



Writing in Mythical Spaces

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Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Studying fairy tales, storytelling and mythology bridges cultural blind spots and miscalculations in my current teaching which only superficially touches on Central and South American languages, poems, songs, music, ritual, histories and stories. More than one half of students enrolled in New Haven Public Schools speak Spanish at home. Students speak a wide variety of dialects from traditional Mayan language in the mountains of Guatemala to European literary Spanish, adding richness and depth to daily classroom conversations. Writing lessons are heavily weighted towards the Black and European American, primarily the British Isles and North American stories of cultural experience. Reading shared texts and building relationships and camaraderie via conversations with colleagues in the District who also attend the Institute Seminar who share the experience of teaching in New Haven will help me build a connection to the diverse social and economic panorama of 'Spanish': Guatemalan, Mexican, Honduran, Puerto Rican and Cuban stories, metaphors and lyrical traditions sewn into the neighborhoods we live in to ensure my lessons continue to be multiculturally relevant in their focus. Researching intra-cultural archetypes will help understand student's experiences, building relationships based on history, wisdom, knowledge, depth of understanding which is the basis for learning by engaging sharing and documenting our stories around celebrations such as the wide practice of the Quinceanera in Mexico or 'Day of the Dead' rituals in Guatemala: traditions that are now part of American culture.

The activities in this unit: a treasure hunt and a series of essential questions deriving from the well-known and loved archetypes in fairytales are designed to bridge an interspace between building community and writing manuscripts of creative nonfiction, short stories and poetry. Though this framework is exciting, and it is applicable across a humanities as well as an arts curriculum. In the description of 'American Unfiltered' an exhibit at the Ely Center of Contemporary Arts in the New Haven Independent, July 16, 2024, the photographers write "[what] if we could better relate to one another and heal our nations divides by seeing what we share...if we found the courage to ask questions and just listen, overpowering our natural instinct to react?' While the activities I designed studying the intrinsic power of mythological thinking and the prompts relate most closely to Creative Writing and to English standards, they are set up the in an inclusive as well as ultimately flexible framing allowing the lessons to be repurposed for literacy, social emotional learning, history, social studies, arts or ethics classes. Additionally, this unit is perusable, you can take a single

inspiration from a suggestion arising from mythological thinking and apply the framework to historical thinking by simply substituting your own goals and values into the exercises. Slightly changing the wording, I am providing frames hours or weeks of deep inquiry, creativity and uplifting conversations.

This curriculum is designed to inspire cultural connections to build shared cultural identities and nurture shared interests. In this way we journey towards mutual understanding of how the world works and why it is so magical and essential to communicate with each other. Marta Figlerowicz describes her pedagogy as inclusive, discussion and diverse text-driven flexible enough to incorporate the diverse needs and interests of the teachers and their student populations. She shares her interest in the way memes communicate revealing compassion and respect for youth culture. Her seminar begins with an overview of intercontinental classical folk tales and myths, part of the academic literary and anthropology canonical literature alongside contemporary scholarly studies such as the work of Edgar Garcia whose “interest and scholarly explorations of Hemispheric literatures and cultures of the Americas, primarily during the 20th century; indigenous and Latino studies; American literature; poetry and poetics; environmental criticism; and the intersection of poetry and anthropology” help us make new meaning in our own teaching. Figlerowicz writes on contemporary mythmaking and storytelling in anime and the Marvel film series to be then segued into the cultural mythologies shared by an American immigrant and refugee communities. I look to Figlerowicz’ insight to collaborate, network and guide in creating differentiated learning assignments to make students excited and inspired to explore then honor their family and cultural history. Literacy-based conversations allow us to engage in life-changing dialogue. By developing our relationships, we learn to work together. Without making the effort to absorb and learn about each other’s cultural values and priorities, little will be done

These activities give the place for connections which build community by beginning with understanding the principals of ‘orature’ in Native American culture folk tales looking for our humanly determined or imagined ties to ritual and art. Half of my students are currently of Puerto Rican, Dominican, Haitian, Mexican, Honduran, Ecuadoran, Peruvian, Columbian and Guatemalan heritage. Many are of mixed heritage such as Afro Latino heritage or Asian Latino heritage. There is a small Asian and White demographic. The other significant percentage of students identify as Black.

