



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume II: Folktales

Folktales and Social Development

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New Haven students require a targeted curriculum that specifically addresses the social and personal facets of their lives. There is a need for an effective program that responds to the needs of students within the school framework and equips them with life skills to function confidently and productively in society.

Many students hail from communities laden with social discord and inundated with economic hardships. New Haven is ranked as one of the poorest cities of its size in the United States. As a result of its low socio-economic status, a plethora of problems besiege the neighborhoods. Among the most pressing are teenage pregnancy, pervasive unemployment, and the high drop-out rate.

Students are not immune from their environment. In fact, they are greatly influenced by their surroundings. When they observe illicit activities and experience the disadvantages associated with the inner city, they will form opinions about their own individual growth and place in the community. Many students are able to resist the lure of fast money and instant gratification and strive towards a productive lifestyle and social acceptance.

The relationships students have with their peers and relatives is germane to their self-esteem and social development. Therefore, it is imperative that relationships be examined with the view of providing problem-solving and coping skills, especially in adversarial situations.

Conflict is an integral part of life. Students are confronted daily with situations that force them to make value choices, unravel moral dilemmas, and decide on behavioral options. There are socially appropriate ways to resolve conflicts. Students must be exposed to various methods of conflict resolution that avoid physical altercation, verbal insults, and violence.

A concerted and aggressive effort must be undertaken to expose students to alternatives that are consistent with the goals of the socially mature individual. There are productive ways to vent anger and frustration when dealing with personal crises and social strife. An analytical problem-solving strategy that utilizes the creative and imaginative energy of the students and promotes moral, social, and personal development is essential.

One idea is tales. Students like stories; they have a certain enchanting quality about them. Stories also contain humor, wisdom, lessons, magic and fantasy. When stories are coupled with the sincere efforts to achieve social maturity, academic success and moral compliance, then learning and pleasure will merge, resulting in behavioral modification and ultimately healthy social development.

Folktales permit people to express emotions in a socially approved manner that would be inappropriate in any other form. The acceptance of popular lingo and non-standard expressions is commonplace and actually enriches folktales. People can engage in projective fantasy by creating tales that contain realistic themes, using symbolism and metaphoric projections on both the unconscious and conscious levels.

Folktales can be used in virtually all disciplines to convey knowledge and communicate ideas. Historians, for example, while questioning the historical accuracy of a tale, acknowledge that much information is contained in them. Folk history reveals a lot about behavior during the historical period, and certainly the views of 'folk' give insight into the time and the prevailing attitudes held by the people. Anthropologists can study the cultures and traditions of a group. The behavior of the characters and the deeds performed reveal much about the lifestyle and beliefs of the cultures.

Fairytales, a popular lore is very informative from a child's perspective. Bruno Bettelheim, in the "Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairytales," states that much can be gleaned about a child's personality and emotional well-being, by analyzing the meaning of the stories that hold a child's attention. Fairytales trigger curiosity and tap into the unconscious inner struggles in the development process. Complex ideas and beliefs are contained in fairytales. The following short tale by Robert Wolfgang Schnell can be seen as a prototype for many fairy tales. The concepts of authority, vulnerability, communication, perception, and death are just some of the ideas addressed in this illustrative story.

"A Fairy-Tale Story"

Once upon a time there was a hawk who lived in a tree close to where a toad kept its hiding place. At the edge of a well.

The toad irritated the hawk because it continually gazed upon the world with the same expression leading the hawk to conclude that it had no idea whatsoever of how powerful and dangerous he was. So one day he swooped upon the toad, chopped it to pieces, and swallowed it.

The owner of the garden observed the scene. Now he, too, became irritated because the toad had made his well into a fairy-tale well which reminded him of his childhood, of the frog prince.

Using his rifle he was able to get rid of the source of his irritation, the hawk. Soon thereafter the neighbour's chickens dug up his garden without worrying about a thing. This led to a quarrel with the neighbour, and eventually they landed in court.

