



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1984 Volume IV: The Oral Tradition

A Dash of Folk, A Pinch of Fairy Recipes for Playmaking

Curriculum Unit 84.04.06
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There is a wondrous magic that exists only in the world of folk and fairy tales. Since I was a small child I have spent much of my life trying to find and hold on to this magic. I know I became a member of the theatrical community because here was another place that enchantment could be found. As a teacher I try to help my students find these special qualities in themselves and in the world around them. Here, I hope to take the reader on a brief journey wherein he will find the necessary ingredients to create his own charmed, magical, creative and dramatic brew using folk and fairy tales as the main elements of concoction.

This curriculum unit has been designed to explore the "oral tradition" and its relationship to the world of drama. Folk tales have been an integral part of the theater since its inception in ancient Greece. Today these stories can serve as powerful teaching tools in motivating children to explore the "inner" as well as "outer" world. As a child I found fairy stories captivating and read them eagerly. Having once read them I would gather my friends and use the stories to put on a play. If no one could be found, I would dramatize the stories by myself with the aid of my dolls. I know that I am not alone in being caught up in the spell of the folk tale. All children are captivated by these primal stories. As Bruno Bettelheim explains in *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, folk and fairy tales can be the tools that help a child successfully complete the rites of passage from childhood to adolescence.

The use of creative dramatics in education also lends itself to helping a child discover who he is as both an individual and as a member of a group. The games and activities found in creative drama lead a child through a process of self discovery which culminates with results similar to those that the folk tales can reap.

The powerful magic found in folk tales can be released in the classroom through the process of creative dramatics. Children have already discovered this, as I did when young, and they can often be found in informal situations acting out the stories of their choice with dolls, puppets, friends, alone or in small groups. A folk tale is special because it is not the creation of one individual but of many. Creative drama is created through a similar process where the sense of community is equally important. A folk tale is a story of oral origin that has been passed from one storyteller to another until it is finally documented in a written form as in the tales of the Brothers Grimm. Creative drama also begins in improvisation and many hands mold a piece before it is complete.

Students should explore the tasks, difficulties and successes of the folk character through the process of drama. This exploration will help the youngster face the conflicts found in his life today as he grows from child

to adult. The “folk” who created these tales did not do so just for their entertainment value, which is great; these tales were also told to educate and train the youth in both a moral and practical sense. Folk tales may appear to be simple but this simplicity is deceptive. The storytelling folk of long ago knew that the allegories found in the tales would educate their children while entertaining them.

Together folk lore and creative drama can be used to educate the “whole” child allowing him to confront his inner hopes, fears and dreams while vicariously living the lives and experiences of others as an actor. Bettelheim feels that a child needs to be exposed to these tales so that he can see how an ordinary hero meets his challenges in life. A child can learn to meet his own life challenges while journeying through the folk tale world with the hero or heroine of his choice. This process can be extended and enriched when the child moves past simply reading or listening to the tales and uses his inner self to act as the very hero he emulates. A psychodrama can be played out with the child taking what he needs from a folk tale, exploring it, assimilating it and with his new growth moving on to the next experience or rite of passage.

I must say at the outset though that I do not intend this unit to be an adventure in psychiatry. My intent is to simply make available to my students the rich world of the oral tradition so that they may take from it what they need. I will never deal overtly with the situations found in Dr. Bettelheim’s book as I am not a trained psychologist but Bettelheim himself encourages the teacher to present to children the world of the folk tale.

I will present to my students in class discussions the notion that there is a deeper meaning to these stories. We will look for these hidden meanings and discuss some of the symbolism to be found in folk tales. These simple stories contain the wisdom of the ages. While telling of a princess and a frog, a little girl and a wolf, a peasant and a bear or a fool and his goose, these stories bubble beneath the surface with the practical and universal solutions to life’s complications. As the stories unfold, hidden in their simplicity and repetition the listener will find deeper meaning that can be personalized and used to confront one’s own problems. Children are reassured that they are not unique in their suffering and that problems can be resolved.