The goal of the learning activities is to bring us together through the storytelling, closer to story building, through theatre, poetry and art. In the Prologue to “A Story as Sharp as a Knife” Robert Bringhurst writes “Native American oral literature in general, and Haida literature in particular, seem to me far closer in spirit and in form to European painting and to European music than to European literature. This is one way out of the dilemma. Reading works of oral literature is like reading musical scores and narrative paintings that it is like reading books.’ By emphasizing active if not ritualized listening to one another, over working in solitude also known as reading on the page, we allow students to return to reading and to learning as a shared, lived experience alongside an analytical allowing for personal and historical reference points. Bringhurst makes the analogy of the book as a “dehydrated voice, set adrift in many copies like a seed’ while ‘a work of oral literature is rooted like a tree, in and place and in the person who is speaking.’ He reminds us that ‘books know nothing’ about oral tradition, books ‘know nothing...of the poems we want to hear.... colored and shaped by a language’ a book will not speak. “It carries out nothing to ask the poem to come to us. We must try to make the pilgrimage to the poem.’ Students often think of writing as a task list, broken down into a linear process from which a logical story appears. I concur with Bringhurst’s analogy of reading as a pilgrimage, an act of devotion which has a form but has no format, a voyage that shows us how stories might be found out perhaps courted/seduced by the seeker of the story. This practice is not unlike the Vajrayana practice of an enlightened warrior who discovers wisdom hidden in the landscape. While Medieval in logic, we know what it means to discover a story, a poem or an essay scattered into the objects and places our lives give us.

Pursuing the metaphor of storytelling as pilgrimage allows teacher and student to mutually support one other on meaningful, unpredictable, differentiated, intergenerational journeys at the heart of which we find a pathway to a variety of truths. This is what narrative worth writing is. What is important about the metaphor: pilgrimage is faith and hard work, ethics worth acknowledging in storytelling today. Modeling writing as a sacred walk might be the remedy students need to keep looking forward to telling their story. “The poems we want to hear are colored and shaped by a language.... that books know nothing about.” How do we do it is a good question and one for which I put forth a suggestion as a rhetorical, physiological map.

If a Quinceanera is a mythical space, Bringhurst’s findings elevate our relationship with storytelling. Uncovering shared reference points around the magic and the culture of the Quinceanera across continents, language and countries helps students recognize shared experiences which translate into their writing. What is mythical space if not shared rhetoric? An example of co-creating this space from which stories are told, is when my student V shared first with me a photo of her grandfather dancing at a wedding with a chicken in her home in the mountains of Mexico. Later in the year, she shared photos of her Quinceanera, the intricate dress she wore, court, caballeros, the cumbia dance her father danced with her. She generously brought me into the space of her life through images, costumes, playlists, photos, this was a place I had never been to, a place minutes from where I live.

This is a primary example of being invited into mythical space the way Alice in Lewis Carol’s story ‘Alice in Wonderland’ sent her to mythical space by eating magic-infused cookies. Causes and conditions for travel into mythical space arise constantly. Other examples include Richard Erdoe’s photos, documenting the ‘Ghost Dance’ of the Rose Cherokee. My colleague Kassalina with whom I have been collaborating for two years shared with me pencil drawings, the basis for her puppet-building unit based on reclaiming African stories by descendants of Africans who have been disconnected from their stories. This drawing called ‘Grasshopper from Guilford Home Garden’ connected to Albrecht Durer’s 1515 print ‘Rhinoceros’ paired with a second drawing of a photo of her friend Karim Ssozi holding an ensene (grasshopper) in Kampala, Uganda to celebrate the 2022 New Year. This suite of grasshopper tales and drawings shared with me as Kassalina and I constructed our fairy tale and myth curriculum took me back to my own childhood in West Africa where grasshoppers and frogs were an intensive part of the garden and landscape where I spent much of my time. This is a childhood also due for its’ own genre of reclamation. My friend’s drawings take me to the mythical space of my childhood, a place not near New Haven, a place my children and husband do not know. This is a healing gift, the fruition of sharing art and writing.

