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Bryce Courtenay's *The Power of One*: An Examination of Democratic and Other Political Values as Depicted in Literature

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Overview

This unit addresses forms of government in the past and present in America and elsewhere utilizing Bryce Courtenay's *The Power of One*, acknowledged as the classic novel of South Africa. This six-week unit is designed for twelfth grade scholars. In the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the scholars are students who do not qualify for the gifted (CAS—Center for Advanced Studies) program but who are academically advanced and motivated. Class size is between 22 and 28 students on average with a fairly even distribution of males and females. Often, a scholars' class in my school will be made up of 16—18 white students and 6—10 Asian or African American students. The total school population is 1450—1500 students with about 57% white and 43% other. In my high school there may be 3—5 sections each of Mainstream, Scholars, and CAS English per grade level. Allderdice also offers AP English 3 for juniors and AP English 4 for seniors. Those students may be CAS or may gain entrance through teacher recommendation. Classes meet daily for 43 minutes. Suggestions for adapting this unit to other high school grade levels are included in **Appendix F**.

In the Pittsburgh Public Schools' 12th grade curriculum, students study the effects of race and class in Bryce Courtenay's *The Power of One*. The role of democracy and other forms of government is evident in the literature read in English classes, so why not approach the stories, novels, plays, and memoirs from that angle? A unit on *The Power of One* can be studied through an examination of the kind of government the characters live under and its comparison to democracy. Students do not always think about the interrelationship of the disciplines they study and directing their attention to the relationship between art and life may come as a surprise learning experience.

To further this goal, teachers could plan to teach literature that aligns with the social studies content so that the students can experience the intertwining of the content areas. The emphasis should be on what kinds of governments people live under and how these governments affect their lives. Therein lies the research. The actual unit could be tailored to fit any literary work in the existing curriculum. The plan on *The Power of One* is scheduled for 35 class periods (43 minutes long) and includes time for a project and viewing the film version. If you have time restrictions, suggestions for eliminating some of the activities are included.

Rationale

The high school English teacher is expected to work miracles. She teaches grammar, punctuation, syntax, spelling, sentence construction, and essay writing. She lectures on works of literature and engages students in discussion about that literature. Her class period is the one picked for school pictures because everybody takes English. Students bring assignments from other classes to have her proofread before turning them in. She is asked to read college applications, job applications, and scholarship applications. In short (or not so short), the English teacher is supposed to be able to do just about everything.

Objectives/Strategies

The student will be able to: understand and explain major forms of government, make value judgments about forms of government, identify conflicts created by specific forms of government, understand the idea and practice of democracy in the past and present, understand the immutability of human nature and how human conflict is repeated throughout the generations, and understand the role of literature in understanding all of the above. In order to create tomorrow's valuable citizens, today's students must be made to understand the society in which they live, how it came about, why, and what is important to maintain it or improve it in the future. Studying ideas through a story grammar uses the story as a context in which concepts can be set to make the process easier for students. In the context of a narrative, students can relate to the characters and link what they are reading to their own prior knowledge in what educators commonly refer to as reader-text interaction. Instructing students through teaching them what is *not* democracy as well as what is provides contrast to help them understand the concept.

Anticipatory Set

Before beginning a study of the novel, *The Power of One*, students should be made aware of the different forms of government that exist in the present as well as in the past. Begin by asking the students if they can define democracy. After discussing their ideas of the definition, present the chart (see **Appendix B**) describing the forms of government and point out that many countries function with a combination of these forms. Students will wonder why they're discussing this in English class and that will segue into a discussion on human nature and why we read what we read in English class.

Students will often complain about reading anything that isn't recognizable to them as pertaining directly to their lives. Pointing out that an examination of history is valuable in order to understand life is not always easy. It is important to pick out the elements of human nature that the students can readily discern as relevant. These include: desire for power, falling in love, feeling envious of others' possessions and station in society, and wanting to understand their place in the general scheme of things. Depending on the grade level and sophistication of the students, point out that people still fall in love, fight over land and rights, and wonder why they exist. It is my hope that this will ignite a discussion about any or all of the above.

Finally, considering how literature and our studies help to build an understanding of our perception of the world will help the students to grasp the importance of reading literature, particularly about a time and place with which they are unfamiliar.

Introductory Material

Democracy(*dl ma' krU si*)

—government by the people, in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.

Throughout history, man has struggled with governing himself and his civilizations. Around 380 BCE, Plato penned his *Republic* in which he discussed the many facets of government. John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* explores the definition of liberty in 19th century Britain, while *The Federalist Papers*, published anonymously beginning in October of 1787 and later acknowledged by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, explain the Constitution thoroughly to the citizens. The mid-nineteenth century brought Alexis de Tocqueville from France to record his outsider's view of American government in *Democracy in America*. Modern thinkers have also contributed to the library of material on democracy adding probing discussions on new topics as they arise, such as Ian Shapiro's *Democracy's Place*, and his book on the death tax, *Death By a Thousand Cuts* with Michael J. Graetz.

As long as there is government there will be changes, discussions, and improvements or changes to the detriment of the system. As each generation comes to adulthood, the laws governing the society in which it exists will come under scrutiny. Laws which were once valid and necessary may be repealed or abolished while the need for new legislation will arise. The combination of forms of government allows a society to function in its best interests. The chart in **Appendix B** shows that the pure definitions describe only a component of any given government. as most governments are a hybrid of two or more of these defined governments. Beginning with these definitions, students can classify how their own country is run as well as the other major international powers. The earliest governments were formed when a group of people realized the need to regulate and control goods and services. Ancient civilizations were centered on meeting the basic human needs of providing food, shelter, and clothing. Of all the needs, water was the essential one, and while governments could not make it rain, they could monitor use of water and take steps to preserve existing supplies through construction of dams and underground storage systems which prevented evaporation.

As needs arose in societies, the role of government expanded. Societies need to defend their living spaces and resources and may wish to establish trade with other people. This all seems simplistic, but if one would imagine what it would be like to be completely dependent on what a small group of people could gather, grow, invent, and construct it makes sense to imagine that there is another group that has something you don't have and that you have an abundance of something they don't have that can be traded.

There is a wealth of material on politics and political history from which to draw in order to construct a study of how different governments are structured and run. For the English teacher, it may be helpful to review some of these before trying to explain them to the students. In my experience, students always come up with questions I haven't anticipated, and the more I have read on the subject in advance, the better. The resources

I explored in preparing to write this unit were assigned as part of a seminar at the Yale National Initiative. All the books and articles are included in the bibliography with annotations for the teacher who wishes to read more about it.

Narrative

Think about your students and how they see themselves, their lives, and their world. Then begin the study of this unit—the beginning of the school year—with the questions below, stopping to listen to your students' answers and let the discussion follow its own path.

What do people want? Do you want to be happy? What will it take? Is security happiness—not worrying about food, shelter, bills, etc.? How do you plan for this? Do you expect to work or do you have another plan—illegal gains or being supported by others? Let's consider freedom: how important is freedom to you? Is the most important thing? Is it more important than your family? Is freedom vital to a happy life? What must you do to achieve this? Is there a minimum you must do? If you have to accumulate a limited amount of information, will you stop there? What about the benefits of having additional info. Who plays basketball? Do you stop at knowing just enough plays, warming up just enough, or do you realize the benefit of more than just enough? When is more too much? Can you exercise too much, eat too much, learn too much? How do we know how much is enough?