The judge went into each and every fact of the case because he wished to find the true cause of the incident. Everything ended up at the fairy-tale toad.

Then the judge pronounced the owner of the well guilty. Indeed, he said, fairy tales are not forbidden, but if you project images of them into the world, they cannot be guaranteed official protection. ¹

The "Fairy Tale Story" begins with the timeless phrase "Once upon a time." It happened in the past in a

nameless land. The vagueness in terms of time and place allows the child to associate the setting with his or her experiential world of reality and fantasy.

A hawk is a very intimidating bird of prey who towers over the earth in flight. It is big, unemotional, and derives its power in part, because of its inaccessibility. He had observed the toad for an extended period of time, assessing its ability to defend itself from aggression. The hawk has concluded that the toad is not a formidable force, and decides to devour it. Whether he eats the toad to satisfy hunger or simply to destroy it is questionable. Whatever the motive, the end result is the demise of the toad.

The toad commits no crime. His only offense seems to be that he irritates the hawk with his expression. His expression reveals innocence and lack of experience, which translate into vulnerability. It appears that the toad did not stand a chance, unless it changed its expression or hid in a more concealing place.

The owner of the garden witnesses the callous attack on the toad. Apparently, the hawk irritated the owner who he liked the toad because he had placed his well in a strategic location, that meant a lot to the owner. It reminds him of his childhood, of the frog prince. Also, the owner did not like the hideous and barbaric way the hawk unmercifully kills the toad. Interesting though, that the owner uses a gun to kill the hawk, which is also a violent act. Once the hawk is removed from the scene, the neighbor's chickens dig up the owner's garden, causing the two neighbors to argue. The chickens no longer had the threat of the hawk to deter them, and felt free to behave in any manner they desire, even if it infringes on someone else's property.

In this case, the quarrel leads to litigation. The judge is objective and thorough, seeking to get to the root cause of the chain of events that led to two killings and conflict between neighbors.

In the end, the judge found the owner of the well guilty. Of course, the toad and hawk were dead, and the chicken's actions were deemed insignificant in the greater scheme of events.

What does all of this mean for a child or an adult for that matter? Does the hawk represent an adult? For it is strong, powerful, and potentially dangerous. Or is the hawk a cunning and shrewd bully? What about the toad? Is its innocence found only in a child or is its inexperience and naivete found in nice people? The toad is defenseless, just as a child is in comparison to an adult.

The owner's role is that of an authority. He uses a weapon to settle the score with the hawk. 'Fairy tales, according to the judge's opinion must be seen in perspective. Flights of fantasy, and projections are acceptable, as long as they are confined to the individual. They may be therapeutic or entertaining, but they are perceptions, unforbidden, but not shared by all.

The ubiquitous nature of folktales renders enough general facts that can apply to a large number of stories in most regions of the world. They help us understand nature, our nature, and our relationships to the world around us.

Cinderella, for example, has no fewer than 500 versions in Europe alone. It is also found in Africa, Asia, and in Oceania. While there are variations, the core concepts remain constant. As with any situations involving human interaction, there will be conflict, action, adventure, alternations, and ultimately, resolutions. Violence, abuse, evil, and death are commonplace in folktales, as well as good and happy endings.

Cinderella, a very popular heroine is physically and emotionally abused by her stepsisters and stepmother. She is assigned to the lowest stratum of society and forced to perform menial tasks. She is ultimately rescued

from her plight by her fairy godmother who extends the force of good to triumph over evil allowing Cinderella to live happily with her prince.

The role of animals is very evident in folktales. The relationship of man to animal is usually very close. Even the choice of animal types is carefully woven into the story. The fox is usually cunning, the rabbit quick and likeable, and the snake venomous and often evil.

“THE DUCK AND THE SERPENT” by Tomas Delriarte

One day, as a conceited Duck was waddling away from her pond, she quacked forth loudly, “What other race of creatures can boast so many gifts as we Ducks? Earth, air, and water, all three are ours. When I tire of walking, I can fly if it suits me; or if I prefer, I can swim.