I hope to guide my students through a series of activities, discussions and dramatizations that will make them aware of the underlying wealth in these tales as Bruno Bettelheim has outlined it in *The Uses of Enchantment*. As actors the students will look inside themselves to see what experiences they can use as the foundation for performance. Dr. Bettelheim has given me the background to safely shape this inner soul searching and to use it in the creation of art rather than the pursuit of psychoanalysis.

Dr. Bettelheim has been a leader in the back-to-fairy-tales movement. For many years these stories were verboten or shared only with children in weak, watered down versions. Since the publication of *The Uses of Enchantment* educators and parents have begun to reevaluate and reintroduce children to these life force stories so that they may take from these wise, old tales the lessons they need to face this modern world. This is my sole intent in using the work of Bruno Bettelheim. I hope to offer my students this folk material in a manner that will excite and lead them to the individual, personal, inner reflection they each need to grow healthfully from children to adults and to create theater as actors/performers.

My students need this type of gentle guidance. Most of them are “street” kids who have had to grow up much too soon. They come into my classroom aggressive, angry, frustrated and very uptight. There is an enormous amount of peer pressure on these adolescents. One has to be cool at any cost. This restrained, tight behavior makes theater work difficult in the beginning. My task is to help the students find self-expression in the process of theater. Using the theories of Bruno Bettelheim and my own approach to drama, I hope to show my students that in the theater room they can learn to solve their problems constructively. I want them to see how an actor creates art by dealing with his inner self. These students not only have the potential to create

great art but to heal themselves while they are doing it.

I have created this curriculum unit for the 5th and 6th graders at the Conte Arts Magnet School in New Haven, but it could be easily adapted to fit the needs of an academic teacher in either the lower grades or high school. This unit has been designed to meet my special needs as a theater teacher but it has much to offer the teacher of English or Language Arts. Moving a few chairs and looking at the tales as something more than material for a reading lesson is all a teacher needs to attempt the games and activities enclosed in this curriculum. Working with drama can bring literature to life for students and enable them to see new dimensions in the assigned material. Some teachers are afraid that using drama techniques will create a kind of uncontrolled atmosphere but this is not the case. Following the directions found here or in any of the methods books listed in the Teachers bibliography will help a teacher find the excitement that is inherent in drama. A teacher may decide to use these drama techniques as a “treat” or to integrate them into her curriculum. I encourage one and all to give creative drama a chance and to take a little or a lot from this unit but to feel free to make whatever you take your own.

As a theater teacher at Conte School I am in a unique situation. Rarely is theater taught to a group of children on such a regular basis. As a result, I and my coworkers have had to redefine how theater is taught to children and we can not use the standard workshop approach. The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has been invaluable in helping us create curriculum. I want to not only teach the basics of theater but to also make academic connections wherever possible. I want to teach theater as a well-rounded subject with its own special skills, a history and literature of its own. This unit fits neatly into the structure I have devised acting as an introduction to theater for the 5th and 6th graders at the Arts Magnet. This oral traditions unit has been created to connect with the unit I created last year for the 7th and 8th graders on Greek Mythology, *Prometheus, the Firebringer* .

This unit can be taught to any group of children as I have structured it to be used with the 5th and 6th grade “core” classes at Conte. In the Arts Magnet students are exposed to four art areas: dance, music, theater and visual arts, which meet once a week in core classes. These children are selected randomly to work in groups of 20-25 and they do not have to qualify as talented. Students are also offered “Arts choice” classes where studio and ensemble work is conducted. Core classes allow the child to explore an art form gaining a general overview, while in the choice class a student grows through specialization.

In the theater core class I give a general introduction to the world of theater and at each grade level the work becomes more sophisticated. At the 5th and 6th grade level I attempt to have the students see theater as an exciting and enjoyable subject where they may freely express themselves verbally or physically. I also begin to introduce the major elements of theater: acting, stagecraft, stage movement. playwriting and vocabulary. This unit will last approximately twenty weeks and will be taught during the second half of the school year.