Another constructive metaphorical connection are the Eider housekeepers of Norway (Fredricksen, 2024) who magically construct dollhouses to protect duck families, living afterwards for months in remote locations without water or electricity to care for birds and to cultivate relationships with them. This act of charity results in shared down which becomes blankets for newborns, a quilt sewing between humans and birds is equally mythical. Where we put our love, life flourishes.

Another definition of myth is as a space between past and present, grief. Myth can be placed anywhere in the present if we share a meaning vocabulary for finding the space. Kassalina’s drawing pencil of a grasshopper in Uganda, in the hands of her friend, which in the context of how we teach with the materials. What we create together sometimes starts a story of healing, a through way as we each see a grasshopper cused in our hands, across cultures and times For those of us for whom the outdoors represent a journey, an awakening, a migration, suffering, play, childhood, the grasshopper takes us to grasslands and to an anthology of stories told of the natural world. Kassalina’s mythic drawings connect me with a conversation I can no longer have with three of my siblings, all my brothers whom I lost following the Covid 19 pandemic. The images remind me

of silly discussions we had together about and with millions of ants and lizards, scurrying about our yard and our home in West Africa and India. My colleague's beautiful pencil lines inscribed in time like the words of Gilgamesh on a clay tablet make a destination of a mythic space. By connecting with a drawing, effortless effort brings the space between loss and forgiveness together. Storytelling, teaching students to write, collage, draw and gather their experience is a space we can acknowledge as a place of writing in our classrooms.

This unit of study includes investigating maps, photos and stories from the classical storytellers relevant to students. Museum catalogues allow artifacts dating back to the beginning of human culture to inspire students to collaborate on standing for their origin stories through installations, events, plays, Tik Tok interview, hand-held books, designed to tell the brilliant origin stories of everyday images and tropes. In class we build the joy and the bravery needed to pass on essential cultural wisdom from generation to generation and from continent to continent. A curriculum unit which includes reading original essential texts, researching unsung heroes, film study, guest lecturers and walking field trips to the Yale Art Gallery and to Bregamos Theatre and restaurants in Fair Haven will enrich and point to our shared love of stories, family --- our reliance on spiritual language to survive change and adversity.

Celebration will also factor into our study looking at for example the origins of the Quinceanera: How are the values of the Quinceanera celebrated differently in society today and how has this tradition been 'Americanized' or has the Quinceanera awoken feminine principles subjugated by the Puritan aesthetic. Consequently, in support of understanding the values of the Quinceanera as a community, we will cooperatively design music playlists, menus, food, family systems and tradition to build powerful empathy and supportive community and respect for each other's stories. This process allows for development and implementation of systems to preserve of language and culture as well as to trace the evolution/movement of traditions as they are carried by immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. We will explore what Marta Figlerowicz described as 'transgenerational transfer,' develop mechanisms of our own based on anthropological and literary practices to try to find and track these trends in our own communities to create positive outcomes for students and their families.