What is school for? What are schools preparing you for? You study math, science, social studies, and literature—why? Are you going to be a scientist or a history professor? Why are these subjects our core subjects? They are interrelated, as are art, music, movement, and anything else you can think of. And so are all of us and the rest of the world. Some people live in a bubble, thinking, *If I can't see it, then it doesn't affect me*. Do you feel that way? Do you think that what happens on the other side of the world doesn't affect you? Does the condition of the ozone layer over Australia seem insignificant to you? Do you care about the rain forests in South America? How about hunger in underdeveloped nations? What is your purpose on earth and why do you think this? How do you learn new things about the world? Is it through math? Or science? Or YouTube? You must remember that your brain is not a computer and you won't run out of memory. You can continue to learn about all kinds of different things, and this knowledge will enable you to gain a broader perspective of the world, yourself, and how we all fit into life on earth. For some of us, learning about the world through a story is the first and easiest way to communicate information. Do we, as American citizens, have freedom? What about your freedom as students? Are there other places you go where your freedom is limited? How important is this?

After you finish this discussion it's time to move to the novel at hand. How does Bryce Courtenay's *The Power of One* fit into a study of democracy in America? As part of the senior English curriculum in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, students are exposed to literature that is diverse and multicultural. Using *The Power of One* to explore a government and its effect on a specific society in a particular time and place provides a contrast to what American students have experienced in their own lives. Students have studied Elie Wiesel's *Night*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* in their first three high school years, these works illustrating various injustices. Now, in their senior year, they will be able to tackle the Classic Novel of South Africa and will gain more from it having read the earlier works. On beginning the study of a book like

The Power of One, it is valuable to begin with some basics. First, the book is considered a *bildungsroman*, or coming-of-age novel. This has become popular in school curricula recently. Novels of this type are considered important for teenagers to study as they are going through their own adolescent struggles and identity searches.

The novel is divided into three Books as follows: Book 1—15 chapters in 276 pages, Book 2—7 chapters in 152 pages, and Book Three with just 2 chapters in 52 pages. The daily lessons are roughly one chapter per day with 2 chapters scheduled for a few of the days. There are three essay tests on specific chapters and a final essay assessment on the entire book. Also included are three video viewing worksheets and a printable bookmark with the chapter numbers and the starting pages for each and a glossary.

The first test of a well-written book is to examine the first paragraph. The opening of a book must not only grab the reader's attention, it must signal the intent and scope of the entire novel; that is, if it is a worthy book. Courtenay displays this skill with the opening of *The Power of One*: "This is what happened." ¹ Immediately, the reader knows that there will be a retelling of events. The structure follows the Stasis-Instability-New Stasis model. ² Courtenay then plunges us into the comfort of "a pair of huge, soft black breasts," ³ the Stasis point of the novel. To understand the changes a character encounters, it is first vital to understand what was normal before introducing the disruption, or Instability that makes up the conflict of the story. Following this unstable period, the protagonist is either successful or unsuccessful; either way, a New Stasis has been realized. Following the introductory lecture on democracy on Day One, your discussion of Chapter 1 should include the material below.

After the safe and nurturing early childhood of our narrator (Stasis) comes the beginning of the trouble (Instability). Due to his mother's nervous breakdown, the five-year-old boy is sent to a boarding school where he is two years younger than the youngest class of students. Adding to the burden is his status as an English boy, a *rooinek*, the only one in the Afrikaner school. Our hero now experiences a complete tyranny led by a bully known as the Judge. The Boer students torture the child as only children can, forcing him to kneel in the shower while they all pee on him. He creeps back to his bed, stinking: "As I had never seen a shower, I had no idea how to turn one on." ⁴ However, the humor comes through the pain. When he is marched back to the shower in the morning by the headmistress he fears for his life: "If she pisses on me I will surely drown." ⁵ To his horror, the water that rains down on him is icy and he believes that it is death. It is worse than death, though, he lives, and it is the Judge and his followers who dub the boy "Pisskop" and ridicule him for being circumcised. This shames him and places another barrier between him and his Afrikaner classmates. To survive the cruelty of his situation, "Pisskop" decides he must adapt; he forgoes crying and tries to remain invisible, but the result of this trauma makes him into a bed wetter. The Judge is a forerunner of Adolf Hitler with his determination to rid his school of the English boy and return the racial purity of the Afrikaners. Through intimidation, the Judge neatly uses his status as a bigger boy with the support of the other older boys to terrify the five-year-old English boy. In this case, though, the Judge did not conquer; his torture of Pisskop only made the boy grow stronger. If absolute power corrupts absolutely, then the Judge is a true example of cruelty inflicted on the minority in his treatment of Peekay. This is further magnified when Peekay sees how the whites in charge treat the blacks who are subordinate to them.

The close of the school year returns our hero to his beloved Nanny who listens to his tale of torture and who introduces the first flavor of Africa to the western reader; she summons the great Inkosi-Inkosikazi, a medicine man who will cure the boy of the "night water." Nanny tells the boy's story with all the eloquence of the great storytellers while Inkosi-Inkosikazi and the others listen. Even our hero is in awe: "I can tell you one thing, I

was mighty impressed that any person, most of all me, could go through such a harrowing experience." ⁶ All is set for the night; the chickens have been put through their magic, our hero has had his sweet potato, and it is time for him to meet Inkosi-Inkosikazi in his dreams. When this happens, our hero is shown a quiet place to which he can return in times of trouble. He does this later in the book when he feels a crisis. In the morning, the night water problem has been solved and Inkosi-Inkosikazi presents the boy with the scrawniest of the chickens. He is named Granpa Chook.

This chapter is significant for several reasons. As an introduction to the *bildungsroman* style, our hero is situated in a time and a place. His early tribulations are addressed and he is given weapons to deal with them. His ability to think things over is revealed, and the chapter ends with one hurdle overcome and the boy set to begin another year at boarding school. This time, though, he has the magic of Inkosi-Inkosikazi and Granpa Chook, "the first living creature over which I had held power." ⁷ He is learning that there are ways to cope with injustice. Just as he had decided to remain invisible, our hero learns that there is strength inside of him and that he can summon that strength when needed. He is able to find ways to survive the Judge and other oppressors. This gives hope to any reader who has felt himself the underdog. As the novel progresses, our hero's ability to rise to the surface despite how different he is to his companions tells the reader that we are all unique and that the power of each one can overcome daunting odds.

The above material should serve as the basis for one class discussion. For each chapter, the teacher should examine what is essential to fuel the discussion. This next portion of the narrative will concentrate on the transitional points in Peekay's development and the instances in which politics affect his life and environment.

The remainder of the first section of Book 1, which will be evaluated through a written assessment (see **Appendix C**) takes Peekay on a journey to his new home in Barberton. Peekay finishes his time at boarding school where he learns to adapt to the Judge and his "storm troopers" by doing the Judge's homework in hopes that the older boy will graduate and be out of his life. The Judge has carved a crude swastika on his arm. He agrees to allow Pisskop and Granpa Chook live until he passes math and then says Hitler will surely deal with them and they will be dead meat. This plan is altered when Pisskop refuses to eat the turds the Judge forces into his hands and Granpa Chook defecates in the howling Judge's mouth. He and the storm troopers beat the bird to death, leaving our hero to bury and mourn his only companion.