My objectives in teaching these folktales as ingredients for a playmaking unit are as follows:

1. to expose students to the folk tales of the oral tradition from several cultures (African, Ancient Greek, European and Scandinavian).
2. to use these folk tales as the main ingredients in the making of drama and its related activities.
3. to use folk tales to take students through an ongoing, organic and graduating theater process.

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| 1. | storytelling |
| 2. | theater games |
| 3. | creative movement |
| 4. | story theater/playmaking |
| 5. | playwriting |
| 6. | rehearsal |
| 7. | performance |
- to integrate such academic Language Arts skills as reading, creative
4. writing, listening, vocabulary and dramatic speaking into the theater curriculum.
 5. to expose children to the folk tales they need to grow from adolescence to adulthood.

The strategies I plan to use in teaching theater through the dramatization of folk tales all fall under the heading of creative dramatics. Creative drama is a catchall term for the activities that comprise the improvisational approach to drama for the young. The emphasis is on the process rather than the product or performance. In creative dramatics, games and activities are played that stress certain creative skills. Children are encouraged to be as expressive as possible. The main goal is for everyone to participate as best he can. A game may emphasize listening, concentration, or movement (using one's body in a unique way). The activities when strung together build a complete actor, not one who has been pushed and pulled through a rote performance. Performance in creative dramatics is loose, free flowing and imaginative. The participant is actor, director and playwright all rolled into one. Improvisation is a major component of all creative dramatics work.

Creative drama, though free flowing, does have a solid structure. The control is held by the leader/teacher and she decides what path to follow. The leader selects the activities and plans a session with an overall goal in mind, choosing the games accordingly. The leader may be a direct participant or may feel the need to act as an observer. A major goal is that, after the rules of play are stated, the participants will use their own self discipline to perform, but the leader is there if guidance is needed. Sidecoaching is the technique a leader uses to direct the action while it is taking place. For instance, during a scene the leader may ask someone to speak louder, to move forward or to change the action somehow.

Many fine books have been written outlining this approach to theater education. I have included several in the Teachers bibliography. Over the years I have developed my own style which is a combination of what I have read, what I have observed others doing and the challenges I have had to meet working with a wide variety of groups. To someone looking to use the creative dramatics approach in their classroom I advise reading as many books on this subject as possible and then simply trying out what you've learned. The teaching of drama comes only through experimentation and the discovery of what works best for you and your class. One must be flexible and open to everything.

Since drama is doing or "being" as the experts say, I feel I must be specific in the plans I've made for the teaching of this folk tales unit. So I am including my "recipes", specific activities and approaches to a few of the folk tales I plan to use. I feel this will best illustrate what I intend to teach my students.

Be forewarned though that drama is a vital, living art form and the techniques I use are difficult, at best, to explain on paper. I will attempt to give a general overview of my teaching strategies and I ask the reader to be

aware that my final result may not be as literal as what is written here.

I have structured this unit around a selection of folk tales that I feel have a strong potential for dramatization. These tales are also relevant to the needs and interests of my middle-school-age students. The themes in these chosen stories are universal and deal with such adolescent concerns as love, friendship, family and rites of passage. These folk tales are dramatic and entertaining, filled with common yet clever characters who are caught in a variety of situations. The basis for the creative drama I have planned is an exploration of how the characters deal with the problems presented to them. This problem solving will open the door not only to theater concepts and skills but to the theories of Bruno Bettelheim as well. All of this unit's activities will deal with some variety of resolving conflict.

Conflict is a vital ingredient of theater. Without some type of conflict there is no drama. I hope to introduce my students to the concept of conflict and to relate that concept to their daily lives. The conflicts found in folk tales are so primal and universal that students will easily recognize them as problems they have already faced or are facing now. A conflict can not be resolved though without some type of change taking place and the idea of transformation is another idea I plan to stress. Examples of transformation are found readily in folk tales. These two elements are fundamental to theater and I expect my students to delve into these ideas not just as theatrical basics but also as elements relevant to their daily lives.

