

# Madama Butterfly

## Lesson Plan: Madama Butterfly for 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*Written by Olga Bezrukova for L.A. Opera*

Duration: 1 lesson/ 50 minutes

(Can be adapted for 2 lessons by increasing discussion time)

Grade Levels: Secondary

Subjects: Theater, Literature, English

### California State Board of Education Visual and Performing Arts Standards

#### *Theater – Advanced*

- 2.2 Improve or write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure (exposition, complication, crises, climax, and resolution); and including complex characters with unique dialogue that motivates the action.
- 3.4 Compare and contrast specific styles and forms of world theatre. For example, differentiate between Elizabethan comedy and Restoration farce.
- 4.0 **Aesthetic Valuing. Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences.**

#### *Literature*

- 1.0 **WRITING STRATEGIES: Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly-reasoned argument. Students writing demonstrates awareness of audience and purpose and use of the stages of the writing process, as needed.**
- 2.0 **WRITING APPLICATIONS (GENRES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS): Students combine the rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description to produce text of at least 1,500 words, when appropriate. Students writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organization, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.**

### Goals & Objectives

1. Introduce students to a synopsis of *Madama Butterfly*.
2. Introduce students to excerpts by different authors, works based on the same story and/or ideas.
3. Teachers will guide students in discussion as they read **Handout 1** and fill out **Worksheet A** and **Worksheet B**.
4. Students will be able to discuss their thoughts and findings in class discussion.

5. Students will be able to analyze the stories and how they portray the societies for which they were written.
6. Students will write a paragraph based on *Madama Butterfly*, using the discussed elements to create a work for contemporary audiences.
7. Homework option: the paragraph can be expanded into a full story.

#### **Preparatory:**

1. **Copies of Synopsis, Handout 1, Worksheet A, Worksheet B**
2. **Optional: Audio track of “The American Dream” from *Miss Saigon* (Downloadable on itunes) Audio sample/video sample available from *Madama Butterfly* LA Opera website: <http://www.laopera.com/production/0809/butterfly/index.aspx>**

#### **Procedure**

1. Teacher will distribute a synopsis of *Madama Butterfly*.
2. Teacher will give **Synopsis, Handout 1** and **Worksheet A** to the class.
3. As a class, students will read excerpts from different works based on the same story.
4. Students will fill out **Worksheet A**.
5. Teacher will facilitate a discussion of students’ ideas.
6. Teacher will distribute **Worksheet B**.
7. Students will fill out **Worksheet B**.
8. Students will share ideas about how our society would be portrayed if an excerpt, based on the original story was to be written for contemporary audiences.
9. Students will write the a short paragraph based on *Madama Butterfly*, using the ideas discussed in class.
10. Note to teacher: the paragraph can be expanded into a full story as homework.

#### **Assessment:**

1. Students will be able to read and discuss a variety of written works, based on the same idea.
2. Students will be able to complete **Worksheet A** and **Worksheet B**.
3. Students will be able to participate in class discussion.
4. Students will be able to write paragraphs incorporating the elements discussed in class.
5. Homework option: Students will be able to expand written paragraphs into a full story.

## Synopsis *Madama Butterfly* composed by Giacomo Puccini (1904)

Synopsis taken from LA Opera

Puccini was visiting London when he saw the play *Madame Butterfly* by David Belasco. The play was based on a story by John Luther Long, which in fact, had many similar elements to another story, *Madame Chrysanthème*, by Pierre Loti. Puccini liked the story so much, that a copy of libretto was sent to his librettists Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa.

Read the synopsis. Then, read the excerpts from the stories mentioned above. Note the similarities and differences between the excerpts.

### ACT ONE

Outside a house in turn-of-the-century Nagasaki, Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, an American naval officer and admitted Yankee vagabond, arranges with Goro to lease a residence for himself and his new bride, Cio-Cio-San, also called Butterfly. He is then introduced to Butterfly's servants, one of whom is Suzuki. While talking to Sharpless, the American consul, Pinkerton reveals that he purchased his bride for a hundred yen and that he can bow out of the marriage contract whenever he wishes. Sharpless tries to warn the officer that his teenage bride could really love him, but Pinkerton ignores the consul, drinking to the day when he will marry an American. Butterfly arrives with friends and relatives, greets Pinkerton, and shows him her paltry belongings, including the dagger her father used to kill himself. She confides to Pinkerton that she secretly converted to Christianity the day before so that she could worship the same God as her husband, for whom she is willing to forget her own people.

As they celebrate their wedding, the Bonze, Butterfly's devout uncle, storms in. He found out that she converted and denounces her for abandoning her faith and her family. They renounce her, and Pinkerton, visibly annoyed, demands that they all leave. Night falls and Butterfly joins Pinkerton outside, where she rapturously confesses her love. He leads her into the house.

### ACT TWO

Three years have passed since Pinkerton sailed for America. The devoted Butterfly tells Suzuki that one day soon they shall see Pinkerton's ship enter the harbor. Sharpless, who knows that Pinkerton and his new wife will soon arrive in Nagasaki, tries to persuade Butterfly to marry Prince Yamadori, but she refuses to listen. She shows the American consul the son that she has borne Pinkerton, convinced that her husband would never abandon her or his own child. The harbor cannon announces the arrival of Pinkerton's ship, and an elated Butterfly prepares for his imminent arrival.

Butterfly, her son, and Suzuki wait all night for Pinkerton, who finally appears the next morning with Sharpless and his new wife, Kate. Butterfly is resting, so Suzuki meets them. Suddenly overwhelmed by remorse, Pinkerton leaves because he cannot face the wife he abandoned. While Kate asks Suzuki to explain to Butterfly that Pinkerton's son would be better off in America, Butterfly awakens and emerges, seeing the strange woman in her garden. Sharpless tells her that the woman is Pinkerton's wife. Distraught, Butterfly retreats to the house to stab herself with her father's dagger. She parts sorrowfully from her son. When Pinkerton rushes into the room, it is too late to save her.