The school term ends, the Judge departs, and Mevrou, who, interestingly, also addresses our hero as Pisskop, prepares him for the journey to his new home by brusquely informing him that he will take the train alone. Free from the Judge, yet mourning the loss of Granpa Chook, they set out. When they meet Harry Crown, the Jew who sells them tackies, the man is appalled at the boy's name and suggests "Peekay" which our hero gratefully accepts. Thus far, Peekay has been loved by his Zulu nanny, despised by his Afrikaner schoolmates and subjected to the cruelties of budding Nazis, and treated kindly by a Jewish storekeeper. The next step involves Mevrou's emotionless parting from the boy when she consigns him to the care of the railway. Then Peekay meets Hoppie Groenewald with whom he travels and who treats him as an individual and a friend. "Hoppie Groenewald was to prove to be a passing mentor who would set the next seventeen years of my life on an irrevocable course. He would do so in little more than a day and a night." ⁸ He introduces Peekay to boxing and brings him to his match where the boy is put under the care of Big Hettie, an aging, overweight Irish woman who literally kills herself with food. She is the subject of her own drama which unfolds in the following chapter. Peekay learns from Hoppie that he is a worthwhile person. He learns that there is a goal in each life and to reach that goal one must focus. The most important piece of information he learns, though, is that the power of one can conquer. The child's mind takes in this crucial information along with his heart's response to the genuine kindness of the first person who seems to care about him since Nanny. To his dismay,

he awakens the morning after the fight to find a note from Hoppie who has left the train. It contains the advice, "first with the head, then with the heart,"⁹ which Peekay follows in all his future endeavors.

This section of Peekay's journey allows characters from several different backgrounds to make their impressions on the boy. The threat of Hitler is somewhat removed, but the marked inequality in the way different groups of people are treated unfolds. From Peekay's embarrassment at Hoppie Groenewald seeing his circumcised penis and fearing that he will despise him because he is English, to hearing the beautiful Indian lady with the diamond in her tooth referred to as a "coolie," Peekay is constantly made aware that people in this society are unrelenting in their notion of social hierarchy. This baffles the boy who sees everyone as the same.

But how did he become the egalitarian child who grew into the freedom fighter? His beginnings show him with a bland and ineffectual mother who has a nervous breakdown and is essentially removed from his life. His nanny is the most important person in his small world. Granpa is kindly but vague. These conditions could account for the boy's acceptance of the blacks in his world, but how does it come about that he also accepts the other disdained groups? While he fears the Judge and his henchmen, he does not profess to despise all other Afrikaners. He takes to Harry Crown and is fascinated by the Indian woman. The key to this acceptance is in his nature as a person and his early experiences.

At school he is made into the outcast. For no reason other than his heritage, the boy is punished, humiliated, and threatened with death. He is bewildered, not understanding why he has been singled out this way, yet he does not see his treatment as an injustice in the beginning. His reaction is to try to blend in and remain impervious to the tortures with which he lives. The result of forcing this under the surface is that he becomes a bed wetter. The interesting point here is the cure; Nanny sets out to cure the boy in the only way she knows how. The acceptance into her culture without question or prejudice enlarges the boy's capacity to understand that all humans are part of the same whole. He communes with Inkosi-Inkosikazi in his dream and is linked to the older man's culture.

This early understanding of the interconnection between all people is what allows the boy to incorporate anyone he meets into his world, his space, and his family. The people who do not fit well are individuals who have strayed from the whole, those such as the Judge and Lt. Borman. These people must be dealt with but they are not representative of their entire race and do not engender hatred from Peekay as such; he can discern them as blotches on the whole of humanity and deal with them appropriately. This maturity is what all intelligent people strive for, hoping to assess an individual and his actions and not mistake the work of one person as representative of an entire race or ethnic group.

Peekay seems to exude the feeling of common brotherhood without consciously striving to communicate it, unlike Pastor Mulvery, who is portrayed as being as sincere as he is intellectually able, yet projecting all of his acquired ideals and dogma in a sickeningly conscious manner. Peekay reflects the world around him. He is everyman and everyman is his brother. Through his actions, Peekay speaks to the world around him and those who inhabit it answer him in kind.

Throughout the book there are subtle distinctions between the competing Afrikaners and the English, referred to by the Judge as the "verdomde roineks," or "damned rednecks." Characters toss off ethnic references and racial epithets as a matter of everyday speech, such as, "I will tell Hoppie Groenewald you behaved like a proper Boer, a real white man,"¹⁰ and ". . . my mother was always getting splitting headaches because she was a white woman and like Nanny said, it was a very hard thing to be."¹¹ Peekay is essentially colorblind. To

him, his Nanny is the most important person in the world. His mother is simply the woman who gave birth to him. Without a father, his grandfather is an absent-minded, distant personage who has little influence on the boy's life. All the figures in Peekay's life at this point, save the Judge, are adults, and it matters little whether they are Zulu, Shangaan, Afrikaner, Jewish, Indian, or "verdomde rooinek." To Peekay they are all people, each one an entity to examine and understand; sometimes to fear and sometimes to love. The combination of a child's point of view with the adult narrator's reflection on these memories frames the picture for the reader, creating a universal point of view for global readers of all ages.

After the disappointment of finding his mother under the religious spell of Pastor Mulvery, Peekay discovers that Nanny has been sent back to Zululand because she would not forsake her beliefs for the Christian religion. Peekay's life would have been unbearably bleak if he hadn't met Doc. Chapter Nine brings a breath of hope, both intellectual and aesthetic, into Peekay's life. Instead of remaining in the stifling company of his mother and Pastor Mulvery with the "escaping teeth," Peekay has found a mind and heart to nurture his own. His loneliness birds are at bay, and he realizes, at age six, that one can be alone but not lonely. In this part of the book, organized Christianity is portrayed as something to be avoided. None of the characters who embrace the Apostolic Faith Mission seems to be very bright. The whole question of what happens in heaven is almost funny, except that the only response to the little white girl's query about whether the blacks will still work for the whites is for Pastor Mulvery to tell her that nobody works in heaven. He sidesteps the entire issue of equality and leans toward the "separate but equal" stance held in the United States. Doc, in contrast, who is a German citizen and therefore perceived as a threat to society, is the most spiritual character in the book; it is he who unwraps the beauty of the natural world for Peekay. In Courtenay's world, those interested in war and politics are definitely less valuable than those who embrace nature.

In the second half of Book 1, Peekay grows from age 6 to 12. His relationship with Doc is the longest and most fruitful of any of his mentors. World War II begins and Doc is imprisoned for being an unregistered German. The injustice spreads as Peekay tries to intervene and is kicked in the jaw and touted as a hero who brought down a suspected traitor. When he comes to in the hospital, his broken jaw wired shut, Peekay is appalled at the report and relies on Mrs. Boxall, his friend and the town librarian, to sort it out and vindicate him. Peekay's observation of the treatment of the prisoners and the racial prejudice of the prison officials only strengthens his feelings of the necessity for equal rights and education for everyone. He does not think of himself as English; he is South African. Doc accepts his internment graciously, as he is allowed full freedom of movement in the prison and is allowed to have a cactus garden. There is a hierarchy among the prisoners as well. In every collection of humans who must coexist at close quarters there will be some order that emerges or that is imposed. Think of *Lord of the Flies* or *The Admirable Crichton*. Power struggles exist among any group of people. Seeing the power that Peekay attains without his seeking it points to the power inside him; the power of one person to make a change. This reinforces the notion that the one who should be held as an example is the one who does not seek power. This is more clearly illustrated in later chapters.