Keeping in mind, therefore, my concern to explore the concepts of conflict and transformation as well as deal with adolescent concerns in a positive, entertaining and motivating manner, I have selected the following folk tales as the raw material for this unit: *A Story, A Story, The Girl With Large Eyes* (African); *Cupid and Psyche, Daphne and Apollo, Pygmalion* (Ancient Greek); *The Beauty and the Beast, The Frog King, or Iron Henry, The Golden Goose, The Half-Chick, Hansel and Gretel, The Three Little Men In the Wood* (European); *East of the Sun and West of the Moon, The Fat Cat* (Scandinavian). I have included three ancient Greek myths in my list and though some scholars would disagree, for my purposes I am looking on these myths as another type of folk tale. Though the structure is different than the typical Grimm tale, myths are of an oral origin and I am clustering them here as folk stories. The dramatic value of these stories is so strong I felt they had to be included.

All of these stories deal with rites of passage in some manner. Children grow up and learn to survive on their own (*Hansel and Gretel*). Young women leave their parents to marry (*Beauty and the Beast, Cupid and Psyche, East of the Sun and West of the Moon*). Young ones set out to seek their fortune (*The Half-Chick, The Golden Goose*). Children become adults and live happily ever after having survived very difficult situations. I want my students to gain from these tales the reassurance that they will survive their difficult situations too. To do this though they must be aware of the process of passage because nothing in life is obtained easily.

These folk tales focus on other adolescent concerns. Love and marriage are seen in most of the stories: *The Girl With Large Eyes, Cupid and Psyche, Daphne and Apollo, Pygmalion, The Beauty and the Beast, The Frog King* and *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*. The family with its complex relationships is seen most clearly in *The Golden Goose, Hansel and Gretel* and *The Three Little Men In the Wood*. Friendship and its many responsibilities is found in *The Frog King, or Iron Henry, The Half Chick, The Fat Cat* and *The Three Little Men In the Wood*. All of these folk tales deal with life's vital issues and that is where the drama can begin.

For the sake of brevity I will present here in detail my approach to three of the folk tales. I feel this will best illustrate my creative dramatics approach to folk literature. I doubt I will have the time in twenty weeks to pursue all of the above stories but I have listed them for the reader as their potential is so great. Besides the following three stories, I will select tales from the above list depending on the interest and need of my

students. I plan to bring them into the story selection process as the work will be more meaningful and productive if the children are attached to the stories.

A Story, A Story retold and illustrated by Gail Haley

This is absolutely one of my favorite tales ever and I have used it with children for many years. Most of the stories I will tell but this one must be read and the lovely wood-cut pictures shown. Gail Haley has taken the African character of Ananse, the spider man, and she tells in this book how he learned the Sky God's stories. Ananse then shared these stories with the creatures of the earth.

I love a strong beginning to start any project with and this tale presents one. I selected this tale because it lends itself to movement and rhythm, a starting point in creative drama. It works well as the first piece in this unit because it is an etiological myth about where all the stories in the world came from. The tale also exudes a strong sense of place and character.

It is the character of Ananse that students will identify with most in this story. This is a slightly atypical Ananse. Here he is not the selfish trickster he is in other tales. Ananse is a creature that the students will want to emulate. He is wise, clever, brave and able to get what he wants by using his own talents. These characteristics of Ananse will be explored in class discussions.

The children will also enjoy the other characters for their foolishness. They will enjoy pretending to be the gum baby, leopard, the hornets and fairy who must be caught for the Sky God. There is great potential here for creative movement and simple improvisation. That is the starting point for the drama.