# Handout 1

The story of *Madame Butterfly* was inspired by real life events. However, the story evolved before it took on the final shape we know today as *Madama Butterfly*. Part of the reason may have been that Puccini wanted to create a successful story that his audience would relate to and appreciate. Read the following excerpts and fill out **Worksheet A**.

**Have a class discussion: How similar/different are the stories/play/opera? In 1900, when Puccini gave his librettists the story, opera was considered popular entertainment. What would the story be like if it was written for the popular audiences of today? What are some of the elements of our society that would be included if an excerpt based on the original themes were to be written for contemporary audiences?**

## Excerpt 1 (1887)

*Madame Chrysanthème* by Pierre Lotti

Excerpt taken from book, available: <http://manybooks.net/titles/lotipier15331533515335-8.html>

*At the foot of the staircase, upon the white mats, by the side of the little clogs and little sandals which are always lying about the vestibule, there is a great array of luggage ready for departure, which I recognize at a glance, -- pretty dark-colored dresses, familiar to my sight, carefully folded and wrapped in blue towels tied at the four corners. I even fancy I feel a little sad when I catch sight of a corner of the famous box of letters and souvenirs peeping out of one of these bundles, in which ray portrait by Uyeno now reposes among divers photographs of mousmés. A sort of long-necked mandolin, also ready for departure, lies on the top of the pile in its case of figured silk. It resembles the flitting of some gypsy, or rather it reminds me of an engraving in a book of fables I owned in my childhood: the whole thing is exactly like the slender wardrobe and the long guitar which the Cicala who had sung all the summer, carried upon her back when she knocked at the door of her neighbor the ant.*

*Poor little gypsy!*

*I mount the stairs on tiptoe, and stop at the sound of singing that I hear up in my room.*

*It is undoubtedly Chrysanthème's voice and the song is a cheerful one!  
This chills me and changes the current of my thoughts. I am almost sorry I have taken the trouble to come.*

*Mingled with the song is a noise I cannot understand: Dzinn! Dzinn! A clear metallic ring as of coins being flung vigorously on the floor. I am well aware that this vibrating house exaggerates every sound during silence of night; but all the same, I am puzzled to know what my mousmé can be doing. Dzinn! Dzinn! Is she amusing herself with quoits, or the jeu du crapaud, or pitch and toss?*

*Nothing of the kind; I fancy I have guessed, and I continue my upward progress still more gently, on all fours, with the precautions of a Red Indian, to give myself for the last time the pleasure of surprising her.*

*She has not heard me come in. In our great white room, emptied and swept out, where the clear sunshine pours in, and the soft wind, and the yellowed leaves of the garden; she is sitting all alone, her back turned to the door: she is dressed for walking, ready to go to her mother's, her rose-colored parasol beside her.*

*On the floor are spread out all the fine silver dollars which, according to our agreement, I had given her the evening before. With the competent dexterity of an old money-changer she fingers them, turns them over, throws them on the*

*floor, and armed with a little mallet ad hoc, rings them vigorously against her ear, singing the while I know not what little pensive bird-like song which I daresay she improvises as she goes along.*

*Well, after all, it is even more completely Japanese than I could possibly have imagined it—this last scene of my married life! I feel inclined to laugh. How simple I have been, to allow myself to be taken in by the few clever words she whispered yesterday, as she walked beside me, by a tolerably pretty little phrase embellished as it was by the silence of two o'clock in the morning, and all the wonderful enchantments of night.*

*Ah! Not more for Yves than for me, not more for me than for Yves, has any feeling passed through that little brain, that little heart.*

*When I have looked at her long enough, I call:--*

*“Hi! Chrysanthème!”*

*She turns confused, and reddening even to her ears at having been caught at this work.*

*She is quite wrong, however, to be so much troubled, for I am, on the contrary, delighted. The fear that I might be leaving her in some sadness had almost given me a pang, and I infinitely prefer that this marriage should end as it had begun, in a joke.*

*“That is a good idea of yours,” I say; “a precaution which should always be taken in this country of yours, where so many evil-minded people are clever in foreign money. Make hast and get through it before I start, and if any false pieces have found their way into the number, I will willingly replace them.”*

*However, she refuses to continue before me, and I expected as much; to do so would have been contrary to all her notion of politeness, hereditary and acquired, all her conventionality, all her Japanesery. With a disdainful little foot, clothed as usual in exquisite socks with a special hood for the great toe, she pushes away the piles of white dollars and scatters them on the mats.*

*“We have hired a large covered sampan,” she says to change the conversation, “and we are all going together,-- Campanule, Jonquille, Touki, all your mousmés—to watch your vessel set sail. Pray sit down and stay a few minutes.”*

*“No, I really cannot stay. I have several things to do in the town, d’you see, and the order was given for every one to be on board by three o’clock in time for muster before starting. Moreover, I would rather escape, as you can imagine, while Madame Prune is still enjoying her siesta; I should be afraid of being drawn into some corner, or of provoking some heartrending parting scene.”*

*Chrysanthème bows her head and says no more, but seeing that I am really going, rises to escort me.*

*Without speaking, without the slightest noise, she follows me as we descend the staircase and cross the garden full of sunshine, where the dwarf shrubs and the deformed flowers seem, like the rest of the household, plunged in warm somnolence.*

*At the other gate I stop for the last adieu: the little sad pout has reappeared, more accentuated than ever on Chrysanthème’s face; it is correct, and I should feel offended now were it absent.*

*Well, little mousmé, let us part good friends; one last kiss eve, if you like. I took you to amuse; you have not perhaps succeeded very well, but after all you have done what you could: given me your little face, your little curtseys, your little music: in short, you have been pleasant enough in your Japanese way. And who knows, perchance I may yet think of you sometimes when I recall this glorious summer, these pretty quaint gardens, and the ceaseless concert of the cicales.*

*She prostrates herself on the threshold of the door, her forehead against the ground, and remains in this attitude of superlatively polite salute as long as I am in sight, while I go down the pathway by which I am to disappear for ever.*

*As the distance between us increases, I turn once or twice to look at her again, but it is a mere civility, and meant to return as it deserves her grand final salutation.*

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THE LAST SCENES OF THE STORY:

LII.