The character of Geel Piet could fill an entire book. His relevance to the theme of Peekay's story lies in his role as a symbol of the downtrodden, poor bastard. He has lived a life of crime, but he is not all bad. He has learned to function within the system to accept what he cannot change. His legacy is: Peekay's success, the eight-punch combination, and the music that Doc dedicated to him.

Peekay's boxing progresses, his musical abilities, although not masterful, proceed, and his academic career flourishes, due largely to his tutoring by Doc, Mrs. Boxall, and extra help from his teacher, Miss Bornstein, on whom he develops a crush. By the end of Book 1, Peekay has realized the enormity of the inequality of his country. His comprehension has grown from his early fear of Hitler coming to kill him and Granpa Chook to a

resolve to continue to fight racial hatred and promote equality for all.

The circle of Peekay's acquaintance is widening and providing a wider scope from which he can view injustice in his environment. His status as the Tadpole Angel, the Onoshobishobi Ingelosi, which makes him someone special, universal, is heightened in this section and marks him as belonging to more than just one people. Geel Piet explains that the people call him this because Doc is known as the frog and Peekay is the small version of Doc. The people accept Peekay as their angel; someone who embodies the feelings and desires of all people. Peekay is not just the hero of his own story but has become a symbol of something greater; he is the inspiration and hope of freedom and equality to all the people. By the end of Book 1 Peekay has grown as a boxer, musician, cactus gardener, and humanitarian. He speaks the languages of the different groups of people in his life; enabling him to translate and to adapt translations for a greater understanding. When he conducts the tribes at the concert he is leading them in song but also in heart. He accepts this role with humility, as the chosen symbol by the People. With Geel Piet's death he has won and lost and learned to live on. He has learned that it is more important to live a short, free life than a long, enslaved one. The reader is confident of his success, but that's not the most important thing; what really matters is how he gets there and who he meets along the way. Part of the message is that whether a person wins or loses, how he plays the game is the interesting part. Contrast Geel Piet's life to Peekay's and decide which one was more successful and why? This is the lesson to all of us; the power of one can be the power to change one thing, or one person at a time. Geel Piet benefited many of his fellow prisoners with his black market. He was a superb boxing coach to Peekay, his loyalty to the boy resulting in his own death.

Peekay arrives at his second boarding school prepared: he has been schooled by Doc, Mrs. Boxall, and Miss Bornstein, trained by Geel Piet, and everyone, from Mr. Isaac Bornstein to Marie, has contributed to his necessary school wardrobe. Morrie Levy is the first person he meets upon arrival at the train station. Morrie revels in his status as the token Jew, never, for a moment, letting anyone forget that he's Jewish or that his dad pulled strings to get him into Prince of Wales School. He spots Peekay as a fellow oddball and strikes up a friendship. Peekay is destined to be the friend of the friendless, champion of the underdog, the one able to see beyond outward differences in people.

Before long, Morrie and Peekay have become a team in which Morrie handles the business and Peekay produces the goods, namely, wins in the boxing ring. While both boys excel in their studies, Peekay has his eyes on the prize of becoming the welterweight champion of South Africa. Morrie has a different agenda; to make his own money. He also wants to help Peekay so they can go to Oxford together but rather than accept a handout from the Levy's, Peekay is determined to make his own way.

Through the story of Peekay's boxing career at school, another moral lesson is addressed. The other schools are all Afrikaner schools, while Prince of Wales is the only English school. Before Peekay came, boxing was a minor sport at the school and was all but dead. Peekay's presence breathes new life into the sport and the squad grows and begins to win. Peekay's fans from his Barberton days, referred to as the People, find him and support him. While they sing and chant prior to the matches, the black fans remain absolutely silent throughout the match so that they will not be made to leave. Morrie even persuades the coach to set Peekay's fight earlier in the lineup so that the People can see it and still get home before curfew. Peekay is admired by the Afrikaner boxers he defeats, he is revered by the People, and he is a champion and savior to the English boys from his own school. He has become a man for all people. When Peekay begins to notice the best cuts of meat at his table, his clothes washed, ironed, and mended, and all his chores completed for him he knows that each of the People has acted individually, doing what he deemed appropriate. There is an old saying that a person makes his own good luck. Peekay, in treating everyone equally, from speaking to the servants in their

own languages to generally putting himself on a par with everyone, made his own luck with his unwitting cultivation of unspoken brotherhood with everyone around him.

Another stage in Peekay's development has to do with Doc's advancing age. While we all know that our elders are expected to pass on before we do, losing a mentor is never a comfortable thought. They set out on an overnight trip to find the crystal cave, an almost magical place where Doc tells Peekay it would be just the place to spend eternity; to become crystalline within the cave. Peekay, alarmed at this, says nothing. On his next trip home he thinks Doc looks ill and expresses his terror at the idea of his death. Doc assures him that he is fine; he will be 87 soon. Peekay says he must live until the welterweight championship is won—at least until Doc reaches 94 or 95. This is the child in Peekay talking, putting off thinking of the death our loved ones.

In 1948, Princess Elizabeth came to South Africa. Peekay notes, in his wry way, that a new game occurred along with the new government dominated by the Afrikaner party. In this game, black South Africans "voluntarily fell on their heads from the third story of police headquarters to the pavement below. It was curious that the whites, renowned for their sporting prowess, never learned how to play this game, and there isn't a single instance of a white South African becoming proficient at it." ¹² Students may pick up on the meaning of this, but it will be worthwhile to explore this statement to ascertain their level of interpretation.

Peekay breaks new ground with the boxing match in which he fights Gideon Madoma, a Zulu boxer. When they meet, Peekay speaks to him in Zulu and discovers that he is the son of his Nanny, who, Gideon tells him, passed away five years earlier. The fight is a stunning win for Peekay. Gideon holds up Peekay's hand as the winner and the Onoshobishobi Ingelosi. Peekay says that they are brothers, suckled by the same breast. Suddenly, Peekay feels an overwhelming sadness, feeling that Doc is dead. He receives a message that Doc has disappeared and he knows that he has returned to crystal cave.

While pretending to help the search parties, Peekay harbors the secret of the crystal cave, traveling there alone to receive Doc's last message. In it, Doc tells Peekay that he has been his greatest friend and that Peekay must not return to the crystal cave until it is his time. He says that perhaps they will meet again in a hundred thousand years. Peekay's childhood has now come to an end. With the news of Nanny's death and the passing of Doc, Peekay must forge ahead alone. While he has many helpers along the way, he is now leading the way for himself.