Place-based learning activities: visiting, drawing, photographing artifacts, interviews, songs, poets, quotes, images, and archival objects available at the Beinecke Rare Books Library and the Yale University Art Gallery (YUAG) which are both within walking distance of New Haven's Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School (CO-OP). A strong theme in our community is loss: of a family member, of home, of resources, loss of community. Coincidental to and with my career as a classroom teacher, I began to experience complex trauma in my family life, I therefore found it necessary to find reliable mechanisms for dealing with loss through reading and responding to poetry and prose. Social emotional and hands on learning is a relevant teaching method to teach following the pandemic. While at times academic learning and social emotional learning appear to work at odds, it can be easily documented that teaching on all levels relies on teachers having emotional well-being to perform effectively and to educate students on a deep level. Taking a stake in the mental health of youth is relevant for deciding what we need to teach as well as how to prioritize goals and expectations. Looking backwards and forwards simultaneously, dwelling spontaneously in the mythic and in the rational, truths we know as well as those with orature, storytelling, mythology and 'folklore' could be a path to healing. By studying and explaining the tropes and idiosyncrasies, making meaning is constructive. Meanwhile, listening to students' stories of survival, of family and of love shows us what we need to teach. This is the psychological, philosophical and intellectual present coming from contemporary mythological media and tropes that, if intentionally organized, could inspire excellent conversation and deeply creative thinking in classrooms. For example, this spring I wrote about the South African pop singer Tyla's sand dress,

fashioned from crystals of sand, then molded to her body, which she wore to the Met Gala 24. I sketched this poem as a broadside print: words of poetry combined with a photo of sand. It read like this reminiscent of a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem “ sandsound on the wings of white gull over the city going to breakfast /Fish at the crest of the sea /White whale’s merciless quest is /Claudia Rankine’s *Institute for the Study of Whiteness* /Gong of the here and to the ever after.

As a writing teacher, I find the more I break down how to draft a story such as sharing the logic and philosophies of storytelling as a hands-on process, the better the resulting writing is from students. Looking at traditionally as well as untraditionally told myths and fairytales shows how the elements of storytelling are culturally relevant across cultures and time. Sharing the topology and the history of almost any myth reinforces the value of focusing on the details of our own experiences. Reinforcing how a story evolves and transforms with each retelling reminds students that stories are alive and important.

Day 1 Exploring Interspace with Music

Materials

Access to YouTube

White Board or anywhere convenient and affordable to save collective thinking progress

Access Prior Knowledge

Choose a question from the list of fairytale plots (see Question List below) that resonates with a personal or thematic element or that aligns with current themes of interest such as the absence of a family member or a monster that enters the picture and ruins everything.

Demonstration

Hands On Learning to Explore Mythological Interspaces as an Intergenerational Conversation

Example: Share Tyla, the South African songwriter’s hit ‘Water’

Listen to the song using our six senses: hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling and your thinking consciousness.

Listen to ‘Water’ a second time taking notes on how the music hits your body, your senses and mind

Small Group Discussion

What connections have you made to this song through your senses? Do your senses speak louder than words? What does it mean to experience a song, a story or a poem?

Large Group Discussion

Divide groups based on learning modalities and preferences: hands on learners, neurodiverse learners, visual learners, audio learners

Reflection

Using a White Board collectively trace a path between the sensorial and the intellectual experiences we have from listening to the song: listing, drawing, word burst, cartoon. Explore how a listening activity brings a group together.

Group Reflection

Do we feel more connected having explored an interspace together? Give examples of what you have learned from someone else's perspective.

Day 2 Brushing Our Way into Interspace

Materials

Paint brushes or calligraphy brushes

Paint or black sumi ink

Paper depending on what is available, for example rice paper could be used.

Ground cloth

Access Prior Knowledge

Discuss the power of community building by listening to music together. What have we learned so far about each other having visited an interspace together?

Demonstration

Set up a pot of paint, paintbrush and paper in front of you in a dignified and ceremonial manner.

Students watch as you take a deep breath, settle your mind and body, pick up your paint brush, dip it into the paint or ink, close your eyes, and draw a circle on the paper without looking at the paper. Then, open your eyes, look to the horizon, breathe then look at your 'circle.'

Small Group Work

In functional silence students practice making circles in an orchestrated series of steps lead by the principal teacher. Repeat 3 times.