*On entering the town, at the turn of the principle street, I have the good luck to meet No. 415, my poor relation. I was just at that moment in want of a speedy djin, and I at once get into his vehicle; besides, it will be an alleviation to my feelings, in this hour of departure, to take my last drive in company with a member of my family.*

*Unaccustomed as I was to be out of doors during the hours of siesta, I had never yet seen the streets of the town thus overwhelmed by the sunshine, thus deserted in the silence and solitary brilliancy peculiar to all hot countries.*

*In front of all the shops hang white shades, adorned here and there with slight designs in black, in the quaintness of which lurks I know not what,--something mysterious: dragons, emblems, symbolical figures. The sky is too glaring; the light crude, implacable; never has this old town of Nagasaki appeared to me so old, so worm-eaten, so bald, notwithstanding all its veneer of new papers and gaudy paintings. These little wooden houses, of such marvelous cleanly whiteness inside, are black outside, time-worn, disjointed and grimacing. When one looks closely, this grimace is to be found everywhere: in the hideous masks laughing in the shop fronts of the innumerable curio-shops; in the grotesque figures, the playthings, the idols, cruel, suspicious mad;--it is even found in the buildings: in the friezes of the religious porticos, in the roofs of the thousand pagoda; of which the angles and gable-ends writhe and twist like the yet dangerous remains of ancient and malignant beasts.*

*And the disturbing intensity of expression reigning over inanimate nature, contrasts with the almost absolute blank of the human countenance, with the smiling foolishness of the simple little folk who meet one's gaze, as they patiently carry on their minute trades in the gloom of their tiny open-fronted houses. Workmen squatted on their heels, carving with their imperceptible tools, the droll or odiously obscene ivory ornaments, marvelous cabinet curiosities which have made Japan so famous with the European amateurs who have never seen it. Unconscious artists tracing with steady hand on a background of lacquer or of porcelain traditional designs learnt by heart, or transmitted to their brains by a process of heredity through thousands of years; automatic painters, whose storks are similar to those of M. Sucre, with the inevitable little rocks, or little butterflies eternally the same. The least of these illuminators, with his insignificant eyeless face, possesses at his fingers' ends the maximum of dexterity in this art of decoration, light and wittily incongruous, which threatens to invade us in France, in this epoch of imitative decadence, and which has become the great resource of our manufacturers of cheap "objects of art."*

*Is it because I am about to leave this country, because I have no longer any link to bind me to it, any resting-place on its soil, and that my spirit is already on the wing? I know not, but it seems to me I have never as clearly seen and comprehended it as to-day. And more even than ever, do I find it little, aged, with worn-out blood and worn-out sap; I feel more fully its antediluvian antiquity, its centuries of mummification, which will soon degenerate into hopeless and grotesque buffoonery, as it comes into contact with Western novelties.*

*It is getting late; little by little, the siestas are everywhere coming to an end; the queer little streets brighten up and begin to swarm in the sunshine with many-colored parasols. Now begins the procession of ugliness of the most impossible description, --a procession of long-robed, grotesque figures capped with pot-hats or sailors' head-gear. Business transactions begin again, and the struggle for existence, close and bitter here as in one of our own artisan quarters, but meaner and smaller.*

*At the moment of my departure, I can only find within myself a smile of careless mockery for the swarming crowd of this Lilliputian curtsying people, --laborious, industrious, greedy of gain, tainted with a constitutional affectation, hereditary insignificance, and incurable monkeyishness.*

*Poor cousin 415, how right I was to have held him in good esteem; he is by far the best and most disinterested of my Japanese family. When all my commissions are finished, he puts up his little vehicle under a tree, and much touched*

*by my departure, insists upon escorting me on board the Triomphante, to watch over my final purchases in the sampan which conveys me to the ship, and to see them himself safely into my cabin.*

*His, indeed, is the only hand I clasp with a really friendly feeling, without a suppressed smile, on quitting this Japan.*

*No doubt, in this country as in many others, there is more honest friendship and less ugliness among the simple beings devoted to purely physical work.*

*At five o'clock in the afternoon we set sail.*

*Along the line of the shore are two or three sampans; in them the mousmés, shut up in the narrow cabins, peep at us through the tiny windows, half hiding their faces on account of the sailors; these are our wives, who have wished, out of politeness, to look upon us once more.*

*There are other sampans as well, in which other Japanese women are also watching our departure. These stand upright, under great parasols decorated with big black letters and daubed over with clouds of varied and startling colors.*

*LIV.*

*We move slowly out of the great green bay. The groups of women become lost in the distance. The county of round and thousand-ribbed umbrellas fades gradually from our sight.*

*Now the great sea opens before us, immense, colorless, solitary; a solemn repose after so much that was too ingenious and too small.*

*The wooded mountains, the charming capes disappear. And Japan remains faithful to itself in its last picturesque rocks, its quaint islands on which the trees tastefully arrange themselves in groups—studied perhaps, but charmingly pretty.*

*LV.*

*In my cabin, one evening, in the midst of the Yellow Sea, my eyes chance to fall upon the lotus brought from Diou-djen-dji;—they had lasted for two or three days; but now they have faded, and pitifully strew my carpet with their pale pink petals.*

*I, who have carefully preserved so many faded flowers, fallen, alas! Into dust, stolen here and there, at moments of parting in different parts of the world; I who have kept so many, that the collection is now almost a herbarium, ridiculous and incoherent—I try hard, but without success, to get up a sentiment for these lotus—and yet they are the last living souvenirs of my summer at Nagasaki.*

*I pick them up, however, with a certain amount of consideration, and I open my port-hole.*

*From the gray misty sky a livid light falls upon the waters; a wan and gloomy kind of twilight creeps down, yellowish upon this Yellow Sea. We feel that we are moving northwards, that autumn is approaching.*

*I throw the poor lotus into the boundless waste of waters, making them my best excuses for giving to them, natives of Japan, a grave so solemn and so vast.*

*LVI.*

*O Ama-Térace-omi-Kami, wash me clean from this little marriage of mine, in the waters of the river of Kamo.*

*THE END*

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## Excerpt 2 (1898)

*Madame Butterfly* by John Luther Long, available on  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/LONG/contents.html>

### XIV

#### THE BLONDE WOMAN

A WOMAN entered.