I will begin this unit by asking all of the students to sit near me on the floor. I will explain that we are about to take a journey together. I will explain that this is a journey of the imagination and that without ever leaving the theater room we will visit many places and meet many new animals and people. Then when everyone is settled comfortably I will read the story. After hearing the story, without discussion, I will ask the students to stretch and to find their own space on the floor. We will do a brief physical warmup. A warm up is as vital in drama as it is in sports. The warmup activity can be brief and as simple as stretching or as involved as a 15 minute dance work out.

The concept of personal space is very important as it allows the children to work freely and safely without disturbing one another. Once in this space I will ask the students to close their eyes and to imagine that they are in Ananse's jungle. Having imagined this rain forest I will ask them to shape its elements with their bodies. Each student will become an animal, plant or tree. Sounds will be added, e.g. Birds, moisture dripping, leaves rustling etc. When the atmosphere of Ananse's jungle is complete I will retell the story in my own words asking the children to move, en masse, and to behave as the different characters.

The next step is to narrate the story again but it should be acted out traditionally with each child playing one part. Casting could be redone after each scene to assure that everyone gets "on stage". After this performance a discussion should be held where students are encouraged to express their feelings and how they took to all these activities. The themes of the story and Ananse's character could be explored also. This type of warm-down discussion is very important in creative dramatics and can serve as the resolution to the work with each tale.

The process being followed here is the same one broken down and illustrated in my objectives. Movement and group work is a solid place to begin all drama activities. Students will feel more secure when everyone is

involved and it is later that the more traditional theater of scene work and acting is approached. The logical step after creative movement work is the playing of theater games.

The next step in the creative-dramatics process will introduce storytelling as well as theater games. I feel quite strongly that all of the folk tales with the exception of *A Story, A Story* should be told rather than read. These folk tales were given birth by the storytellers of long ago and as powerful as they may be on the page they don't really soar until they are told by an involved and excited teller of tales. Everyone has a storyteller inside waiting to be born. Knowing the story well and practicing it are the first steps. In *The Way of the Storyteller* Ruth Sawyer gives excellent advice on how to begin.

Pygmalion

The story of Pygmalion is an ancient Greek myth passed down by the Roman poet, Ovid. The tale connects nicely to the study of theater as it appears in several later forms, *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw and the musical, *My Fair Lady*. I have selected this story for its manner of dealing with the artist and the creative process. Since my students are being introduced to the arts at Conte I like using this story to illustrate the struggles an artist goes through to express himself. Adolescents will empathize with Pygmalion and his troubles in love as well. The themes in *Pygmalion* offer much material for reflection.

The story is as follows: Pygmalion is a sculptor who has angered Aphrodite and the women of Cyprus by not taking a wife. Pygmalion begs Aphrodite to let him complete a statue of her before he is forced to wed. She allows him to do so and Pygmalion finds himself falling in love with his own creation. Aphrodite takes pity on him and turns Pygmalion's statue into the woman, Galatea. Galetea and Pygmalion live happily ever after.

Students will identify with Pygmalion and his frustrations in love. I hope they will also begin to understand the demands of being an artist by experiencing Pygmalion's conflicts. These thematic elements can best be illustrated by the playing of two theater games, "Pass the Clay" and "Two Sticks". Both of these games are described in the activities section of this unit. At this point students can act out the story but the themes can now be dealt with through these games as well as discussions.

Another game that ties in with this story is "Statues" which is described in *Prometheus, the Firebringer*. "Statues", "Pass the Clay" and "Two Sticks" all ask the students to use their imaginations while dealing with the same problems firsthand Pygmalion had to confront in the story. Students are asked to create art out of nothing. These games can illustrate the themes of Pygmalion far better than a teacher's lecture for the students will have lived the experience and the knowledge is acquired firsthand. This is what makes the dramatic process so exciting. The folk tales can be explored on so many levels in so many different ways.

The next step takes one into the more traditional realm of theater. Here scene work is emphasized and the stories are turned into small playlets that require some rehearsal and may even involve playwriting. Spontaneity and improvisation are still the keys, though, and all of the previous elements: storytelling, movement and theater games, have brought the student and teacher to this place.