Share

This is a chance for students to talk about their insights and their experiences with the circle exercise.

Open the discussion up for students the length and style of which should be to help you and your students' needs and aspirations.

Reflect

Post all the painted circles on the wall.

Spend 3 minutes looking at the collection of circles in silence.

Draw conclusions circling around experiences while finding connections and finding unifying patterns and conversations between the circles.

Suggest the power of elective and non-elective group power.

Day 3 Reading Ovid's 'Metamorphosis' as an Event

Access Prior Knowledge

We have explored sharing space together through music and through a shared experience of feeling our way through painting a circle together which are both ways of 'getting us all more or less onto the same page.'

Demonstration

Now we will begin our journey Ovid's 'Metamorphosis' which is a poetic rendition mythology told as an embedded narrative, a sequence of myths and stories some of which you will be familiar with from Percy Jackson's series and from Marvel comics. The stories are linked to one another through the appearance of different characters within different circumstances. We are going to study these myths by reading them together in a randomized fashion.

Open Ovid's 'Metamorphosis' (or the collection of myths of your choosing) and read a myth without discussion.

Small Group Work

Students explore the myth by writing their own 3 sentence fictional or non-fictional memory of the essence of the myth focusing on a moment in the reading which is familiar to them from the Percy Jackson series, from Netflix, or which reminds them of a story you have read or an experience you have had.

Reflect

Highlight student writing by setting up an informal but respectful student-directed Open Mic as a reflection exercise.

Allow space for non-judgmental work sharing to create group solidarity.

Focus on quality, tone, listening

Day 4

Access Prior Knowledge

Revisit the direct and fresh experience from the informal sharing of unedited work. Discuss the experience of improvisational work. What do we learn about ourselves from a rough draft?

Demonstration

Share an example from your work before and after edits and changes. This sharing could take the form of a poem you wrote, a paragraph from an essay or a slideshow you created for teaching.

Small Group Work

Find examples from student work or from a famous artist's work where the rough draft was better than the final draft and vice versa.

Reflection

What really is progress when it comes to creativity?

Day 5 +

The following is a stand-alone series of questions which can be used as warm up lessons at the beginning of class or as reflection lessons at the end of class in tandem with literature you are studying. They are overarching higher order thinking questions that lead students to dig deeply into their own experiences and to see them as mythic in nature. These are questions that can be asked repeatedly and for which the answers are layered and wonderfully complex.

Questions can be answered in the modality of learning of the students' choice: short answer, project-based learning, as collaboration.

Questions List

Morphology-based inquiry structured as essential questions paraphrased and derived from the Russian folklorist and scholar Vladimir Propp's 'Morphology of the Folktale' published by The American Folklore Society, a brilliant calculation of the elements of folktales, starkly but accurately outlining in psychological detail the basis for many familiar Western narrative structures. Propp isolates conventions of motif and structure to delineate the basic trajectories of the stories we are probably familiar with both consciously and unconsciously.

The following questions are suggestions for developing your own framework for deep inquiry into first person storytelling based on structural writing prompts derived from historically powerful plots which cannot help but inspire excellent story telling. Teaching goals could vary from working in community towards a performance i.e., show case goal to include family and community member or these prompts could be for developing social emotional skills or building. These lessons could be used at the beginning of the year as trust building exercises or in the middle of the year as recalibration and recentering exercises.

1. Has a member of your family absented himself from home by going on a long-distance journey to faraway lands? How far did this family member go? What was the name of the faraway land that your family member went to?
2. Has a member of your family or anyone you know been called to go to war, to go on a business trip or a trade trip? Which war did your family member leave for? What business does your family or family member practice?
3. Has a younger sibling ever been absent by going visiting, going fishing or going on a walk or going out to gather berries? Have you or a family member ever been lost? How did you get lost? How were you found?
4. Have you ever experienced an intensive form of absence like from the death of a family member? Who went away and why? Were you prepared for this absence? Did this absence have any effect on you? Describe the result of this unexpected absence from your life.