A wily Serpent overheard the boasting speech of the clumsy bird and, full of contempt, glided up, exclaiming with a scornful hiss, “I think, Mrs. Duck, there is a small reason for what you have just said. These boasted gifts of yours make a pretty poor showing, since you cannot swim like a trout, nor run lightly and swifty like a deer, nor follow the eagle in his flight.”

It is a mistake to think there is merit in a little knowledge of many things. Aim to do well what you can do, if you want to stand high among your fellows.”²

“The Duck and the Serpent” is a short folktale about a conceited Duck, who verbalizes her attributes. This behavior is characteristic of many individuals. They are motivated by a myriad of reasons, including compensation, insecurities, low self-esteem or just arrogance. As long as there are different personalities with varying assets, there will always be individuals who boast. Inculcating this fact to students is fundamental to social development. The point is how does one deal with such individuals?

The Serpent handles the boastful person by deflating the Duck’s qualities. In other words, the Duck may be able to swim, fly, and walk, but not very well. By calling attention to the Duck’s shortcomings, the assumption is that the Duck will desist from boasting. Reason should prevail, and the Duck will realize that she has nothing to boast about.

In life, symbolism and representation aside, boastful individuals can be annoying to even the most tolerant person. Students often dislike the boastful person and are often reluctant to tell them so. As a result, the boaster makes other angry and in many cases, fighting erupts. Perhaps, the greatest value in this tale is diplomacy as an effective alternative to aggression.

The Horned Animals’ Party

All the horned animals decided to have a party. No one but those with horns were invited to that party. Dog and Cat heard about it and really wanted to go, so they got busy, killed a goat, and took his horns. Bro’ Dog was to use the horns for half the night, then he was supposed to come out and tie them on Bro’ Cat. So Dog took the first turn, but after he was in the party he didn’t give a thought to Cat anymore. You know how once you start singing and dancing you don’t think

of anything else. After the time passed when he was supposed to come out, he was nowhere around. Cat got near to the door, you know, and started to holler, "Bro' Dog, Bro' Dog!" He went on so about four times. And Bro' Dog gave no heed to him. After this, Bro' Cattle, who was the boss of the party, he came to the door and said, and he was really angry, "Go away there, go away there! There is no Dog in here!" Well, Bro' Pussy got a little angry himself. He came back, this time shouting: "Bro' Dog, Bro' Dog, Bro' Dog!" Then Bro' Dog, he came out himself and hushed Bro' Cat—or tried to anyhow. He said, "Don't bother that fellow in there now. No Bro' Dog is in here." Now, Bro' Cats was so mad he really kept up the calling. Finally, Bro' Cattle said, "Maybe Bro' Dog is in here. Let's just see." And they started to search. Bro' Dog himself started, saying, "Let me see whether Bro' Dog is at this party! Let me see if Bro' Dog is in here!" After searching, they discovered Bro' Dog, and they tore off his horns and started to beat him. And he started hollering, and ran out.

When he ran out, you know, he met Cat. They had an argument, which soon came to a fight. As Bro' Cat found that he was getting the worst of it, so he scratched Bro' Dog on the corner of his lip.

And if you notice a dog's lip, in the corner it always looks raw. That's why. And that is why a dog and a cat can never agree. ³

In "The Horned Animals' Party," the dog and the cat initially work together in order to attend the party. Their inherent differences are set aside for their mutually shared goal. Their overwhelming desire to go to the horned animals party induces them to commit the felonious crime of murder for the sole purpose of acquiring the goats horns. Their awkward alliance and malicious actions presupposes that a shared objective would supercede differences, as is indeed the case.

Even though the tale does not mention the differences in the beginning, it is obvious to the audience that cats and dogs are traditional adversaries. This fact is mentioned only at the end of the tale, "And that is why a dog and a cat can never agree."