The Frog King, or Iron Henry

The Frog King is from the folk tale collection of the Brothers Grimm. It is the amusing story of a frog who aids a princess in retrieving her golden ball from the well. All he asks for is her friendship which she grudgingly gives when ordered to by her father. The princess puts up with the frog eating off her plate but when he asks to sleep in her bed it is too much for her and she throws him against the wall. By magic he is transformed into a

prince. The prince's servant, Henry, is so overjoyed to see his master again that the iron bands he had placed on his heart in sadness now burst with joy. The frog prince and his princess are wed and live happily ever after.

This is a story that lends itself well to dramatization. The conflict between the frog and the princess gives an actor much to work with. At this point in the process I would ask students to explore this story in a number of ways. Students could be broken into two groups, each rehearsing the story to be presented to the other. A student could be asked to take over the role of narrator. Another student could act as director.

Having become comfortable as a group by playing theater games, the students should be ready now to direct most of the activities. Simple playwriting could be introduced and students could write monologues for Iron Henry where he describes his feelings about his master's transformation. Dialogue could be written for the frog and the princess where they argue about their agreement. Finally the story could be simply rehearsed and presented in an informal performance. Technical theater could be introduced in the making of costumes and masks. A mask created for the frog would be very appropriate.

This story illustrates how well folk tales lend themselves to drama activities. The possibilities for presenting it are limitless. This is because the story has a plot and characters that are so simple and true. Iron Henry is representative of the folk tale character who suffers greatly but survives. When the bands on his heart burst we know all is well. There is conflict here and transformation as well. Students will enjoy acting out this tale and will be ready for it having gone through the steps of the drama process by the time they reach it.

Though I have made suggestions here it is up to the reader to decide what ingredients he will use in his recipes for drama. Here I have tried to illustrate my own methods. The folk tales are rich in resources and if the reader chooses tales he enjoys and finds meaningful then he can do with these tales as he wishes. Folk tales can be explored through movement, discussions, games, acting, storytelling, playwriting and performance. Hopefully the end result will be a new awareness of self and an appreciation for the wealth of the oral tradition.

As this unit is being placed on paper I can still feel it growing and refusing to be completely contained. I see it as a culmination of the work I have been doing for years. I am excited about living and working with these folk tales and I know my students will be too. With these recipes for a game, a monologue, a discussion and a playlet I hope to take my students on a journey where together we will discover that self found only in theater while dealing with the greater whole of our past as found in the oral tradition.

Sample Lesson Plans

Activity # 1: "Pass the Clay"

"Pass the Clay" is not a "pure" drama activity but it helps to build several important skills such as concentration and cooperation while it stimulates the imagination. The emphasis is on change and transformation as each child works with the clay differently. It is a fun yet simple game that can be played anywhere and connects very nicely to the themes found in the myth of *Pygmalion* .

Equipment: 6-8 chunks of modeling clay; a variety of colors is best.

Setup: The students should be seated in chairs placed in a circle. The teacher should be seated with them and act as a participant.

How it is played: The teacher distributes the pieces of clay to the students, spreading them out around the circle. The children are told to begin molding the clay into any shape they want. When the teacher says, "Pass it!" the students will pass the piece of clay they have to the student on their left, going clockwise. The teacher will pause for a few minutes allowing the clay to be worked and then "Pass It!" will be called again. The students will keep receiving new clay to sculpt. No one is to destroy or alter drastically the clay piece he is handed. *The object of this game is to build on what you are given.* The creation becomes a group piece rather than an individual's own work. This is a little hard for the students to adjust to at first. They want their own piece of clay. But as they see the group creations close to completion, the attitude changes. If a person is handed a piece they feel is completed they ask the opinion of those around them. If all agree the piece is finished it is placed in the center of the circle. "Pass It!" is called until all of the pieces are complete and placed in the center.