5. Have you even been dared to do something like look into a closet? What was the dare?
6. Has a family member ever told you not to do something such as not go swimming or fishing because you were too young? Have you ever been told not to do something like answer the phone or eat a cookie?
7. Has there ever been a situation in your family in which you told or commanded not to come home late but you did come home late? Share the details of this story. What happened when you came home late or when you did not follow the rule?
8. Has there ever been a villain, a monster, a dragon, devil, witch, stepmother, a bandit or another new person who enters your story which interrupts the peace of your family causing misfortune and disrupting the peace of your family? Explain how the person or the villain made him or herself known. What did the villain look like or how did you know that trouble was in the mix? Think of the 'Big Bad Wolf' in the fable of the 'Three Little Pigs.' or the "Big Bad Wolf" in "Little Red Riding Hood" or any other villain, bad guy or witch or evil force that came to disrupt your family or your life story.
9. Has anyone tried to get you to give away a secret such as where a secret fortune or object is? Who tried to get the treasure from you? What was the treasure? Why did the outsider want to get it from you?
10. Has a villain or someone who does not have your best interest in mind ever assumed a disguise to get possession of something precious of yours? This kind of deception is often described as a 'wolf in sheep's clothing.' Has anyone ever pretended to be nice to you to get something from you? Has anyone acted like a 'sweet old lady' offering you a cookie or a bribe to get at something deeper, take something more important from you? Describe the figure that tricked you or coerced you into doing something damaging and what they got from you or from someone in your family. This can be a story that you overheard, or a story told to you by a friend or a family member.
11. Have you ever accidentally given away information to your enemy? Have you ever been taken advantage of by someone who takes advantage of a difficult position you are in such as a time when you had a bad grade, or you needed money resulting in someone taking advantage of your vulnerability? Explain this vulnerability and how you or your family were taken advantage of.
12. Has there ever been an event in your life where it felt like magical means were used to deceive you into giving something up? An example of this might be that it feels as though a magical potion were used to get something from you or from a family member?
13. Have you ever been in a situation where a villain takes something that is considered magical or precious of yours for example an uncle takes a guitar, a drum, a jacket, a basketball or a necklace that was handed down through generations which your family valued highly, felt attached to its qualities real or imagined. Talk about, describe the object with your senses, how you were connected to it? What did it feel like to lose it as well as what the effects of being betrayed were for you or for your family member.
14. Has anyone in your life suddenly disappeared under suspicious circumstances that cannot be explained through logic or has anyone been expelled from your family or your house, sent away by an untrustworthy person? Describe this illogical situation. What exactly happened? Describe the sequence of events as you recall them. When did this event real or imagined occur? Who was involved? How did you deal with it? Is there a story that you have heard that reminds you of what happened?
15. Did it ever seem as though one moment in your life was under a spell therefore resulting in a mishap or a fortunate situation that does not make sense? Have you been in a situation wherein the outcome is stranger than fiction, for example a situation that feels very out of the ordinary? Explain the details of the occurrence.

Treasure Hunt: To build a story set up steps for drafting as a treasure hunt which might be a global or local or

digital search. The advantage of local search is having a hands-on experience of relating a story to a photograph. Being in the presence of an artist's work when there is any connection between our story and the art piece allows a story through another viewpoint which generates a shared vocabulary. In this environment, a conversation can begin giving life to the artwork and storytelling. Illuminating stories through creative writing as well as research make stories come alive with purpose and benefit further if the process connected to community resources.

Suggestions: Tell a mythological or non-fiction by visiting and exploring the Yale University Art Gallery setting up essential questions for students to answer using findings from the gallery.

1. Find an art object such as a photo or a painting that reflects who you were as a child by generating a search in an art collection digital or in person.