The plan of sharing the horns was a reasonable strategy that was predicated on trust and honor. Each one would receive a turn. The order was inconsequential because in the final analysis they both would have an equal amount of time at the party.

Equality was also a significant underpinning. Not only was it a factor in divvying up the time allocation, but also, the dog and cat were both excluded, equality in rejection. As far as the horned animals were concerned, cat and dog were equally unqualified to attend the party. This mutual isolation and sense of denial was an importance factor in their partnership. Their common exclusion forms such a powerful bond, that it allows them to overcome, at least for a while, their natural antipathy.

After Dog enters the party, he completely disregards the agreement. It does not appear as though it was a calculated plan of deception, in the first instance, but more of a reaction to the setting. The music and dancing is just too tempting and exciting. However, Dog then makes a deliberate choice to ignore the arrangement of sharing the horns. At this point, an ostensibly unpremeditated action turns into a purposeful plan. Dog simply decides to violate the agreement. Cat, unsure if Dog's tardiness is due to oversight, decides to that the arrangement is still salvagable, if Dog immediately exits the party.

The problem escalates because Dog continues to ignore him and Cattle is forced to yell and tell Cat to leave. Cat feels that he should not be subjected to Cattle's anger. Even though Cat leaves, he returns, and is determined to resolve the conflicts, by forcing Dog to abide by their agreement. When Dog comes out and attempts to trick Cat into believing that Dog is not there, Cat becomes livid. The arrangement has now entered a blatant trickster stage, void of any semblance of propriety on the part of Dog. Dog tries to trick Cat into believing that he was not at the party. Cat, so angered, continues the pressure, because he knows that he has been taken advantage of. Such determination by Cat does not go unnoticed by Cattle. Cattle decides to initiate a search of the premises. Dog rises to an even higher level of deception by pretending to search for Dog. This action simultaneously takes the suspicion off of him and would hopefully put an end to the annoyance.

Finally Dog is discovered and attacked by the horned animals for crashing their party. He realizes that he is outnumbered by the horned animals and retreats. Cat is waiting for him and another altercation occurs. This time the Dog is more powerful and Cat's only recourse is to scratch Dog.

The "Horned Animals Party" is a fun and exciting folktale that includes many social concepts that can generate discussion of human issues. Betrayal, violence, status, discrimination, and perception are prominent in this folktale.

Social Development themes can be analyzed through folktales on various levels of interest and focus. One level is the relationship between Dog and Cat, the other is the relation of both Dog and Cat to the horned animals, who are clearly a higher caste. Virtually all interaction between Dog and Cat has to be seen in the light of their socially inferior position.

Closely aligned to perception is communication. The neighbor feud is characteristic of many communities, especially the gang conflicts. Many injuries and fatalities occur because of guns and other lethal weapons. The shootings are done with very little thought of the consequences, just as the chickens did not 'worry about a thing.' In order to resolve the conflict, a judge, who represented the 'system,' was needed. When people don't communicate and take matters into their own hands, then a more powerful authority, sanctioned by society is needed.

The judge's pronouncement may warn that perceptions influence action. Even the garden owner's experiences in childhood have an impact on his behavior. Everyone is free to make choices, but the wrong choices will result in official consequences.

Social development emphasizes diversity. People are different on a personal and group level. Appearances, cultural logic, and behavior vary. Experiences, attitudes, and beliefs form the basis of one's view of the world. The premise, that people are different is a starting point. The different outlook is not assigned a value judgement, but is simply seen as an objective fact.

In a multicultural society such as the United States, the population consists of folks from various religious persuasions and ethnicities. Historically, this country was founded on the notion that differences should be accommodated.

Central to the concept of diversity is the principle of equality. That dissimilarity need not be viewed in descending order. Students must be aggressively taught that one culture, or one individual is just as valid as the next one. Even when there is a dominant group that prevails, the minority and powerless are equal in human terms.

The role of temptation is underscored in both tales. Many students plan to abide by the rules and honor their commitments. However, when they are with their peers and 'swept by the moment,' it is difficult to act as intended.