" Mr. Sharpless--the American consul?" she asked, while crossing the threshold.

The consul bowed.

"Can you reach my husband at Kobe--by telegraph ? "

" I think so. Who is your husband?"

He took up a writing-pad as he spoke.

" Lieutenant Pinkerton of the--"

" One moment, for God's sake! "

It was too late. The eyes of the little woman in the chair were fixed on his. They even tried to smile a little, wearily, at the poor result of his compassionate lying. She shook her head for silence.

"I beg your pardon; I 'm--I am--ready--" said the consul, roughly. He made no other explanation. " Proceed."

" I should like you to send this telegram: ' Just saw the baby and his nurse. Can't we have him at once? He is lovely. Shall see the mother about it to-morrow. Was not at home when I was there to-day. Expect to join you Wednesday week per *Kioto Maru*. May I bring him along?

'ADELAIDE.'"

As she advanced and saw Cho-Cho-San, she stopped in open admiration.

" How very charming--how *lovely*--you are, dear! Will you kiss me, you pretty--*plaything!* "

Cho-Cho-San stared at her with round eyes--as children do when afraid. Then her nostrils quivered and her lids slowly closed.

" No," she said, very softly.

" Ah, well," laughed the other, " I don't blame you. They say you don't do that sort of thing--to women, at any rate. I quite forgive our men for falling in love with you. Thanks for permitting me to interrupt you. And, Mr. Sharpless, will you get that off at once ? Good day ! "



She went with the hurry in which she had come. It was the blonde woman they had seen on the deck of the passenger-steamer.

They were quite silent after she was gone--the consul still at his desk, his head bowed impotently in his hands.

Cho-Cho-San rose presently, and staggered toward him. She tried desperately to smile, but her lips were tightly drawn against her teeth. Searching unsteadily in her sleeve, she drew out a few small coins, and held them out to him. He curiously took them on his palm.

" They are his, all that is left of his beautiful mooney. I shall need no more. Give them to him. I lig if you also say I sawry--no, no, *no!* glad--glad--*glad!* " She humbly sighed. "*Me?* I--I wish him that happiness same lig he wish for himself--an'--an'--me. *Me?* I shall be happy--mebby. Tell him I--shall be--happy." Her head drooped for a moment.

When she raised it she was quite emotionless, if one might judge from her face.

" Thang him--that Mr. B. F. Pikkerton--also for all that kineness he have been unto me. Permit me to thang *you*, augustness, for that same. You--you "--she could smile a little now at the pretty recollection--then the tears came slowly into her eyes--" you--the mos' bes' nize man--in all the--whole--worl'."

She closed her eyes a moment, and stood quite still.

The consul said below his breath:

" ---- Pinkerton, and all such as he! "

" Goon night," said Cho-Cho-San, and at the door looking back, " Sayonara," and another tired smile.

She staggered a little as she went out.

" ALAS, you also have seen her ! " wailed the intuitive little maid, as she let her mistress in.

" An' she is more beautiful than the Sun-Goddess," answered Cho-Cho-San.

The maid knelt to take off her shoes.

" She--she thing me--jus' a--plaything."

She generously tried to smile at the maid, who was weeping. She touched her hair caressingly as she knelt.

"Don' weep for me, liddle maiden--account I disappoint--a liddle--disappoint--Don' weep for me. That liddle while ago you as' me to res--peace--sleep," she said after a while, wearily. " Well, go 'way, an' I will--res'. Now I *wish* to res'--sleep. Long--long sleep. An' I pray you, loog, when you see me again, whether I be not again beautiful--again as a bride."

The maid did not go. Once more she understood her mistress.

" *But--* I thing *you* loave me ? "

The girl sobbed.

"Therefore go--that I suffer no more. Go, that I res!--peace--sleep. Long--beautiful sleep ! Go, I beg."

She gently took her hands and led her out.

"Farewell, liddle maiden," she said softly, closing the shoji. " Don' weep."

## XV

### WHEN THE ROBINS NEST AGAIN

SHE sat quite still, and waited till night fell. Then she lighted the andon, and drew her toilet-glass toward her. She had a sword in her lap as she sat down. It was the one thing of her father's which her relatives had permitted her to keep. It would have been very beautiful to a Japanese, to whom the sword is a soul. A golden dragon writhed about the superb scabbard. He had eyes of rubies, and held in his mouth a sphere of crystal which meant many mystical things to a Japanese. The guard was a coiled serpent of exquisite workmanship. The blade was tempered into vague shapes of beasts at the edge. It was signed, " Ikesada." To her father it had been Honor. On the blade was this inscription:

*To die with Honor*

*When one can no longer live with Honor.*

It was in obscure ideographs; but it was also written on her father's kaimyo at the shrine, and she knew it well.

" To die with honor--" She drew the blade affectionately across her palm. Then she made herself pretty with vermilion and powder and perfumes; and she prayed, humbly endeavoring at the last to make her peace. She had not forgotten the missionary's religion; but on the dark road from death to Meido it seemed best now to trust herself to the compassionate augustnesses, who had always been true.

