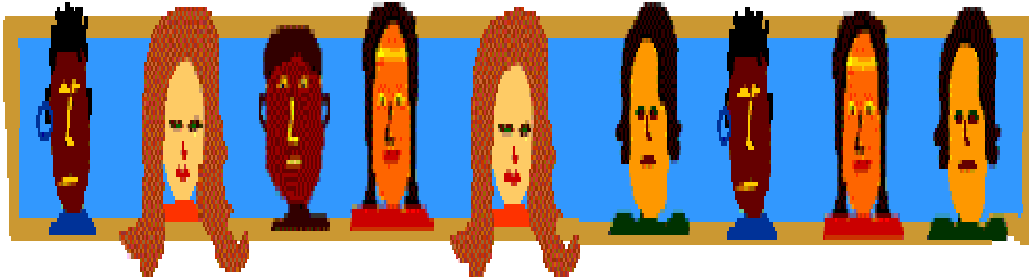


A Mosaic of Stories:

Celebrating Cultures Through Classroom

Storytelling



Robin Groce and Patricia Wiese

Acknowledgements and Dedications

The genesis of the curriculum guide *A Mosaic of Stories* was our realization of the power of storytelling with preservice teachers on the campus of Texas A&M University (TAMU). We saw the looks of terror on the faces of these beginning teachers when they were first assigned to tell a story **from memory** turn to sheer delight in themselves and their young audiences when they had successfully mastered the task. This guide was a natural progression in our attempt to provide the tools necessary to teachers willing to incorporate storytelling in their classrooms. Therefore, we first want to thank our student storytellers from whom we have learned so much. Of course, without the development of the multicultural storytelling project at the TAMU Evans Library Curriculum Collection and the collaboration between the library and the TAMU College of Education, we may not have had the opportunity to develop hands-on experience with multicultural storytelling. The encouragement and advice of the advisory board members of the Multicultural Storytelling Project and our respective doctoral committee members helped further clarify our purpose and goals for the guide.

As a tribute to her influence and many contributions, we proudly and gratefully dedicate *A Mosaic of Stories* to our renowned professor, Dr. Donna E. Norton, who gave us the opportunity to work with her TAMU children's literature classes and whose training and guidance in all aspects of traditional literature and, specifically, in multicultural children's literature provided us the scholarly framework in which to proceed.

Last, but not least, we recognize our families whose ongoing support, encouragement, and patience have allowed us to invest the time and effort needed to

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Robin Groce & Pat Wiese

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PART I

THE WHY...

CHAPTER ONE

The Why of Storytelling and an Introduction to

A Mosaic of Stories

The Why of Storytelling

Before we enter into the life of language, before we thematize and know, we have already begun to organize our lived experiences perceptually and imaginatively.”

(Greene, 1995, p.73) In *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research* edited by McEwan and Egan (1995) Robert Graham points out that people from all walks of life make sense of the world through storytelling. He further indicates that administrators, teachers, and students commonly tell stories and anecdotes about their school experiences. Storytelling has a long tradition of orally communicating ideas, beliefs, personal histories, and life-lessons. In this respect, school is an ideal place for storytelling to generate discussions regarding a wide range of issues such as community, identity, and education (Zipes, 1995).

Inviting children into the world of storytelling greatly depends on the manner in which a storyteller interacts with the audience. Interacting with the audience through storytelling is much different than that of traditional story reading frequently used in classrooms. The storyteller has the responsibility of sharing and transmitting a story orally and without the use of text in order to bring the story to life. “The storytelling audience does not watch a performance; it becomes directly involved in the construction of a literary experience.” (Livo & Rietz, 1986, p.184) In her book *Storytelling*, Eileen Colwell (1980) emphasizes the value in storytelling over story reading. She asserts that

the printed text interferes with the teller's capacity to speak directly to the audience and develop a personal relationship with the listeners. Trostle and Hicks (1998) conducted research with British Primary School children on the effects of storytelling versus story reading on comprehension knowledge and vocabulary. In the study, the researchers found that the children who participated in the storytelling groups performed significantly higher in reading comprehension and vocabulary than the groups who were simply read to.