Example of a direction this an organized treasure hunt could take as a global or local digital search: I found David Goldblatt's 1949 black and white photograph titled 'Children on the Border between Fietas and Mayfair, Johannesburg' which came from a digital search of the collection of the Yale Art Gallery. As I reflect on the photo of not ironically black and white children clowning around in front of the camera, I find my own sense of both playful belonging and an intimate distance from my own society and childhood due to being cared for by caregivers of a different race, a different culture than mine though my culture did not in many ways exist either. The photo carries a moment of vulnerability, beauty, humor and awkwardness to express and to recall a story of my own. Additionally, I discovered that YUAG will have an exhibit of David Goldblatt's work next winter titled 'Not Ulterior Motive.'

2. Find an art object from the YUAG or an object from your home, simple or complex, precious or ordinary, obvious or obscure that names who you are right now:

Example: Dáreece J. Walker's photo from 2019. Dad on D, from the Series Black Fathers Matter, Series II. This photo came up as a search in the YUAG digital collection for an art object that could reflect current incarnation as a parent in New Haven meant as a cue to engage family in research and writing. The aim and goal of the student storytellers includes encouraging family members to play along with the research momentum. Searching 'Dad in New Haven' brought up images Black and Latino dads before other dads reflecting the racial and class reality of New Haven where most white Dads are educated and work at Yale. This kind of search stands for a teachable moment because the search engine whose algorithms correctly align with the class and racial demographics of New Haven.

3. An art object reflecting who you want to become, who you are ultimately

Example: Naoko Matsubara's polychrome woodcut print with silver dust and color on handmade paper called Altar -Tibet which came up for me when I searched the YUAG collection using the word "Tibet" as my symbol for deep wisdom, spiritual realization, and well-being for myself and for future generations. I connect with this print through my studies and experiences as a writer and teacher because I practice Tibetan Buddhism and I worked with print making while I was studying poetics. Now as a sheep dog of writer, I can model taking hold of photos of at the gallery as a hands-on way to connect anew with writing. The colors as well as the imprint of the image 'Altar-Tibet' gives angles to write from. There is a journey to take when writing. There are myriads of systems to offer students. Demonstrating the steps for getting to the heart of storytelling.

4. Find an art object to reflect themes that illustrate your family culture or the culture you identify with.

Example: A tablecloth or a cooking implement. From a description in the YUAG catalogue and using the descriptive elements [Early 20th Century Indo-Pacific, cotton: wax resistant, made in Indonesia] or [Prototype Sedar Plate Design, American Decorative Arts, aluminum alloy]

5. Find art objects to fill out your family tree, discover real or imagined elements to support intergenerational stories which are generating a mythmaking engine

Example: Erica Horn's Creativity 2020 'The Journal' documenting daily experience. Horn's journal is a map for honoring the details of daily life as a path for appreciating family stories.

Reflection Questions

How can you use what you find visiting the museum to help you build depth and nuance which develops your relationship to your story and to telling it?

How does a story change as you put the pieces such as the digital photo memories and you retell your family stories?

How do you learn more about yourself by making associations between your individual experiences and the experiences of other people who share and appreciate your stories?

How do you learn more about yourself by studying and researching stories of people that do not share your upbringing?

How can you inspire joy and connection by telling your story?

How can telling your story in an informal setting help others tell their story?

How could a formal setting such as a performance help others tell their story and build community strength?

How can listening to myths and fairytales build empathy and creativity in your writing?

How can studying myths and fairytales build transferrable job skills?

How can studying myths inspire connection to the ritual importance of family relationships and traditions?

What can we take from reading classical myths by studying as a template for understanding how stories are embedded?

How can we further explore family relationships related to myths told through urban film and legends?

How can we explore the diversity of student stories through formal recorded interview formats at the Pulitzer Center?

How can we use place-based learning to explore local mythology and geological history?

How can we tell stories inspired by myths and folktales that result in with hands on three-dimensional outcomes?

How can we make a classroom playlist inspired by myths and fairytales to create a positive, growth-oriented

classroom culture?