Book 3 shows Peekay going it alone, refusing the help of Morrie's family and determined to earn his way to Oxford. He trains for a dangerous mining job and works longer than most. He makes a good friend in the Russian Rasputin, who speaks little English. They enjoy food, music, and chess together, and when Peekay finally does have an accident, it is Rasputin who rescues him, at the cost of his own life. In a stunning revelation at the end of the book, Peekay discovers that the top miner he had been working for all these months is the Judge. Peekay recognizes the swastika tattoo on the drunken Botha and confronts him. "Jaapie Botha, come! Come man, come! I have been waiting for you for most of my life." ¹³ His rage surfaces, raw from Rasputin's death, and he savagely beats Botha until he is unconscious. He then carves a Union Jack and "PK" over the swastika tattoo. He cannot contain his fury when confronting his tormentor and cannot help but blurt out, "You killed Granpa Chook!" ¹⁴ The child's grief spills out of him and is purged by his revenge on his own enemy. "There was nothing more to say. The slate was wiped clean. The hate was gone. Poor bastard." ¹⁵ He walks away feeling that the loneliness birds have vanished forever, and knowing that the power of one is strong.

In a true democracy every citizen has a voice. People like Geel Piet would have the same single vote that the

richest and most powerful man in the community. Peekay's rise to fame shows that an individual can emerge from obscurity and prove himself. While he did this in a government that did not afford the same opportunity to its black citizens, it shows the possibility of a minority, an English boy, rising to the top of his game. It's a start, and Peekay determined to use his fame to shine light on the other oppressed citizens, using boxing to integrate and declare himself an equal and brother to his Zulu opponent.

Peekay became a focal point for so many others; from Doc to Mrs. Boxall, the Bornsteins, Marie, Morrie, and even Rasputin; all gained something from knowing him and this is what the reader should learn. We all give to the others with whom we interact and that is the essence of our time on earth. Whether we do it in a big way and become Onoshobihosi Ingelosi, or we humbly clean the boots of someone great, we are all integrated in our earthly existence. Peekay's tale of emergence from the anonymity of the despised outsider to the leader of many groups of people gives hope to anyone who has felt low or worthless, or who thinks he or she is not contributing to the easing of human suffering. This is the triumph of the book and the lesson to the students and to us all.

The Film

John G. Avildsen's 1992 screen realization of the novel poses an interesting set of questions about translating literature to the screen. Among the most disturbing differences between the book and the film are the number of characters that have been relegated to brief appearances or eliminated altogether. Peekay's family, consisting of his mother and grandfather, are quickly disposed of. Mother dies and Granpa appears only briefly as a nondescript guardian. The roles of Mevrouw, Harry Crown, Big Hettie, Pastor Mulvery, Dee and Dum, Mrs. Boxall, Miss Bornstein, and Rasputin do not exist. Instead of meeting Peekay on the train and changing his life forever, Hoppie Gruenewald is introduced later in the story as a substitute for Solly Goldman. Morrie Levy, whose identity as a token Jew was central to his character in the book, becomes Morrie Guilbert whose uncle is a Christian vicar. Gideon's role is enlarged, and Peekay is given a love interest in the character of Maria. After the prison concert and the end of the war, Doc goes back to Germany. How, the reader may ask, does Peekay's story survive with these radical changes? This is more than simply omitting events that would make the movie too long. What, then, was the rationale? The reader (or viewer) can only guess, but the conclusion should lead to the preservation of the theme of the book, the goal of the story. This, the film accomplishes.

To begin, the music sets the tone for the film with a score by Hans Zimmer and additional songs and music by Johnny Clegg and Lebo M. Blending traditional African themes with effective underscoring, the music couches the story, providing part of the framework that is completed by the landscape cinematography by director of photography Dean Semler. Guy Witcher is absolutely enchanting as Peekay. His treatment by the Judge in the shower seems minor, though, compared to the trauma our hero suffered in the book. The killing of his pet is brutal, but the creature was fat enough to be Sunday dinner and did not seem like the scrawny chicken called Granpa Chook.

Morgan Freeman is a compelling presence. His portrayal of Geel Piet was entirely believable even though he didn't match Courtenay's physical description. Freeman is much better-looking than Geel Piet, and not nearly so frail. While his appearance was brief, it was dynamic, and the decision for him to die in Peekay's arms rather than be found dead by him is dramatically sound, uttering the words, "A free man."

I was skeptical about the inclusion of a love interest and saw it as a necessary evil to sell the story to audiences, but after seeing how the relationship was handled I accepted it. The character of Maria Marais satisfied the portion of Peekay's road to adulthood that the book dealt with by describing the boys' chagrin at their emerging sexuality and Peekay's adolescent crush on Miss Bornstein. To further validate this deviation from the original story, the filmmakers made Maria into part of the political contrast in the book, making her father a prominent Afrikaner professor whose writings support total apartheid. As a privileged Afrikaner schoolgirl and a descendant of the early Dutch settlers, Maria is the antithesis of everything that Peekay stands for, and through her association with him she learns that there is more to her country than private school and her father's beliefs. Sacrificing her life to save Peekay's advances the cause of freedom. This event is magnified by its perpetrator being Sgt. Botha, who was responsible for closing down Hoppie's gym, beating Gideon until he blinded him in one eye, and threatening Peekay by threatening that he wasn't finished with him or that Marais girl. It was his doing that the Saturday school Peekay and Morrie started at their school had to be closed. This led to the removal of the school to Morrie's uncle's church where Botha raids it and Maria is accidentally killed. In a meeting in the headmaster's office Peekay recognizes Sgt. Botha as the Judge because of the crude, self-inflicted swastika tattoo.

Instead of Peekay working in the mines and meeting his nemesis there, a riot breaks out where Gideon lives and where they have moved the school after Maria's death, and Gideon steps in to save Peekay when Sgt. Botha is about to shoot him. In Maria's memory, and fresh from finally defeating the Judge, Peekay travels south with Gideon to Pretoria to continue to fight for freedom. Thus, the idea that freedom is attainable and that one person can make a difference has been realized. While I still prefer the book, the film was successful in putting forth the idea of the power of one person, one idea, and one goal, and the study of the book and film together will be a valuable learning experience.

Classroom Materials

class set of *The Power of One*, DVD of *The Power of One*, DVD player/ monitor

Optional Classroom Materials

bulletin board, poster board /chart paper, markers, Internet access or library research

Classroom Activities

This unit will be taught for thirty-five standard-length class periods (43 minutes) with homework reading and writing included.

Day One—The teacher lecture will be drawn from the above narrative with opportunities to stop for Q&A and discussion. One suggestion is to have "Democracy" written on the board when the students come in and see what their reactions are. Some may know what it means and offer explanations and some will not know. Whether any of the students will wonder why it's on the board in *English* class will be interesting to discover.

Following the discussion of *democracy*, the teacher will address the poster provided in **Appendix A**.

Day Two—Distribute the books and the bookmarks (print these from **Appendix B**), then read aloud Ch.1, stopping to check for understanding and take questions. Assign Ch. 2.