Jackson (1995) states that teachers of reading, social studies, science, and the arts use some form of narrative within the context of their teaching. He asserts that educators use storytelling to educate as well as to instill some form of lasting good in learners. Other researchers (Bellon, 1975; Livo & Rietz, 1986; Nelson, 1989; Hamilton & Weiss, 1990; Mason, 1996; & Collins & Cooper, 1997) cite specific educational benefits of storytelling. These include stimulating the imagination, instilling a love of language, improving listening skills, improving vocabulary, building comprehension, sequencing events, eliciting story recall, and encouraging creative writing. Kies, Rodriguez, & Granato (1993) discuss the advantages of oral language development through the use of storytelling. They claim that by hearing and using language, children are more inclined to learn language. Nelson (1989) claims that language development is improved as a result of discussions following storytelling sessions. She claims that storytelling acts as a catalyst for generating ideas for discussion.

Farrell (1983) illuminates the multicultural benefits of storytelling by stating, "...story material is as endless and varied as all the peoples of the world. Every person has a story; every culture has a story." (p.4) Hamilton and Weiss (1990) point out that

hearing stories from other cultures gives students an awareness and appreciation of diverse ethnic groups. They reiterate the value in telling folktales from around the world as an effective means for storytelling. Stories that perpetuate tradition, cultural diversity, and heritage may serve as useful topics in the initial telling and generating of stories (Combs & Beach, 1994; & Mason, 1996). Norton (1999) suggests the use of storytelling as a valuable approach to the introduction of children's multicultural literature. Cazden (1990) asserts that "sharing time" in schools is the perfect opportunity for children to attempt to make sense of their world through personal narratives in storytelling. Similarly, researchers (Ochs, Taylor, Rudolph, & Smith, 1992) propose that dinnertime storytelling with family members stimulates critical social, cognitive, and linguistic skills. In addition, family experience stories, telling jokes, reciting poems, and retelling stories are effective means for introducing children to the art of storytelling (Hamilton & Weiss, 1990).

Good and Brophy (1997) discuss the influence that teacher presentation has on the goals, motives, and strategies that students use in the learning process. They suggest that teachers facilitate classroom activities and management in ways that may internally and/or externally motivate students. Fox (1993) highlights the versatility of storytelling by describing its ability to entertain and motivate students. She offers it as a means of introducing new concepts, bringing closure to particular units, and accentuating or making a point. Nelson (1989) describes the motivational advantages of storytelling in enticing children to write and tell their own experiences as a result of listening to hers.

Introduction to *A Mosaic of Stories*

In spite of historical and contemporary rationale for incorporating stories in the classroom, research has shown that teachers are less likely to use storytelling than librarians, religious educators, or recreational directors (Pellowski, 1990). Hamilton & Weiss (1990) report that teachers are often enthusiastic about the idea of their students telling stories, but are reticent to try it themselves. The need to encourage the use of classroom storytelling, both to enhance overall learning and to celebrate cultural differences and similarities is the impetus for this text. Our contention is that many teachers, such as yourselves, are hesitant to actively incorporate storytelling into their classrooms because they lack both confidence and skills, but we believe that both of these are quite easy to acquire. Although there is no doubt that some people find telling stories easier than others, Farrell (1983) indicates that the basic fact, personality aside, that enables one person to tell stories better than another, is primarily the utilization of a few techniques that require initial concentration, after which they become second nature. After learning these rudimentary techniques, the National Storytelling Association (1994) discusses the fact that it is also important to consider the multicultural dimension of storytelling, since it is crucial that you, as teachers, also understand the rules necessary to respect other cultures, including the value of accuracy in source notes, the need to avoid violating cultural taboos, and the importance of establishing an appropriate cultural context. Thus are the purpose and rationale of *A Mosaic of Stories: Celebrating Cultures through Classroom Storytelling*. Our hope is that, by providing you with a guide that addresses both the steps involved in effective storytelling and the considerations for the

appropriate selection and treatment of stories, you will feel equipped to take the risk to orally share stories with children in meaningful, measurable ways.

We realize that you, as classroom teachers, are stretched fairly thin already, with numerous demands on your time and resources. For this reason, our goal in developing *A Mosaic of Stories* has been to provide you with a “hands on” curriculum guide that can be used to assist you in integrating multicultural storytelling into your classrooms. Although the guide’s listing of references and annotated bibliographies will provide a roadmap for anyone who wants to extend his or her multicultural storytelling activities, we have tried to include adequate information to allow this text, if necessary, to stand on its own in providing the tools to implement classroom storytelling. *A Mosaic of Stories* is divided into two main parts, the first being what we call “The Why...” of storytelling and the second being “The What and How.” Both parts contain their own listings of references and, when appropriate, annotated bibliographies.