Then she placed the point of the weapon at that nearly nerveless spot in the neck known to every Japanese, and began to press it slowly inward. She could not help a little gasp at the first incision. But presently she could feel the blood finding its way down her neck. It divided on her shoulder, the larger stream going down her bosom. In a moment she could see it making its way daintily between her breasts. It began to congeal there. She pressed on the sword, and a fresh stream swiftly overran the other--redder, she thought. And then suddenly she could no longer see it. She drew the mirror closer. Her hand was heavy, and the mirror seemed far away. She knew that she must hasten. But even as she locked her fingers on the serpent of the guard, something within her cried out piteously. They had taught her how to die, but he had taught her how to live--nay, to make life sweet. Yet that was the reason she must die. Strange reason ! She now first knew that it was sad to die. He had come, and substituted himself for everything; he had gone, and left her nothing--nothing but this.

THE maid softly put the baby into the room. She pinched him, and he began to cry.

" Oh, pitiful Kwannon ! Nothing ? "

The sword fell dully to the floor. The stream between her breasts darkened and stopped. Her head drooped slowly forward. Her arms penitently outstretched themselves toward the shrine. She wept.

" Oh, pitiful Kwannon ! " she prayed.

The baby crept cooing into her lap. The little maid came in and bound up the wound.

WHEN Mrs. Pinkerton called next day at the little house on Higashi Hill it was quite empty.

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## Excerpt 3 (1900)

### *Madame Butterfly* (play) by David Belasco

**LIEUTENANT PINKERTON.** (*Aside to Sharpless, his eyes fixed on the mother and child*). I can't face it! I'm going. Give her the money.

**SUZUKI.** (*Entering, and seeing Pinkerton as he passes out of the door*). Ah! (*Sharpless gives her a warning gesture.*)

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** (*Seeing Suzuki's astonished face*). Wha'--?

(*She puts the baby in Suzuki's arms. Suzuki goes out quickly. Madame Butterfly sees the Consul.*) You! Oh! (*Joyously.*) You seen him?

**SHARPLESS.** Yes.

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** An' you tole him?

**SHARPLESS.** Well...

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** But you tole him...of bebbby?

**SHARPLESS.** Yes.

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** (*Wiping her dry lips*). Yaes...tha's right. Tha's what I—as' you do...an'—an' what he say?

**SHARPLESS.** Well...(*Taking out the envelope, and giving her the money which she takes without looking at it.*) He said—er—He was crazy to see you and—(*aside*) What the devil can I say! (*To her.*) You know he can't leave the ship just yet. (*Pointing to the package in her hand.*) That is in remembrance of the past. He wishes you to be always happy, to have the best of luck; he hopes to see you soon—and—(*The lies die out on his lips.*)

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** (*Bending and kissing his hand*). All—all the gods in the heavens bless you! (*Overcome, she staggers. Sharpless catches her, puts her into the chair—she leans against him—her face upraised, her eyes closed.*)

(*Kate, entering hurriedly.*)

**KATE.** Has Lieutenant Pinkerton gone? Has my husband been here? (*Madame Butterfly hears and opens her eyes.*)

**SHARPLESS.** For God's sake—*(He looks at Madame Butterfly whose eyes are fixed on his with a look of despair.)* Come, we can overtake him.

**KATE** *(In a lower voice).* Did he speak to her of the—

**SHARPLESS.** No.

**KATE.** Then I will ask. *(For the first time seeing Madame Butterfly.)* Is this—*(Sharpless nods and goes. There is a short pause, while the two women look at each other; then Madame Butterfly, still seated, slowly bows her head.)* Why, you poor little thing...who in the world could blame you or ...call you responsible...you pretty little plaything. *(Takes Madame Butterfly in her arms.)*

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** *(Softly).* No—plythin'...I am Mrs. Lef-ten-ant B.F.—No—no—now I am, only—Cho-Cho-San, but no playthin'...*(She rises, then impassively.)* How long you been marry?

**KATE.** Four months...

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** *(Counting on her fingers).* Oh...four.

**KATE.** Won't you let me do something for the child? Where is he? *(Madame Butterfly gestures toward the next room. Kate, seeing the child.)* Ah! The dear little thing! May I—

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** No! Can look...no can touch...

**KATE.** Let us think first of the child. For his own good...let me take him home to my country...I will do all I would do for my own.

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** Taking the money-box from her sleeve, and giving the coings to Kate.) Tha's his...two dollar. All tha's lef' of his moaneys...I shall need no more...*(She hands Kate the envelope which Sharpless has just give.)* I lig if you also say I sawry—no—no—no—glad—glad! I wish him that same happiness lig he wish for me...an'tell him...I shall be happy...mebby. Thang him...Mister B.F. Pik-ker-ton for also that kindness he have been unto me...an' permit me to thang you, augustness, for that same...You—you mos' bes' lucky girl in these whole worl'...goon-night— *(She stands stolidly with her eyes closed.)*

**KATE.** *(Wiping her eyes).* But the child!

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** Come back fifteen minute... *(With closed eyes, she bows politely.)* Sayonara. *(Kate reluctantly goes.)* God he'p me, but no sun kin shine. *(Suzuki, who has listened, sinks at Madame Butterfly's feet.)* Don' cry, Suzuki, liddle maiden...accoun' I disappoint, a liddle dizappoint'—don' cry...*(Running her hand over Suzuki's head—as she kneels.)* Tha's short while ago you as' me res'—sleep...*(Wearily.)* Well—go way an'I will res' now...I wish res'—sleep...long sleep...an' when you see me again, I pray you look whether I be not beautiful again...as a bride.

**SUZUKI** *(Understandingly, sobbing).* No—no—no.

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** So that I suffer no more—goon bye, liddle maiden. *(Suzuki does not go. Madame Butterfly claps her hands, and sobbing, Suzuki leaves the room. Madame Butterfly bolts the shoji and the door, lights fresh incense befoe the shrine, takes down her father's sword and reads the inscription:)* "To die with honor...when one can no longer live with honor."...

