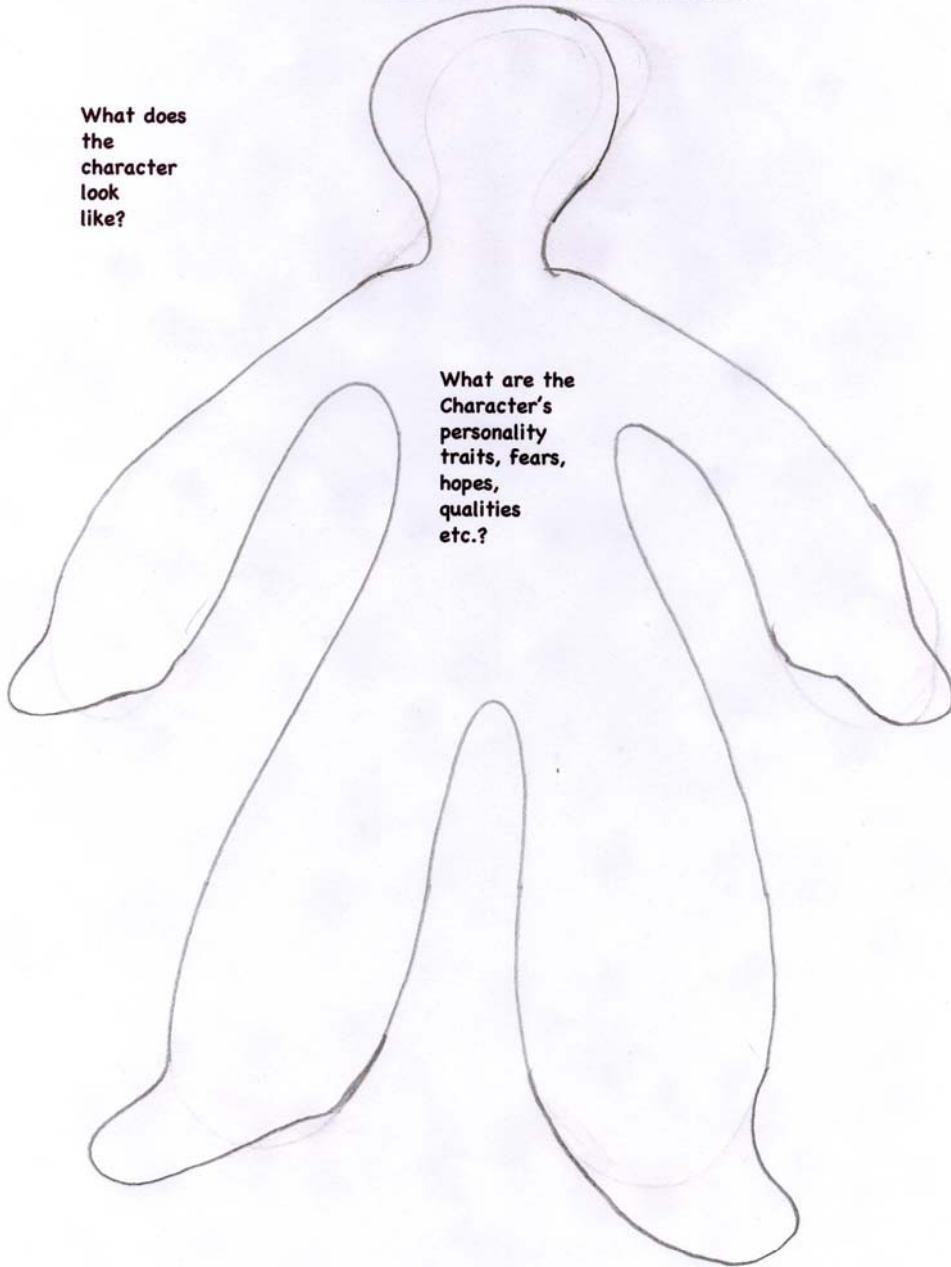
Part Two:

- A note book sized “role on the wall” figure (on next page) should be photocopied & distributed to individual students OR you may have students draw their own figure in their notebooks
- Students create “Role on the Wall” about themselves. This will be a private piece which they need not present or discuss with anyone should they so choose.

"Role on the Wall"

What does
the
character
look
like?

What are the
Character's
personality
traits, fears,
hopes,
qualities
etc.?



Post-show Activity: Lesson Two

Reflection: Ethical Concerns

As a class:

- Let's first define Ethics. Before going to a dictionary, a class discussion about what this means will be valuable.
- Then let's provide some examples from your students' lives and from the play.

Individually or in small groups:

- Are there ethical issues in the lives of your students that can be explored and discussed?

You may want to start with a statement as a stance on an ethical issue and have a discussion about the statement. Such as:

Students should be able to assign their own marks.

OR

Stem Cell research is too important to be left to politicians.

Reflective work:

Students write, draw, dance, prepare a scene or script concerning an ethical issue that is important to them. Students who wish to may present their ethical concerns to the class for discussion. (You may want to encourage your students to write scenes or plays about their ethical concerns. If your students decide to write scenes or plays about their ethical concerns, we'd be glad to take a look at the scripts)