Days Three through Ten, Ch. 2—Ch. 9. The key points in these chapters are:

Ch. 2—There is the meeting with Inkosi-Inkosikazi, the boy is cured of bedwetting, he gets Granpa Chook, war is declared in 1939, and conflict between the Afrikaners and the English increases due to the war. Ch. 3—There is a power struggle between the Judge and Pisskop. The Judge cannot make Pisskop cry and this frustrates him. He beats Granpa Chook to death, school ends, and Pisskop is free of him. Ch. 4—Pisskop is taken by Mevrou to buy tackies from Harry Crown, the first Jew he has ever met. The man is horrified at the boy's name and renames him "Peekay" and gives him suckers. Ch. 5—Peekay is handed over to the railway and meets Hoppie Groenewald who changes his life, introduces him to boxing and Big Hettie and inspires him to become the welterweight champion of South Africa. Ch. 6— Hoppie Groenewald has taught Peekay "first with the head, then with the heart" as his winning strategy. The boy witnesses Hoppie win the fight and this is the point where he realizes that the tyrants don't have to win: "It was the greatest moment of my life. I had hope." ¹⁶ When he dealt with the Judge at school, he avoided or withstood the punishment, but now he understands that he can overcome unfair treatment if he is prepared. Ch. 7—The theme from the last chapter is carried over in Hoppie's note to Peekay in which he encourages the boy and Peekay says that he had given him the power of one. The Big Hettie story is also here, but while it is interesting and can be relevant, it can be glossed over if time is a problem. Ch. 8—The lesson in this chapter is that nothing stays the same. Peekay discovers that his mother has become a Christian and banished Nanny because she wouldn't give up her Zulu ways. Here is another kind of tyranny, a religious mania that takes over his mother's life and rules her ability to make decisions. Peekay decides early on that he wants no part of this. Ch. 9—Peekay learns a lot about dealing with the world: his mother is ineffective in punishing him, Doc's view of the world is most compatible with his own, and that it is better to make a mistake than to follow blindly. This idea of looking at the world from his own point of view rather than be directed by others is what makes Peekay his own person, someone who will lead the way for others.

Day Eleven—Test—Students will complete a written assessment covering Chapters 1—9 (see **Appendix C**). Then they'll begin reading Ch. 10 in class for tonight's long reading.

Days Twelve through Seventeen, Ch. 10—Ch. 15. The key points in these chapters are:

Ch. 10—Inequality is again demonstrated when Doc is forced to prison because he is an unregistered alien. Rumors run rampant that Doc is a German spy and the foolishness of people in a panic is evident. Peekay, allowed to visit Doc at the prison, gets another lesson in the way the black prisoners are mistreated. They do not seem to be much better off than the Jews in the concentration camps. Ch. 11—Making the system work for his own goals is what Peekay learns here. Setting up the "post office" proves beneficial for the prisoners and it is all sanctioned by those in charge. Ch. 12—Peekay is presented with boots from all the People by Geel Piet for his first bout. He has a following before he actually gets started. Ch. 13—VE day is coming. Doc will be released but nothing will be changed or improved for the black prisoners. They make plans to continue the mail after Doc's release. Ch. 14—Doc manages a coup when he composes a great piece of music that includes all the tribes singing together. This brings about a feeling of solidarity which Geel Piet misses because he is found beaten to death. The second time the music is played it is named after Geel Piet, whom the kommandant assumes was a worthy Afrikaner. Peekay muses that Geel Piet would have thought it a great

joke but would have wondered why a man had to die first and miss being there to enjoy it. Ch. 15—Another example of working around the system is the letter-writing and the King Georgies, (religious tracts with the tobacco leaf inside). Peekay is accepted to Prince of Wales School and there is a mass cooperative to get his school kit together.

Day Eighteen—Students will complete a written test covering Chapters 10—15

Days Nineteen—Twenty-Four—Ch. 16—Ch. 22. Note: Chapter 17 is longer and the discussion may spill over to Day 21 which covers Chapters 18 and 19. The key points in these chapters are: Ch. 16—Peekay's partnership with Morrie, the resurrection of the boxing team and a few choice thoughts on leadership. Peekay realizes that he is a natural leader, and does not need to explain himself. Ch. 17—Peekay and Morrie's acceptance into Singe 'n' Burn's Six, the belief of white supremacy by both the English and the Afrikaners, and Morrie's business sense. Ch. 18—Peekay sees things differently as he is maturing, he learns that he has the mechanics to play jazz but not the soul, and he continues to train and grow. Ch. 19—The discovery of the crystal cave and what it means to Doc. Ch. 20—Peekay starts at Solly Goldman's gym. Peekay begins to fear Doc's passing and he contemplates eternity. Ch. 21—This is where many changes have occurred in 1948 and Peekay sums them up. (See narrative section.) Ch. 22—Pastor Mulvery has a funeral for Doc, Peekay and Morrie start a school for the blacks and it is shut down, and they begin the Miss Bornstein Correspondence School.

Day Twenty-Five—Students will complete a written test covering Chapters 16—22.

Day Twenty-Six—Distribute the project handout and either go to the library for research or use computers in the classroom to begin their research work (see **Appendix D**).

Days Twenty-Seven and Twenty-Eight, Ch. 23 and Ch. 24. The key points in these chapters are discussed thoroughly in the narrative section.

Day Twenty-Nine—Thirty-One—students will watch one third of the film each of the three days and will complete the Video Viewing Response Form (see **Appendix E**).

Day Thirty-Two, The unit will end with a test allowing the students use the text, their notes, and the Video Viewing Response Forms and comparing the film to the text (see **Appendix F**).

Days Thirty-Three through Thirty-Five—presentation of projects.

Optional Activities: If you have more time available, students can make a wall display using visuals from their projects. Give guidelines or let them design it themselves.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Avildsen, John G. *The Power of One*. DVD. Burbank: Warner Brothers, 1999. Filmed in 1992 and starring Morgan Freeman and Stephen Dorff, the screen realization of Courtenay's book maintains the tenor of the book while delivering the theme in a severely abridged form. The addition and deletion of characters is disturbing, but given that this was a motion picture release and not a miniseries it is understandable. Courtenay served as consultant on the film.

Baginski, Mike. <http://www.mpsvt.org/msms/grade6/gov-quest/>. (accessed May 31, 2008). Mr. B's class assignment on determining the best government includes good definitions of several types of government in an interesting assignment. Although intended for grade 6, the clear delineation of the government types will be helpful to the English teacher.

Bloom, Allan. *The Republic of Plato*. 2 ed. New York: Basic Books, 1991. Told in the form of dialogue among Plato and his colleagues, this ten-chapter discussion of how to live includes sections on determining the genuine from the imitation, the roles of each gender in a society, and the limits a government should exercise. Bloom's edition includes extensive notes, line numbers for easy reference, and his own interpretive essay.

Courtenay, Bryce. *The Power of One*. New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996.

The "Classic Novel of South Africa" is the *bildungsroman* of a white English boy who clashes with the Afrikaners who despise him. A chance meeting with an aspiring boxer spurs young Peekay on to his own dreams of becoming the welterweight champ of South Africa. Along the way, Peekay is mentored by Doc, a German naturalist who becomes a father figure as well as a teacher, and Giel Piet, a kaffir at the local prison where he trains as a boxer. Peekay's journey is told in a stunning and thoughtful way, bringing the Western reader to a time and place both foreign and irresistible.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. New York: Perennial/Harper/Collins, 2000. In the mid 1800s, Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in its democratic infancy. The perspective of this Frenchman's view of how our government worked in the early days provides a unique vantage point for the modern reader.

Dovey, Lindiwe. "SparkNote on The Power of One." (accessed 7/16/2008). <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/power/>. This site offers a complete summary, character descriptions, a section on themes and symbols, and analyses by chapter.

Godwin, Peter. *Mukiwa*. New York: Grove Press, 1996. This is a great memoir of a white boy growing up in Zimbabwe in the 1960s. It is an interesting extension of what continued to happen following the political events in Courtenay's book and is recommended for those wishing to delve further into the subject.