Conclusion: The pieces are then titled by the group and given as many titles as possible. The qualities of the statues are discussed both realistically and abstractly. This game allows the student to briefly explore the sculptor's world and to work on being a group member. These sculptures are created by many hands just as the folk tales were told long ago and molded by many tellers.

Activity # 2: "Two Sticks"

"Two Sticks" is a theater game that emphasizes the skill of pantomime. It asks a student to problem-solve and to use his imagination in creating something out of nothing. Students find this game a lot of fun and beg to play it as often as possible. It could be connected to any fairy tale as it has an element of magic but I will be using it with the myth, *Pygmalion*. I feel this activity connects well to the concept of the creative process and it can help to illustrate how and why his sculpture is so important to Pygmalion.

Equipment: two sticks of equal size and length, eg. dowels, rulers or yardsticks.

Setup: The students should be seated in chairs placed in a circle. The teacher should be seated with them and act as a participant.

How it is played: The teacher should show the group the two sticks and ask the children what they are. Of course the reply will be that she is holding two sticks. The teacher will say, "No, I'm not. I'm holding (*name an object*)." She will proceed to create that object out of the two sticks such as skis, knitting needles, chopsticks, a violin and bow, earrings, rabbit ears or anything else she can imagine. The sticks can be turned into larger or smaller items. The key is in how they are used.

The teacher will now pass the sticks to a child who will use them. He will not tell what they are but the rest of the group will try to guess his object. This goes on around the circle until everyone has had enough. I find it takes one or two turns before everyone is warmed up and then no one wants to stop playing. An object can only be pantomimed once but the ideas for use of the sticks are limitless.

Conclusion: After this game is played a discussion could be held about what it felt like to create "something out of nothing". This could be related to the game, "Pass the Clay" and to the struggles of Pygmalion. The discussion could be extended to cover areas of the students' lives where they feel troubled creating. Comparisons to acting could be made.

Activity # 3: “Making Monologues”

The first element of playwriting I expose my students to is the monologue. The egocentric middle school child loves this form of self expression. Through monologues I have been able to connect students to the character empathy that is necessary for acting. The monologue asks a child to look inside himself to see what quality or emotion he has that he can share with the character speaking the monologue. It also reinforces language arts skills and is the first step to writing dialogue and the more complicated play. I will be asking my students to write several monologues but the first will be for *The Frog King, or Iron Henry* .

Equipment: paper and pencil

Setup: After having heard the story and having acted it out once the students will be asked to discuss the concept of a monologue. It is a one person speech within in a play where the character reflects on a conflict he is involved in. This monologue can be directed to the audience, another character on stage or work as if the character is commenting to himself.

At this point the story will be discussed and the conflict of the lead character explored. I will ask the students to share problems they may have faced that could compare in any way to the character’s struggles. After the discussion I will ask the students to write a free form, stream-of-consciousness speech. These first monologues will be read to the class then refined and worked on under my supervision as well as at home.

The completed monologues will be given a final performance and one or two of the stronger ones will be performed within the context of the improvised playlet.

Conclusion: After the monologue work students could be asked to look at dialogue. In *Prometheus , the Firebringer* I give an example of a dialogue activity. These activities serve only to give students a taste of playwriting. That is an art form that takes great talent and practice to truly achieve success but these activities can whet a child’s appetite and persuade him to look at playwriting more seriously.

Bibliography for Teachers

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* . New York: Vintage Books, 1975-76.

A major source for this unit as has already been discussed. Must reading for all parents and teachers.

Cheifetz, Dan. *Theater In My Head* . Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971.

A very exciting and inspiring first hand account of setting up a drama workshop. Lots of information and practical advice.

CTTE, Center for Theatre Techniques in Education. *Bananas* . For information: Pilot Arts Project, CTTE, c/o Conte Arts Magnet School, 21 Wooster Place, New Haven, Ct. 06511.

A sourcebook written by artists (of which I was one) that shares with the reader a variety of multi-arts activities. “Pass the Clay” can be found in this collection as well as many other creative projects.