Chapter Two of Part I provides general storytelling techniques, followed by Chapter Three which provides a general discussion of Multicultural Issues. Each chapter in Part II then goes into more detail about the values and beliefs of six different cultural groups: African/African American, Asian, Jewish, Latino, Middle Eastern, and Native American. These portions include summaries of information contained in Donna E. Norton’s 1999 Fifth Edition of *Through the Eyes of a Child* as well as from her multicultural children’s literature graduate seminar. By presenting accurate and respectful summaries of multicultural issues, including both the unique and common values and belief systems of the different cultures. *A Mosaic of Stories* will hopefully provide

enough background on the six represented cultures to allow you, as teachers, to develop a thoughtful, appropriate approach to each culture's storytelling traditions.

Chapter Four of Part I addresses the genre of Traditional Literature, including cultural folktales, fables, myths, and legends that have been handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Following this chapter's introduction to Traditional Literature and its pertinence to education, Part II includes samples of traditional literature from each of the noted cultural groups. These samples were found in written collections compiled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In some cases, the collections represent the first time the stories were written down or translated into English. The stories were retold by adults to adults, so at first glance they often seemed awkward, archaic, and difficult to understand. For this reason, we have attempted to adapt the tales to suit an elementary grade audience while still maintaining the authenticity so important to the respectful understanding of cultures. To reinforce this need for cultural awareness, we have followed each story with background information suitable for discussion with children.

As noted above, in Part I's second chapter, we provide what we hope is a concise, helpful guide to the techniques of storytelling. However, in addition to reading about techniques, we believe that actual practice with stories is crucial to implementing classroom storytelling, since teachers need the confidence in storytelling that can best come from repeated, successful experiences in the craft. For this reason, we have included storytelling hints and suggestions throughout Part II's sample stories from different cultures. Storytelling is fun, and we hope these guidelines will provide the tools to effectively communicate this message!

Following the sample stories from each cultural group, we provide what we believe ties all the other sections together by providing practical teaching strategies to accompany the stories. These strategies and classroom activities are designed to (1) reinforce cultural awareness and understanding; (2) develop and refine storytelling techniques of both teachers and students in the obvious areas of oral language such as vocabulary, listening skills, memory, story construction, retelling, etc.; and (3) integrate other activities around the storytelling to address other essential student skills and knowledge, such as creative writing, comprehension and analytical activities, and relationships between oral language and the written word.

Before we move on to the heart of our text, we want to stress our strong belief in the importance of storytelling in the learning process and our equally strong belief that you, as today's teachers, play a crucial role in keeping the art of storytelling alive in today's culture of computers, television, and other mass media bombardments. We have been very encouraged by our on-campus experiences with preservice teachers, many of whom were initially extremely reluctant to try their hands at storytelling. We hope their enthusiasm following successful storytelling experiences will be replicated by those of you who are "already in the trenches," since the practical implementation of storytelling curriculum must rest with teachers who are realistic about its use and are in a position to measure its effectiveness. Storytelling is a personal journey; we hope *A Mosaic of Stories* assists in providing the means by which you, our readers, and in turn your students can experience its powerful potential in both learning and life.

Chapter Two

Storytelling Techniques

The task of teachers as storytellers is to create meaningful literary experiences through not only appropriate story selection, but also effective storytelling techniques. While there is no perfect prescription for how to tell a story, there are some fundamentals that can be applied to all storytellers. The magic potion lies within the heart of each storyteller and within their capacity to interact with, and adapt to, an ever-changing audience. The next section describes some storytelling techniques to be used and adapted when preparing stories for the classroom or any audience. We have included some examples of techniques that were used by college storytellers from Texas A&M University. The college storytellers presented multicultural stories at the university's first Multicultural Storytelling Festival during the spring semester of the 1999-2000 school year. The students selected traditional multicultural folktales, learned the story sequence and plot, obtained costumes and props (if applicable), and presented their stories for audiences of local school children, community members, and college students.

Storytelling Techniques

Story Selection:

The first task for each of you as a storyteller is to select a story that is appropriate for your students and setting. For beginning storytellers, choose a story that has a simple plot and will be easy to remember and improvise. It is also important to choose stories that have catchy introductions and conclusions. If the story does not lend itself well to catching students' attention, add some dramatics to it. One of the most important things

to remember in storytelling is to adapt the story to your audience and to your personality/style. Personalize the story and make it yours.

Learning the Story:

The next step in storytelling is to familiarize yourself with the story plot. Do not memorize the story word for word. The idea is to become so familiar with the story line that you are comfortable with making impromptu changes to fit the mood of your audience. A good way to learn the story is to read it through several times and then outline the plot on a notecard. Using the notecard, tell the story to a group of friends or family members. Tell the story bit by bit following the main events of the story.