To err is human. If a person makes a mistake, whether it be due to oversight, naivete, ignorance, etc., they should be encouraged to discontinue errant behavior. The major point that must be underscored is that when reminded of the error, the assumption and expectation is that responsibility, obligation, and reason will prevail.

Heroes are popular in stories. Often they are grounded in reality before being launched into the superhuman adventures and impossible situations. The pseudo realism of a hero can allow for projective fantasy. Usually, there are a series of struggles that a hero overcomes.

Stagolee is an example of a black folk hero. Elliot Orin underscores the significance of ethnic folktales as a source of ethnic identification and pride.

"Stagolee"

Stagolee grew up on a plantation in Georgia, and by the time he was two, he'd decided that he wasn't going to spend his life picking cotton and working for white folks. Uh-uh. And when he was five, he left. Took off down the road, his guitar on his back, a deck of cards in one pocket and a 44 in the other. He figured that he didn't need nothing else. When the woman heard him whop the blues on the guitar he could have whichever one he laid his mind on. Whenever he needed money, he could play cards. And whenever somebody tried to mess with him, he had his 44. So he was ready. A man didn't need more than that to get along with in the world.

By the time Stack was grown, his reputation had spread around the country. It got started one night in one of them honky-tonks down there in Alabama, and Stagolee caught some dude trying to deal from the bottom of the deck. Ol' Stack pulled out his .44 and killed him dead, right there on the spot. Then he moved the dead guy over to the center of the room and used the body as a card table. Another time, something similar happened, and Stack pulled the body over next to him, so a buddy of his, who was kinda short, would have something to sit on. Didn't take long for the word to get around that this was one bad dude! Even white folks didn't mess with Stagolee. Well, this one time, Stagolee was playing cards with a dude they called Billy Lyons. Billy Lyons was one of them folk who acted like they were a little better than anybody else. He'd had a little education, and that stuff can really mess your mind up. Billy Lyons had what he called a "scientific method" of cardplaying, and naturally, Stagolee was just taking all of Billy Lyons' money, and Billy got mad. He got so mad that he reached over and knocked Stagolee's Stetson hat off his head and spit in it.

What'd he do that for? He could've done almost anything else in the world, but not that. Stack pulled his .44, and Billy started copping his plea. "Now, listen here, Mr. Stagolee I didn't mean no harm. I just lost my head for a minute. I was wrong, and I apologize." He reached down on the ground, picked up Stack's Stetson, brushed it off, and put it back on his head." I didn't mean no harm. See, the hat's all right. I put it back on your head." Billy was tomming like a champ, but Stack wasn't smiling. Don't shoot me. Please, Mr. Stagolee! I got two children and a wife to support. You understand."

Stack said, "Well, that's all right. The Lawd'll take care of your children. I'll take care of your wife." And, with that, Stagolee blowed Billy Lyons away. Stagolee looked at the body for a minute

and then went off to Billy Lyon's House and told Mrs. Billy that her husband was dead and he was moving in. And that's just what he did, too. Moved in.

Now there was this new sheriff in town, and he had gotten the word about Stagolee, but this sheriff was a sho' nuf' cracker. He just couldn't stand the idea of Stagolee walking around like he was free-not working, not buying war bonds, cussing out white folks. He just couldn't put up with it, so, when he heard that Stagolee had shot Billy Lyons, he figured that this was his chance.

Sheriff told his deputies, said, "All right, men. Stagolee killed a man tonight. Well got to get him." The deputies looked at him. "Well, sheriff. Ain't nothing wrong with killing a man every now and then," said one.

"It's good for a man's health," added another. "Well," said the sheriff, "that's all right for a white man, but this is a black man."

"Now, sheriff, you got to watch how you talk about Stagolee. He's one of the leaders of the community here. You just can't come in here and start talking about one of our better citizens like that." ⁴

Stagolee is eventually arrested by the sheriff who tries to hang him. The lynching is not successful because of the strength of Stagolee's neck. Finally Stagolee is called to the 'other world' where he continues to occupy a prominent position.