Dundes, Alan. *The Study of Folklore* . Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1965.

A collection of scholarly essays that can be very helpful in pursuing a broad based academic background on folk tales as well as the other varied elements of folklore.

Evslin, Bernard. *Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths* . Toronto: Bantam Books, 1968.

This collection of retellings contains a version of Pygmalion well suited to storytelling and the middle school child.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1944.

The Frog King comes from this famous collection. The raw material is here for an infinite amount of playmaking and storytelling.

Haley, Gail E. *A Story, A Story* . Hartford Atheneum, 1970.

The delightful folk tale that begins this unit. Must reading for any lover of folk tales.

Lester, Julius. *Black Folktales* . New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1969.

A saucy and colorful collection where the storyteller is heard as you read. The source of *The Girl with Large Eyes* .

McCaslin, Nellie. *Act Now ! Plays and Ways to Make Them* . New York: S.G. Philips, 1975.

A book written to be used by children but it can be invaluable to the teacher. *Act Now !* is filled with games and activities that lead to the production of simple plays.

Neilsen, Kay, illus. *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1976.

This book is comprised of six Norwegian tales illustrated beautifully by Kay Nielsen. The pictures are as classic as the tales.

Sawyer, Ruth. *The Way of the Storyteller* . New York: Viking Press, 1942.

Ms. Sawyer was a renowned storyteller and here she shares her secrets. Inspiring as well as entertaining.

Segal, Lore & Sendak, Maurice. *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales from Grimm* . New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.

Grimm tales at their best thanks to the illustrations of Maurice Sendak.

Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation for the Theater* . Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1963.

This is "a handbook of teaching and directing techniques" written by the originator of the theater games process. The final word on creative dramatics and improvisational work.

Time-Life Books. *Enchanted World* series. Alexandria, VA Time-Life Books, 1984.

Published at this time are *Wizards and Witches and Fairies and Elves* . These books are filled with colorful,

charming illustrations as well as tales and material from many sources. An excellent reference.

Other Materials

Connecticut Storytelling Center

at Connecticut College

Department of Education

New London, Ct. 06320

(203) 447-1911, ext. 7423 or

(203) 453-3630

Barbara Reed, Director

The Storytelling Center can be a valuable resource. It sponsors workshops with professional storytellers as well as for the novice. A newsletter is published as is a calendar of local events. For further information contact, B. Reed.

Folk Tale Resource Boxes

The Teacher Center, Inc.

425 College St.

New Haven, Ct.

(203) 776-5987

Corinne Levin, Director

The Teacher Center has a variety of helpful materials for the classroom teacher available. Storytelling and Drama workshops are held throughout the year. Resource boxes on a wide variety of subjects are available for loan to members (a small and worthwhile membership fee). There is a folk tale box with stories, filmstrips and other treats. The Teacher Center is definitely worth checking out.

Bibliography for Students

Students should hear the stories in this unit rather than read them as the emphasis is on the drama inherent in the oral tradition, but for those students who enjoy reading or simply can't get enough of this enchanted world, I recommend the following folk tale books. These books are colorful, interesting, well illustrated and at the reading level of the average middle school child. May these books be enjoyed by all!

Barth, Edna. *Cupid and Psyche , A Love Story* . New York Clarion Books, 1976.

Cole, Joanna. *Best-Loved Folk Tales of the World* . Garden City, N.Y. Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983.

Lang, Andrew. *The Fairy Books* (Blue, Red, Green etc.) New York: Dover Publications, 1965.

Lang, Andrew. *The Rainbow Fairy Book*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.

Spero, James. *Rackham's Fairy Tale Coloring Book* . New York: Dover Publications, 1979.

Rackham, Arthur. *Fairy Tales From Many Lands*. New York: The Viking Press, 1974.

Sendak, Maurice. *King Grisly-Beard* . Cedar Grove, N.J.: Rae Publishing Co., 1973.

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. *Zlateh the Goat and Other Stories* . New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

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