*(She draws her finger across the blade, to test the sharpness of the sword, then picks up the hand glass, puts on more rouge, re-arranges the poppies in her hair, bows to the shrine, and is about to press the blade of the sword against her neck, when the door is opened and the child is pushed into the room by Suzuki, who keeps out of sight. Madame Butterfly drops the sword and takes the baby in her arms. A knocking is heard but she pays no heed. She sets the child on a mat, puts the American flag in its hand, and, picking up the sword, goes behind the screen that the*

*child may not see what she is about to do. A short pause—the sword is heard to drop. Madame Butterfly reappears, her face deathly—a scarf about her neck to conceal the wound. Suzuki opens the door, sees the face of her mistress—backs out of the room in horror. Madame Butterfly drops to her knees as she reaches the child, and clasps it to her. A hand is thrust through the shoji and the bolt is drawn.)*

*(Kate enters quickly, urging the reluctant Pinkerton to follow her.)*

**LIEUTENANT PINKERTON** *(Discerning what she has done).* Oh! Cho-Cho-San!

*(He draws her to him with the baby pressed to her heart. She waves the child's hand which holds the flag—saying faintly:)*

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.** Too bad those robins didn' nes' again. *(She dies.)*

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## Excerpt 4 (1989)

*Miss Saigon* musical (Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil)

Lyrics from the last song: "The American Dream" available on

<http://www.lyricsdownload.com/miss-saigon-the-american-dream-lyrics.html>

my father was a tattoo artist in Haiphong  
but his designs on mother didn't last too long  
my mother sold her body, high on Betel nuts  
my job was bringing red-faced monsieurs to our huts  
selling your mom is a wrench  
perfume can cover a stench  
that's what I learned from the French

then it all changed with Dien Bien Phu  
the frogs went home. Who came? Guess who?  
are you surprised we went insane  
with dollars pouring down like rain?  
businessmen never rob banks  
you can sell shit and get thanks  
that's what I learned from the Yanks

I'm fed up with small-time hustles  
I'm too good to waste my talent for greed  
I need room to flex my muscles  
in an ocean where the big sharks feed  
make me Yankee, they're my fam'ly  
they're selling what people need

what's that I smell in the air  
the American dream  
sweet as a new millionaire

the American dream  
pre-packed, ready-to-wear  
the American dream  
fat, like a chocolate éclair  
as you suck out the cream

luck by the tail  
how can you fail?  
and best of all, it's for sale  
the American dream

greasy chinks make life so sleazy  
in the States I'll have a club that's four-starred  
men like me there have things easy  
they have a lawyer and a body-guard  
to the Johns there I'll sell blondes there  
that they can charge on a card

what's that I smell in the air?  
the American dream  
sweet as a suite in Bel-air  
the American dream  
girls can buy tits by the pair  
the American dream  
bald people think they'll grow hair  
the American dream  
call girls are lining time square  
the American dream  
bums there have money to spare  
the American dream  
cars that have bars take you there  
the American dream  
on stage each night: Fred Astaire  
the American dream

shlitz down the drain!  
pop the Champagne!  
it's time we all entertain  
my American dream!

ENGINEER and CROWD

come ev'ryone, come and share  
the American dream  
name what you want and it's there  
the American dream

spend and have money to spare  
the American dream  
live like you haven't a care  
the American dream  
what other place can compare  
the American dream  
come and get more than your share  
the American dream

there I will crown  
Miss Chinatown  
all yours for ten percent down

ALL

the American dream!

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## Excerpt 5 (1988)

According to enotes website ( <http://www.enotes.com/m-butterfly/> )

The play is based on a bizarre but true story of a French diplomat who carried on a twenty-year affair with a Chinese actor and opera singer, not realizing that his partner was in fact a man masquerading as a woman. The diplomat apparently became aware of the deception only in 1986, when he was charged by the French government with treason—it transpired that his companion had been an agent for the Chinese government, and had passed on sensitive political information that he had acquired from the diplomat. This almost unbelievable story stimulated Hwang's imagination, and from it he created a drama that plays with ideas on a grand scale and manages at the same time to be witty and entertaining. Weaving into the play many parallels with, and ultimately ironic reversals of, Puccini's opera, *Madame Butterfly*, Hwang explores the stereotypes that underlie and distort relations between Eastern and Western culture, and between men and women.

### M. Butterfly by David Henry Hwang

#### ACT 3, Scene 2

*Same.*

*Music from the "Death Scene" from Butterfly blares over the house speakers. It is the loudest thing we've heard in this play.*

*Gallimard enters, crawling towards Son's wig and kimono.*

GALLIMARD: Butterfly? Butterfly?

*Song remains a man, in the witness box, delivering a testimony we do not hear.*

GALLIMARD (*to us*): In my moment of greatest shame, here, in this courtroom—with that...person up there, telling the world...What strikes me especially is how shallow he is, how glib and obsequious...completely..without substance! The type that prowls around discos with a gold medallion stinking of garlic. So little like my Butterfly.

Yet even in this moment my mind remains agile, flip-flopping like a man on a trampoline. Even now, my picture dissolves, and I see that...witness...talking to me.

*Song suddenly stands straight up in his witness box, and looks at Gallimard.*

SONG: Yes. You. White man.

*Song steps out of the witness box, and moves downstage towards Gallimard. Light change.*

GALLIMARD (*To Song*): Who? Me?

SONG: Do you see any other white men?

GALLIMARD: Yes. There're white men all around. This is a French courtroom.

SONG: So you are an adventurous imperialist. Tell me, why did it take you so long? To come back to this place?

GALLIMARD: What place?

SONG: This theatre in China. Where we met many years ago.

GALLIMARD (*to us*): And once again, against my will, I am transported.

*Chinese opera music comes up on the speakers. Song begins to do opera moves, as he did the night they met.*

SONG: Do you remember? The night you gave your heart?

GALLIMARD: It was a long time ago.

SONG: Not long enough. A night that turned your world upside down.

GALLIMARD: Perhaps.

SONG: Oh, be honest with me. What's another bit of flattery when you've already given me twenty years' worth? It's a wonder my head hasn't swollen to the size of China.

GALLIMARD: Who's to say it hasn't?