Stagolee is a very popular folktale among African Americans. A song about the folkhero was composed in the 1950s and is still played on radio stations' "oldies, but goodies," line-up. The tale in the original version can generate a discussion on social issues, especially race. Stagolee is described as a fearless individual who is destined to be a hero. As a child, he excelled in strength and boldness. He was very streetwise and was prepared for any adversity that arose.

The process in which Stagolee soars to heroism is apparent from the beginning even preceeding great deeds. As the story progresses his statue is enlarged as the adventures increase. The ethnic unifying identification derived from his fearlessness in terms of race. Generally, black men in the south were relegated to a subservient position, a residue of slavery. While there were many card-playing slicksters and womanizers as heros in tales, few, if any confronted the "massa," from either a equal or superior position.

Stagolee refused to continue the tradition of the shuffling black manchild. Simple or even aggressive resistance would not work in this case, because lynching and whippings were frequently used in black folktales to illustrate a male's ability to withstand such abuse. The most that would be gained from such behavior was martyrdom for the hero who resisted to the end. Flight to the north would not have effectively

addressed the problem because the hero would have been removed from the setting, and any adventures, no matter how daring, would be minimized by the fact that he chose to flee and not assert his manhood in the segregated south where it mattered most.

The notion that racial minority communities have autonomy when dealing with their own is usually an accurate description of racial polarities. Social institutions, values and mores, of the blacks in the south were not interfered with by the white power structure as long as the black community did not infringe on others outside of the community. Also, the deputies may have been fearful of disturbing the status quo. Stagolee was a hero in his community who also received the respect and deference in all communities. This is so evident when the sheriff attempts to arrest Stagolee and the deputies and members of the community abandon him.

Killing is seen as a moral wrong and punishable by law. The sheriff's determination to arrest Stagolee is actually the moral deliberations on the part of Stagolee when he murdered Billy. The role of the angel in the latter part of the tale, illustrates the spiritual dimensions of the hero who believes that there is another world.

Max Luthi, in explaining the fairytale hero, states that the hero's isolation allows him to be free because of his independence from any specific constellation. Stagolee represents the dream of black people to be emancipated from slavery and the indignities and trappings of racism. The symbolic and allegorical interpretations of Stagolee are seen by some to be speculation. Indeed there is a degree of uncertainty in the deeds, objects, powers, and characters in the folktale. However, there is a strong sense of realism.

In the psycho-analytical tradition, Stagolee provides a safe place to fantasize. The fact that a black is fearless and can overcome situations and prevail may reveal a sense of an individual having the power to overcome life's adversity. The invincibility of character suggests that each trial and tribulation encountered builds strength. This qualified intensification is noticeable in the sequencing of encounters, beginning with Billy and progressing through the sheriff, lynching and death.

Consistent with hero tales is the element of competition. Early on Stagolee shoots Billy and gets Billy's wife as a prize. Even though the initial adventure was relatively uneven, it clearly established the hero as a victorious being, capable of winning. As the tale develops, his deeds become more exciting and competitive, finally culminating in his ability to compete with the power structure and ultimately, the other world.

The supernatural element surfaces only in the latter part of the tale, when the angel reminds God that Stagolee has lived too long on earth. It takes a super act of godly wit to finally extricate him from Georgia and relocate him into the spiritual world.

Stagolee is so powerful that his reputation does not end with his earthly demise, but continues in the spiritual domain. Stagolee reemerges as a dominant force, unstoppable, undaunted and strong. The longevity and popularity of Stagolee includes essential elements found in fairytales. In the symbolic interpretation of C. G. Jung and his school of the thought, Stagolee, and the other characters represent one and the same personality. Billy is frightened because of the realization that he will be killed. At times, Stagolee must feel fear, after all, he is human. Billy is a dimension of the Stag persona.