Graetz, Michael J., and Ian Shapiro. *Death by a Thousand Cuts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Utilizing the analogy of the torture called "death by a thousand cuts," Graetz and Shapiro clearly outline how the death tax in America bleeds citizens of their hard-earned wealth. Specific cases of individuals whose estates have been affected bring life to this account of the unfairness of this tax, what it does to people and their families, and how it came to be.

Hamilton, Alexander, and James Madison and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Penguin, 2003. This is a compilation of all the numbers published by the authors anonymously in serial form beginning in 1787. With an introduction and notes by Charles R. Kesler and edited by Clinton Rossiter, this edition also includes the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Articles of Confederation.

James, G.. "Freedom in the UK." 8/5/2000. <http://dSPACE.dialp.ipex.com/town/street/pl38/set2/htm> (accessed 7/16/2008). A more sophisticated discussion of political systems is presented in this devoted to civil liberties in the UK.

Library of Congress, "Religion and Apartheid." <http://countrystudies.us/south-africa/53.htm> (accessed July 16, 2008). This website was valuable in delineating religious practices of the various groups in South Africa, particularly helpful in researching conditions in former Southern Rhodesia during the time of Courtenay's book.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1978.

Mill's five-chapter work expounds on the definitions and meanings of *liberty*, citing examples and posing hypothetical situations in which government intervention should be imposed.

Shapiro, Ian. *Democracy's Place*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. In a collection of essays, Shapiro covers several topics dealing with justice in different situations: With Courtney Jung he explores the role of democracy in South Africa, while his essay on autonomy and religious freedom, written with Richard Arnelson, critiques *Wisconsin v. Yoder*.

Stutz, David. "Stutz Family web site." August 16, 1999. <http://www.stutzfamily.com/mrstutz/WorldAffairs/typesofgovt.html> (accessed July 16, 2008). This site offers an excellent chart of government types.

Appendices

Appendix A

(Resize these and enlarge the font to print as posters.)

Charts of Government types

Governments based on *Economy* & examples of countries that operate under them:

Capitalism—People run their own businesses & must buy health care, other services.

Russia has a capitalist government.

***Socialism*—The government owns many of the larger industries and provide health care, welfare, and education while allowing citizens some economic choices.**

Norway's government is socialist.

***Communism*—All of the businesses in a communist country are owned by the government which provides and limits education, welfare and health care.**

Cuba is a communist country.

Governments based on *Politics* & examples of countries that operate under them:

Dictatorship—A single leader who has not been elected and who uses force to keep control. In a military dictatorship, the army is in control; public opinion is ignored and citizens have few rights.

Iraq is run by a dictator.

***Totalitarianism*—Government by a single political party in total control which may prevent its**

citizens from leaving the country.

China has a totalitarian government.

Theocracy—Rulers claim to be carrying out the dictates of a deity which empowers them with total control of the country.

Iran is a theocratic country.

Monarchy—A monarchy has a king or queen, an inherited position, who sometimes has complete control.

Jordan is a monarchy.

Parliamentary—This government is run by members of parliament who are elected by the people. Each representative remains as long as his/her party is in power.

Israel runs under a parliamentary government.

Republic—Representatives are elected for a set period of time in a republic. These representatives make the laws.

The *USA* is a republic.

Anarchy—This lack of organized government often occurs after a civil war when the government has been deposed and there is no alternate government to take its place.

Afghanistan is in a state of anarchy.

Governments based on *Authority* & examples of countries that operate under them:

Revolutionary—The existing government in a country can be overturned through a revolution which can be mounted by a large or small opposition. If successful, the revolt leads to a new form of government.

USA, France, and the *USSR* all experienced revolutions.

Totalitarian—Elections in totalitarian governments simply allow citizens to vote for the only

candidates on the ballot, the ones approved by the government.

North Korea is a totalitarian government.

***Oligarchy/Plutocracy*—This type of government limits the participation to the chosen few, usually the rich, to make the decisions for all.**

Pakistan is an oligarchic/plutocratic government.

***Democracy*—Everyone who is eligible to vote elects all the officials. Most of the population in a democracy is eligible, with age the main factor.**

India is a democracy.

Remember that most countries are ruled by a combination of two or more of these systems. The USA is capitalistic in some ways but the government does provide some services. It is a democratic republic because its citizens participate in free elections but elect officials to represent them in the Senate and House of Representatives.

Appendix B

BOOKMARK *The Power of One*

<p>Ch. 1 —p. 3 Ch. 2 —p. 19 Ch. 3 —p. 37 Ch. 4 —p. 52 Ch. 5 —p. 71 Ch. 6 —p. 87 Ch. 7 —p. 102 Ch. 8 —p. 125 Ch. 9 —p. 143 Ch. 10—p. 162 Ch. 11—p. 207 Ch. 12—p. 231 Ch. 13—p. 256 Ch. 14—p. 280 Ch. 15—p. 307 Ch. 16—p. 323 Ch. 17—p. 349 Ch. 18—p. 379 Ch. 19—p. 386 Ch. 20—p. 398 Ch. 21—p. 415 Ch. 22—p. 435 Ch. 23—p. 461 Ch. 24—p. 493</p> <p>GLOSSARY ASEGAI—Zulu fighting spear BLERY—corruption of British “bloody” BOER—farmer or Afrikaans-speaking South African BOERE—belonging to the Boers BOEREMUSIK—Boer music BOEREWORS—farm sausage BOETIE--brother BOK-BOK—boys' game</p>	<p>BRAAIVLEIS--barbecue CHARAH—derogatory name for Indian DAGGA--cannabis DAMES EN HERE—ladies and gentlemen DANKIE—thank you DOEK—small cloth or headscarf DOMKOP--dumbhead DONGA--gully DORP—small town DUMMKOPF—dumbhead (German) FANAGALO—language of Afrikaans, English and Zulu FLY HALF—position in back line in rugby game GOBSTOPPER—long-lasting candy GOEIE MORE—good morning NDABA—important meeting INFAST--woman INKOSI—superior being JUJU—black magic KAFFIR—black person KAK--shit KEREL--fellow KLAAR--finished KLEILAT—ball in cup game KLEIN--small KLOOF--gorge KOPPIE—small hill KRANS--cliff LEE-METFORD—rifle used by British LEKKER--delicious LIEFLING--darling MAAT--mate MAGTIG--mighty</p>	<p>MAUSER—rifle used by Boers MAYIBUYE AFRIKA—come back, Africa MENEER—Mr. MEVROU—Mrs. MOOTIE--medicine NEE--no OUNOOI—elderly female Afrikaaner OUBAAS—elderly Afrikaaner OUPA--grandfather RIEMPIE—thin rawhide straps RINDERPEST—cattle disease RONDAVEL—round, thatched hut ROOINEK--redneck VERDOMDE ROOINEK—damned Englishman SCHWEINHUND--swinehound SCRUM HALF—position in rugby football SIS--yuk! SJAMBOK—whip of plaited leather SKELM--rascal STOEP--verandah STOMPIE—cigarette butt TACKY—shoe of canvas with rubber sole TICKY--threepence TIEKIEDRAAI—folk dancing TOT SIENS--goodbye UITLANDER--foreigner UMFAZI--female VELTKORNET--lieutenant VERDOMDE--damned WONDERLIK--wonderful WRAGDIG--verily</p>
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Appendix C

Written Assessment on Chapters 1–9 of NAME _____ *The Power of One* Period _____

Date _____

- In the style of the classic *bildungsroman*, Courtenay begins the novel with the image of our young protagonist at the breast of his nanny. How does the opening of the book set the tone for the story? Offer examples showing tone, paying particular attention to the first several sentences.
- Examine the character of the Judge. What do you know about him? How does he function as a symbol of the political climate? How does Pisskop manipulate him and how does he triumph over him?
- Describe Courtenay's use of Harry Crown. Why does he introduce him and what does he do that is important?
- Hoppie makes a brief but vital appearance in the book. Describe his personality including what he says and does, and what others say about him? Why was he so important to Peekay? What does he symbolize?
- The Big Hettie chapter is sad and interesting. Why does Courtenay include this? What did Peekay gain from his brief association with Big Hettie?
- How does Pastor Mulvery affect Peekay's relationship with his mother?