SONG: Who's to say? And what's the shame? In pride? You think I could've pulled this off if I wasn't already full of pride when we met? No, not just pride. Arrogance. It takes arrogance, really—to believe you can will, with your eyes and your lips, the destiny of another. (*he dances*) C'mon. Admit it. You still want me. Even in slacks and a button-down collar.

GALLIMARD: I don't see what the point of—

SONG: You don't? Well maybe, Rene, just maybe—I want you.

GALLIMARDLLIMARD: You do?

SONG: Then again, Maybe I'm just playing with you. How can you tell? (*Reprising his feminine character, he sidles up to Gallimard*) "How I wish there were even a small café to sit in. With men in tuxedos, and cappuccinos, and bad expatriate jazz." How you want to kiss me, don't you?

GALLIMARD: (*Pulling away*): What makes you—?



SONG: --so sure? See? I take the words from your mouth. Then I wait for you to come and retrieve them. (*He reclines on the floor*)

GALLIMARD: Why?! Why do you treat me so cruelly?

SONG: Perhaps I *was* treating you cruelly. But now—I'm being nice. Come here, my little one.

GALLIMARD: I'm not your little one!

SONG: My mistake. It's I who am *your* little one, right?

GALLIMARD: Yes, I—

SONG: So come get your little one. If you like. I may even let you strip me.

GALLIMARD: I mean, you were! Before...but not like this!

SONG: I was? Then perhaps I still am. If you look hard enough. (*He starts to remove his clothes*)

GALLIMARD: What—what are you doing?

SONG: Helping you to see through my act.

GALLIMARD: Stop that! I don't want to! I don't—

SONG: Oh, but you asked me to strip, remember?

GALLIMARD: What? That was years ago! And I took it back!

SONG: No. You postponed it. Postponed the inevitable. Today, the inevitable has come calling.

*From the speakers, cacophony: Butterfly mixed in with Chinese gongs.*

GALLIMARD: No! Stop! I don't want to see!

SONG: Then look away.

GALLIMARD: No! Stop! I don't want to see!

SONG: Then look away.

GALLIMARD: You're only in my mind! All this is in my mind! I order you! To stop!

SONG: To what? To strip? That's just what I'm—

GALLIMARD: No! Stop! I want you—!

SONG: You want me?

GALLIMARD: To stop!

SONG: You know something, Rene? Your mouth says no, but your eyes say yes. Turn them away. I dare you.

GALLIMARD: I don't have to! Every night, you say you're going to strip, but then I beg you and you stop!

SONG: I guess tonight is different.

GALLIMARD: Why? Why should that be?

SONG: Maybe I've become frustrated. Maybe I'm saying "Look at me, you fool!" Or maybe I'm just feeling...sexy. (*He is down to his briefs*)

GALLIMARD: Please. This is unnecessary. I know what you are.

SONG: Do you? What am I?

GALLIMARD: A—a man.

SONG: You don't really believe that.

GALLIMARD: Yes I do! I knew all the time somewhere that my happiness was temporary, no love a deception. But my mind kept the knowledge at bay. To make the wait bearable.

SONG: Monsieur Gallimard—the wait is over.

*Song drops his briefs. He is naked. Sound cue out. Slowly, we and Song come to the realization that what we had thought to be Gallimard's sobbing is actually his laughter.*

GALLIMARD: Oh god! What an idiot! Of course!

SONG: Rene—what?

GALLIMARD: Look at you! You're a man! (*He bursts into laughter again*)

SONG: I fail to see what's so funny!

GALLIMARD: "You fail to see—!" I mean, you never did have much of a sense of humor, did you? I just think it's ridiculously funny that I've wasted so much time on just a man!

SONG: Wait. I'm not "just a man."

GALLIMARD: No? Isn't that what you've been trying to convince me of?

SONG: Yes, but what I mean—

GALLIMARD: And now, I finally believe you, and you tell me it's not true? I think you must have some kind of identity problem.

SONG: Will you listen to me?

GALLIMARD: Why?! I've been listening to you for twenty years. Don't I deserve a vacation?

SONG: I'm not just any man!

GALLIMARD: Then, what exactly are you?

SONG: Rene, how can you ask—? Okay, what about this?

*He picks up Butterfly's robe, starts to dance around. No music.*

GALLIMARD: Yes, that's very nice. I have to admit.

*Song holds out his arm to Gallimard.*

SONG: It's the same skin you've worshipped for years. Touch it.

GALLIMARD: Yes, it does feel the same.

SONG: Now—close your eyes.

*Song overs Gallimard's eyes with one hand. With the other, Song draws Gallimard's hand up to his face. Gallimard, like a blind man, lets his hands run over Song's face.*

GALLIMARD: This skin, I remember. The curve of her face, the softness of her cheek, her hair against the back of my hand...

SONG: I'm your Butterfly. Under the robes, beneath everything, it was always me. Now, open your eyes and admit it—you adore me. *(He removes his hand from Gallimard's eyes)*

GALLIMARD: You, who knew every inch of my desires—how could you, of all people, have made such a mistake?

SONG: What?

GALLIMARD: You showed me your true self. When all I loved was the lie. A perfect lie, which you let fall to the ground—and now, it's old and soiled.

SONG: So—you never really loved me? Only when I was playing a part?

GALLIMARD: I'm a man who loved a woman created by a man. Everything else—simply falls short.

*Pause.*

SONG: What am I supposed to do now?

GALLIMARD: You were a fine spy, Monsieur Gong, with an even finer accomplice. But now I believe you should go. Get out of my life!

SONG: Go where? Rene, you can't live without me. Not after twenty years.

GALLIMARD: I certainly can't live with you—not after twenty years of betrayal.

SONG: Don't be so stubborn! Where will you go?

GALLIMARD: I have a date...with my Butterfly.

SONG: So, throw away your pride. And come...

GALLIMARD: Get away from me! Tonight, I've finally learned to tell fantasy from reality. And, knowing the difference, I choose fantasy.