While extolling the virtues of folktales, it should be noted, that not all tales are appropriate for instructional purposes. Some promote bad ideas and even morbid views that do not facilitate wholesome development. If for example, a folktale demonstrates illegal activities and advocates immorality, then its instructional value is questionable.

When selecting folktales, it's important to:

1. Clearly identify relevant concepts
2. Communicate focused messages
3. Appeal to age level
4. Provide humor for comic relief
5. Entertain to hold attention.

From the foregoing, it is clear that folktales can be an invaluable part of the instructional process. Almost every concept can be extracted from a tale and used for instructional value. Folktales are replete with themes and subthemes that can be examined in greater depth. Stagolee, for instance, provides for an easy transition to a session on race in a multi-cultural society. By beginning with the folktale, a safe didactic environment is created to discuss the sensitive subject of racism.

Many students feel uncomfortable talking about race. It is a source of collective and personal conflict for many students. With the often wide negative media coverage, existing stereotypes are exacerbated, often leading to further racial and ethnic polarization.

Social development is designed to bridge the gap by heterogeneous grouping and problem-solving tactics. However, race relations, is not particularly singled-out in the curriculum guides. It must be added to the program by the teacher.

The folktale Stagolee uses terminology that usually evokes an emotional response. Either students view it as offensive or they accept that such language is necessary and realistic. Thus the first didactic application of the folktale is to confront the issue of race by eliciting the feeling tone. Specifically, "Why do you feel uncomfortable discussing race?" In confronting the sensitive topic through a tale in an academic setting, feelings are directed into a structured and qualified rational exercise.

Once a positive climate is set, then the folktale again can be used to select certain passages to examine. Group cohesiveness can be promoted by assigning a collective activity, such as a group project. Students from diverse backgrounds can devise a way of getting students to communicate with each other.

There are many heroes in the campaign of race relations. To some, Stagolee is a prototype of the militant civil rights activist who is not concerned with race relations. Many films that are popular in black communities depict this. However, some heroes are accepted by both the dominant society and the minority communities because they are conciliatory and operate from a broad social premise. Dr. Martin Luther King and Gandhi are examples of such heroes. Because Martin Luther King is respected by most strata of society, it is seen as 'socially' correct to actively seek the reduction of racial prejudice.

In conclusion tales mirror the social order in a given historical period. They symbolize the needs, goals, and concerns of the people by revealing the cultural values, social mores, and group norms of the people.

An analysis of the folktale is not merely a literary exercise, but a way of approaching topics, examining behavior, and transferring information. Many tales aim straight at a message, without using symbolism or projection. The point is clear and instructional. The following folktale is an example of such a folktale.

“Hide Your Anger Until Tomorrow”

“There was a man who had to go off to town to work. In town he met this old man who was wise in all things, and who said to him, “I am going to tell you the things you need to know; When you get angry, hide it until tomorrow; and all that your eyes see, you must not believe.

Now, this man had a wife at home, but they had no child. He had to remain away from home for a long time, but finally he was able to return. but when he came home, he found a man in bed with his wife and they were both asleep. He drew his revolver to shoot the man, but suddenly he remembered what the old man had said to him: “Hide your anger until tomorrow.” So he didn’t shoot the man.

When the morning came and they were all awake, his wife told him of their good luck; for when he left she was pregnant, and this was their boy who was sleeping with his mother. The child had grown so big! If he shot him, he would have killed his own child.

That is why it is well to listen to a person who says, “Hide your anger till tomorrow, and all tat you see you must not believe.” ⁵

The story, though short, is very potent. In social development, students are taught to stop, think, and consider the consequences of their actions. A stop-light poster is displayed in most classes that has red (stop) yellow (think) and green (action after consideration of alternatives.)

Anger is a natural emotion. Students must realize that while anger is acceptable, some manifestations of it are unacceptable. When students feel betrayed, as is the perception in this story, they want to lash out at the objects and persons who are responsible for the betrayal. Unfortunately in U.S. society, there is easy access to weapons and a willingness to use them to settle anger related issues. This point is so clear when the man, without pondering, is set to shoot his wife and the man.