7. Meeting Doc is a major turning point in Peekay's life. What role does Doc fulfill in Peekay's world? Describe his character using examples from the text.

Written Assessment on Chapters 10—15 of NAME _____ **The Power of One** Period _____
Date _____

1. Doc's time in jail provides Peekay with many opportunities. What does Peekay learn about music, boxing, treatment of prisoners, and the unfairness of laws?
2. What was your first impression of Geel Piet? Did your opinion of him change as you learned more about him? What is his function in the book?
3. What effect does Peekay's success have on his integrity? Consider the letter-writing project, his win in the ring, the boots from Geel Piet and the other prisoners, and his new name, Tadpole Angel.
4. Why does Lt. Smit invite Geel Piet to be in the photo with the boxers and trainers? Why did he destroy the pictures and the photographic plate?
5. What are the results of the prison concert? How do these events figure in Peekay's journey to maturity? What do you make of the mix between the good and bad results of the concert?
6. What happens to Borman? Was there magic involved? What about irony?

Written Assessment on Chapters 16—22 of NAME _____ **The Power of One** Period _____
Date _____

1. The next step in Peekay's life begins at the Prince of Wales School. How does his past impact his school career? Describe his current mentor and the situation.
2. What is the importance of being chosen by "Singe 'n' Burn"?
3. Why does Peekay see Barberton differently when he comes home from school?
4. How does Courtenay introduce political unrest? How effective is this?
5. What does Peekay's fight against Gideon symbolize?
6. Describe the crystal cave and what it means to Doc, to Peekay, and in relation to the theme of the book.

Appendix D

Project on Bryce Courtenay's *The Power of One*

Take what you like from the suggestions below and organize it into the type of research project you want your students to do. If you're under time constraints omit this part.

There is a wealth of information online about what used to be Southern Rhodesia as well as information and still photos from the movie and some information on the book. Students can research the food, music, clothing, religion, indigenous plant life, animals, industries, transportation, schools, and daily lives of the English, the Afrikaners, and the different groups of natives in that area in that time period.

Appendix E

(Make two lines under each of the questions before printing.)

Video Viewing Guide for *The Power of One* NAME _____

Day One Period _____ Date _____

1. What are your first impressions of the film? Compare the presentation of the characters, the story, and the setting of the film to what you thought when you read the book. Describe at least one setting and tell how it is different from what you expected. How does the addition of music add to the overall effect of the film? What do you think the filmmaker had in mind with his use of music?
2. Note one key difference in the storyline in the first day's viewing? Do you agree with the director's choice? Give an example and explain.
3. Which character depiction do you like the most (or least) and why? Offer three examples of differences between the book description and the screen realization.

Video Viewing Guide for *The Power of One* NAME _____

Day Two Period _____ Date _____

1. In this second day of viewing, do you find that you like or dislike any of the characters more or less than yesterday? Explain why and give examples.
2. How does the filmmaker illustrate the themes of the book through the changes in the storyline? Offer at least two examples.
3. Discuss Morgan Freeman's brief appearance in the film as Geel Piet. He has major billing in the credits but is in only a small portion of the film. How would you explain this? Think about the scene preceding Piet's death. What is the advantage of altering the death slightly in the film?

Video Viewing Guide for *The Power of One* NAME _____

Day Two Period _____ Date _____

1. On this final day of viewing you should be accustomed to the many deviations from the plotline in the book. Concentrate on the character of Maria today. What was the purpose of creating that character? What functions did that character fulfill dramatically? Which character (s) from the book did she replace? How do you feel about what happened to her? Why was that included?
2. Think about the character of Gideon. What are the major differences in this character's purpose between the book and the film? Why do you think the character was expanded in this way?
3. Does the Judge get what he deserves? Compare how he was dealt with in the book to what happened in the film. Which version do you prefer? Why?

Appendix F

Final Written Assessment on *The Power of One* NAME _____

Essays Period __ Date _____

Take all of your notes from reading, your two written assessments, and all three of your video viewing forms and respond to the following:

1. Literature is often adapted to the screen and many times readers are disappointed. State whether you preferred the book or the film and then defend your choice using specific examples. Use page numbers or chapter numbers for your citations. Consider character depictions, settings, portrayal of themes, and your overall impression of the story in each format. Include one concrete example for each of the four points referred to in the last sentence.
2. Think about the book as a whole. What one moment or event is most prominent in your mind? Choose

one event from the following and analyze it for literary content, tone, and style. How important is this event to the overall novel? If you had to recommend one story from the whole book, why would it be this one?

Choices: The trial and killing of Granpa Chook, Peekay's time with Hoppie, Peekay's time with Big Hettie, Peekay's first meeting with Doc, The concert and Geel Piet's death, Peekay's alliance with Morrie, Finding the crystal cave, Peekay's soul-searching at the beginning of Ch. 23, Peekay's time with Rasputin, Peekay's final meeting with the Judge

3. Trace the structure of the *bildungsroman*. Following the childhood portion, what events would you mark as stepping stones in Peekay's journey? What culminating event led to his emergence as a man at the close of the novel?

Appendix G

Suggestions for titles for other grades: 9 grade—*To Kill a Mockingbird, Night*, 10th grade—*A Lesson Before Dying, In the Time of the Butterflies, Fahrenheit 451*, 11th grade—*The Crucible, The Scarlet Letter, Twelve Angry Men*. These are titles in the Pittsburgh Public Schools curriculum and may appear in other districts' curricula. Other titles: *A Gathering of Old Men, Monster, Brave New World, 1984, and Before We Were Free*.

Standards

PA Content Standards for Communications: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking

All students: use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies, read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts, respond orally and in writing to information and ideas from reading narrative and informational texts and use these to make decisions and solve problems, write for a variety of purposes, to narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas, analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, noting inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence, exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications, listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify purpose, structure and use, compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe, and communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

Notes

1. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 3

2. This way of looking at the novel is credited to the great teacher and Faulkner scholar Olga Vickery who, in turn, imparted the method to my own graduate school professor Dr. Ronald Schumacher. This citation is personal recollection.

3. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 3

4. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 5
5. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 5
6. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 13
7. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 18
8. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 60
9. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 102
10. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 125
11. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 128
12. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 415
13. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 510
14. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 512
15. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 513
16. Courtenay, *The Power of One* (New York: Ballantine/Random House, 1996), 103

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