**Statement of Purpose** Allen Chak

The Trial of Dr. Beck is a play that centers around racial discrimination before the Civil Rights Movement. With the Judicial System as its mean setting and theme, the author brings important views that emphasises the injustices of racism. The play’s main character, Dr. Beck, is an “olive or light skinned” African American who just graduated from medical school. He believes that being light skinned means having a higher social and intellectual standing over people with darker skin. His wife, who he is jealous of and hates, is a successful and “dark skinned” entrepreneur. Dr. Beck is on trial for murdering his wife. All of the evidence points to him as he is jealous of the success of his “inferior” wife as well as wanting his children to be lighter skinned. The play’s main theme focuses on the racial segregation and discrimination between not only Whites and Blacks, but the tone of skin colors as well.

While discrimination is one of the big themes, eugenics is also brought up in the play as a central story point. Eugenics, the science that improves humanity based on genetics, is an important study Dr. Beck believes in. This connects to the fact that Whites are seen to have a higher social standing than African Americans. This way of thinking has affected the way people in the 1930’s judgement and stereotypes based on skin color. The importance of this theme is to show discrimination not only between races but also between people with different skin color. It shows that before the introduction of the Civil Rights Movement, many African Americans accepted the fact they are an inferior race to the Europeans. Using the exhibit, I will conclude that the cause of internal prejudice between “lighter” and “darker” colored African Americans is caused by the external racism and discrimination they receive from the European Americans.