SONG: *I'm your fantasy!*

GALLIMARD: You? You're as real as hamburger. Now get out! I have a date with my Butterfly and I don't want your body polluting the room! *(He tosses Song's suit at him)* Look at these—you dress like a pimp.

SONG: Hey! These are Armani slacks and—! (*He puts on his briefs and slacks*) Lets just say...I'm disappointed in you, Rene. In the crush of your adoration, I thought you'd become something more. More like...a woman. But no. Men. You're like the rest of them. It's all in the way we dress, and make up our faces, and bat our eyelashes. You really have so little imagination!

GALLIMARD: You, Monsieur Song? Accuse me of too little imagination? You, if anyone, should know—I am pure imagination. And in imagination I will remain. Now get out!

*Gallimard bodily removes Song from the stage, taking his kimono.*

SONG: Rene! I'll never put on those robes again! You'll be sorry!

GALLIMARD: (*To Song*): I'm already sorry (*Looking at the kimono in his hands*) Exactly as sorry...as a Butterfly.

### Scene 3

*M. Gallimard's prison cell. Paris. Present.*

GALLIMARD: I've played out the events of my life night after night, always searching for a new ending to my story, one where I leave this cell and return forever to by Butterfly's arms.

Tonight I realize my search is over. That I've looked all along in the wrong place. And now, to you I will prove that my love was not in vain—by returning to the world of fantasy where I first met her.

*He picks up the kimono; dancers enter.*

GALLIMARD: There is a vision of the Orient that I have. Of slender women in chong sams and kimonos who die for the love of unworthy foreign devils. Who are born and raised to be the perfect women. Who take whatever punishment we give them, and bounce back, strengthened by love, unconditionally. It is a vision that has become my life.

*Dancers bring the wash basin to him and help him make up his face.*

GALLIMARD: In public, I have continued to deny that Song Liling is a man. This brings me headlines, and is a source of great embarrassment to my French colleagues, who can now be sent into a coughing fit by the mere mention of Chinese food. But alone, in my cell, I have long faced the truth.

And the truth demands a sacrifice. For mistakes made over the course of a lifetime. My mistakes were simple and absolute—the man I loved was a cad, a bounder. He deserved nothing but a kick in the behind, and instead I gave him...all my love.

Yes—love. Why not admit it all? That was my undoing, wasn't it? Love warped my judgment, blinded my eyes, rearranged the very lines on my face...until I could look in the mirror and see nothing but...a woman.

*Dancers help him put on the Butterfly wig.*

GALLIMARD: I have a vision. Of the Orient. That, deep within its almond eyes, there are still women. Women willing to sacrifice themselves for the love of a man. Even a man whose love is completely without worth.

*Dancers assist Gallimard in donning the kimono. They hand him a knife.*

GALLIMARD: Death with honor is better than life...life with dishonor. (*He sets himself center stage, in a seppuku position*) The love of a Butterfly can withstand many things—unfaithfulness, loss, even abandonment. But how can it face the one sin that implies all others? The devastating knowledge that, underneath it all, the object of her love

was nothing more, nothing less...a man. (*He sets the tip of the knife against his body*) It is 19\_\_\_. And I have found her at last. In a prison on the outskirts of Paris. My name is Rene Gallimard—also known as Madame Butterfly.

*Gallimard turns upstage and plunges the knife into his body, as music from the “Love Duet” blares over the speakers. He collapses into the arms of the dancers, who lay him reverently on the floor. The image holds for several beats. Then a tight special up on Song, who stands as a man, staring at the dead Gallimard. He smokes a cigarette; the smoke filters up through the lights. Two words leave his lips.*

SONG: Butterfly? Butterfly?

*Smoke rises as lights fade slowly to black.*

*END OF PLAY*

**Worksheet A**

**Name:**

<p>Opera Synopsis-<i>Madama Butterfly</i></p>	
<p>2<sup>nd</sup> Excerpt- <i>Madame Butterfly</i> by John Luther Long</p>	
<p>1<sup>st</sup> Excerpt-<i>Madame Chrysanthème</i></p>	
	<p>Year the story published</p> <p>Who is telling the story?</p> <p>How does the story end?</p> <p>Which historical events affect the development of this story?</p> <p>Do you think that the excerpts are more similar or more different to the synopsis of the opera? EXPLAIN WHY OR WHY NOT?</p> <p>What does this excerpt tell about the audience for whom it was created for?</p> <p>Are there any ideas in this segment that relate to our society today?</p>

	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> Excerpt- <b><i>Madame Butterfly</i></b> (play) by David Belasco</p>	<p>4<sup>th</sup> Excerpt- <b><i>Miss Saigon</i></b></p>	<p>5<sup>th</sup> Excerpt- <b><i>M. Butterfly</i></b> by Hwang</p>
<p>Year the story published</p> <p>Who is telling the story?</p> <p>How does the story end?</p> <p>Which historical events affect the development of this story?</p> <p>Do you think that the excerpts are more similar or more different to the synopsis of the opera? EXPLAIN WHY OR WHY NOT?</p> <p>What does this excerpt tell about the audience for whom it was created for?</p> <p>Are there any ideas in this segment that relate to our society today?</p>			

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## Worksheet B

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Brainstorm the ideas for an excerpt to suit present society and audiences based on the story of *Madama Butterfly*.

Who would be telling the story? (ex. child, maid, Prince Yamadori)

How will the story end?

What elements of our society might be included?

What are some of important issues in the news today?

What would the similarities/differences to the other excerpts be?

Where is our society headed? Would this affect the story?

**Discuss your ideas with class. Assignment: Write the story of Madama Butterfly for today's audience. Begin by writing a paragraph describing the story. Make sure your teacher approves your paragraph before you go on to complete your story.**

**Ideas: Where will the story take place? What is Pinkerton's profession or identity? Does Madame Butterfly work? Where does she live? How do they communicate? How do they use technology? Do they marry? Does Pinkerton get left behind? Do they have children? Adopt? Do they even live on this planet? Is it in the future? Write your own story?**