Anger often accompanies perceptions, or perhaps more accurately, misperceptions. The man, in fact, saw a male in bed with his wife. The assumption that the two had misbehaved is valid, as with so many situations. However, there is a tendency to be presuptuos, which often leads to negative consequences.

The critical factor in the avoidance of violence is the fact that the man had been warned. It was the wise man’s instruction that allowed the man to ponder. This is precisely the rationale underlying social development. And, as with many folktales, maybe the ending will be happy, if not happy, at least instructional.

Lesson One

Title of Folktale: Stagolee

Concept:

Toughness, Violence, Accommodation, Racism

Goal:

To analyze folktale and derive meaning

Objectives:

- a. To *classify* folktale using motifs and typologies
- b. To *understand* the place of folktales in a society
- c. To *apply* folktale to deal with social developments
- d. To *comprehend* the issues in the folktale Stagolee
- e. To *interpret* the meaning of symbolism and projective fantasy
- f. To *appreciate* the humor and entertainment element in the folktale

Procedure

Phase 1. (Teacher Control)

- A. Teacher asks: What is folktale? Responses will vary, but teacher should direct questions that identify basic elements. Teacher will adjust this phase according to age level. In lower grades, nursery rhymes and fairytales can be enlarged, while the higher levels can be more direct and specific.
- B. Teacher will then give an operational definition of folktale 1) that students should note for future discussion
- C. Distribute copies of motifs and indexes and explain the classification (see appendix)

Phase 2. (student centered)

Students should read Stagolee (allow silent reading)

The following questions should be distributed:

1. What are the issues?
2. What are Stagolee's assets?

3. Identify instances of violence.
4. Why was Stagolee a hero?
5. Do you think that there was a real Stagolee?
6. What historical period did Stagolee live in?
7. Why do you think Stagolee was able to survive?
8. Why is this story popular with black “folks”?
9. How do you think members of the other folk groups might respond to Stagolee?
10. What changes in this folktale could be made to make this story more believable or more imaginative?

Phase 3. (Interactive) Students and teachers should discuss in great detail the meaning of the folktale projection and vocabulary should be included in the discussion.

Phase 4. (Summative) Teacher should ask students to identify social development themes that are prevalent in the story. As students respond, raise questions about alternatives in addressing the dilemmas and problems.

Lesson Two

Title of folktale: (Select from the list) (See Appendix)

Concept:

(Varies, depending on folktale)

Goal:

To examine the specific themes and promote moral values contained in selected folktales.

Objectives:

- a. To further expose students to the motifs in the folktale genre
- b. To classify the tale using the motif/indexes
- c. To explain the meaning of the folktale

- d. To relate folktales to student's life world
- e. To teach students to appreciate the literary and moral values contained in folktales.

Procedure:

1. Teacher read a folktale to students.
2. Review value checksheet with students.
3. Discuss folktale in terms of meanings and uses in the student world.
4. Students select a folktale to read and write about.
5. Students read folktale aloud and lead a discussion.

Lesson Three

Title: Formulating A Folktale: from writing to telling

Title of Folktale:

Concept:

Character, Deeds, Classification

Goal:

To develop a brief folktale and tell to peers

Objectives:

- a. To allow the IMAGINATION to express conscious and unconscious attitudes in a folktale.
- b. To focus on what is important to the student.
- c. To identify issues, especially family and friend relationships.
- d. To develop a story line.
- e. To write a folktale.
- f. To read story to peers.

g. To analyze folktales using motif and topical indexes.

PROCEDURE

1. (Teacher) Read folktale to class.
2. Discuss folktale. Refer to lesson one.
3. Assign students a folktale to read and tell why they selected it.
4. (Student) Write a folktale, using animal characters.
5. Read to class and prepared discussion questions.

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