How can we design a gala, or a game day inspired by myths and fairytales to build family relationships and community connections?

How can we understand meetups with friends as mythic communication?

Annotated Reading List for Students

Chu, Jon M. 2018. *Crazy Rich Asians*. USA: Warner Brothers.

Coin Depicting the God Asklepios, Art Institute of Chicago

Creativity 2020: Erica Van Horn, The Journal. 2020. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. June 1, 2020. <https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/article/creativity-2020-erica-van-horn-journal>.

Example of daily journaling to connect with the mythology of place-based writing.

Goldblatt, David. 1949. *Children on the Border between Fietas and Mayfair, Johannesburg*. Yale Art Gallery. <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/275796#technical-metadata>.

Mythical everyday photographs race relationships in South Africa. Matsubara, Naoko. 1989. *Altar-Tibet*. Yale Art Gallery. This print part of a series of prints shows an artist's study of Tibetan Buddhism which inspires students to study mythologies known and unknown following their personal talents

Unknown, Maker: 1912. *Table Cloth*. Yale Art Gallery.

This every day cultural object points out how a common household object speaks to personal mythology

Walker, Dáreece J. 2019. *Dad on D, from the Series Black Fathers Matter, Series II*. Yale Art Gallery. <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/293601>.

Photos of fathers to uplift and inspire

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<https://www.biographic.com/the-eider-keepers/?src=longreads>.

Havelock, Eric A. 1986. *Muse Learns to Write: Reflections of Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Humphries, Rolfe, and Ovid. 1955. *Metamorphoses*. Bloomington, MN: Indiana University Press.

A lyrical contemporary translation embedded of Greek myths showing how stories are related and entwined with meaning and cross-cultural reference.

Jolles, Andre. 2016. *Simple Forms: Legend, Saga, Myth, Riddle, Saying, Case, Memorabile, Fairytale, Joke*. London, England: Verso Books.

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Appendix on Implementing District Standards

Writing using myths, folktales, stories and mythical spaces as the place for building a text rich environment organically introduces students to rigorous but also imaginative conversations and prompts to consider how language works to make their school lives meaningful. The power of storylines that resonate with the deepest wisdom they preserve then give students a template for finding the basis of their own confidence Writing within a classroom learning space that values student voice, the big mythic picture of the incredible consequences of being educated and present to listen to each other, to read and to understand the visions of our young people who dream of the true future, emphasizes the joy and the potential of classroom teaching. Without being connected to a genuine power of writing, one developed from deep conversing, listening, reading and writing is a skill which might be both forgotten and misunderstood. Cultivation of the value of writing by investing in literacy skills is a profound effort of cultural and personal value.

Adam Gopnik writes in his review of Charles Taylor's book *Cosmic Connections: Poetry in the Age of Disenchantment* that 'communities of meaning that are drawn together by interspace and enchantment' and they are 'communities of practice.' Interspace taken in the context of teaching reading/writing in a mythical

space, feels like a place where we can bring the powerful history and incantation of language into an auspicious but also intentional learning environment. Answering essential questions which help break down and record stories is interspace: a powerful locator between standards and community values. Camille T. Dungy writes in her epic memoir *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden*, 'We talked about the narratives we hadn't seen published out of the American West. Books we longed for The Black pastoral. The Black garden book. The Black mother finding peace in the wider-than-human world' calling us to record and investigate this beautiful interspace neglected, and underrecognized in schools and communities. Another example of valuable interspace comes from the work of Connie Voisine's volume of poem *Psalm to Whomever is Responsible in* which she writes mythical interspace this way, '[y]our mouth is everything, a wedding cake with tiers of flowers' where we see our bodies as sacred space

L.11-12.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to understand more fully when reading or listening.

L.11-12.3(a) Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

L.11-12.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

L.11-12.5 (a) Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

L.11-12.5(b) Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

RL.11-12.6 Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

RL.11-12.7 Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time

frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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