Characterization

As you are learning the story, bring the characters to life. Give the characters distinct personalities through the use of voice and facial changes. It might be a good idea to make notes as to the distinct personality that you have given the different characters (especially if you are using a story that has a large number of characters). Another good way to distinguish the different characters is through body language. If you are portraying a large character, stand on tip-toes and look down on an imaginary small person. Conversely, if you are portraying a small person, bend your knees a bit and tilt your head up as if looking at a taller person. If you are portraying a monster, use ugly facial expressions and body language to bring it to life. The idea is to give the audience a visual perspective without having to hang a sign around your neck that says, "I am the monster!"

Props:

Props may be an additional way to differentiate between characters. Simple items

such as hats and scarves can be used to distinguish between a feminine role and a masculine role. The use of props is an individual consideration. It is important that if they are used, that they not take away from the opportunities that children have in using their imaginations to create the setting. Rich description on behalf of the storyteller can sometimes be much more meaningful than props. A college storyteller telling the story *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* by Tomie dePaola without props described the fire in the story so well that a group of four year olds sitting on the front row actually jumped back when he pretended to be throwing the doll into the fire. An additional consideration when using props to imitate or enhance a culture is to ensure their authenticity. A pair of college storytellers told a Korean version of Cinderella wearing authentic dresses that they had borrowed from members of a local Korean church.

Body Language and Gestures:

The use of body language should be appropriate for the story and the audience. It is important to consider the amount of space that you as the teller has and how your audience will be seated. You want to make sure that the audience can see you at all times during the telling. If you sit or lie on the floor, it may cause students to be forced to move around in order to see you. This could be distracting and interfere with the story flow. In addition, your body gestures should not distract from the telling of the story. Creating too much of a dramatic scene will not allow children to imagine the characters on their own. However, there are certain gestures that add greatly to the characterization and the plot. A college storyteller portraying the role of a giant gave excellent perspective by pretending to be picking up little people and animals by pinching them between her thumb and pointer finger and dropping them effortlessly into her mouth. Another

storyteller portrayed a scared child walking through the woods by making very slow and careful steps. He added crackling noises as he crept through the leaves. These gestures, coupled with costumes, voice inflection, props, and eye contact led to a more complete composite of the character(s).

Audience Interaction:

Eye contact with your audience may be one of the best ways to get them involved. Some storytellers use musical instruments to set a mood or to create a rhythm with which students can interact. You may even wish to include members of the audience as part of your story. If a story is cumulative or repetitive, you may want to get them to respond orally. The important thing to remember is that you want the audience to vicariously interact with the telling. You must set the stage and have the capacity to involve them at key moments in the story. It may be necessary to set some storytelling guidelines before the telling. These guidelines may include cues for the audience to watch for that indicate when it is their turn to respond.

Basic Storytelling Techniques for use with Children

One of the ultimate goals of storytelling is to encourage children in the activity of telling stories. In *Children Tell Stories*, Hamilton and Weiss (1990) outline several basic steps in facilitating storytelling opportunities for children.

Voice

There are several variables to consider when approaching this important storytelling technique: expression, feeling and mood, word emphasis, volume, tempo/rate, and pitch.

- Expression - Practice different expressions (such as sad, mad, happy, glad, surprise, eager, etc...) with the children by having them read various sentences using the different emotions.
- Feeling and Mood – Allow the children to say certain words or read phrases using various feelings and moods (such as gloomy, dull, bright, etc.).
- Word Emphasis – Demonstrate to students that by simply placing special emphasis on certain words the meaning of the sentence or story can change.
- Volume – Discuss the importance of using an appropriate volume so that everyone can hear the story. They should also avoid being obtrusively loud. Rehearse with students by having them sit toward the front of the room and again at the back while a stereo is playing at a set volume.
- Tempo/Rate – Share with the students that the speed at which they tell the story should vary. Speaking at a rapid pace might indicate fear or excitement. Slowing down might build suspense for the listener or indicate sadness.
- Pitch – Discuss how the pitch of their voice (high and low) can work to build characterization as well as indicate various emotions. A high pitch can indicate that something exciting is happening. A low pitch might reveal strength or unhappiness.

Facial Expression

Appropriate facial expressions usually accompany voice changes and expressions.

Students can practice saying various phrases while using corresponding facial expressions.

Gestures and Movements

Students should be encouraged to do what comes naturally. If too much emphasis is placed on this area, it may distract from the story. Have students explain why they are using gestures in areas where they elect to do so. Activities such as pantomime and charades may increase their awareness of appropriate and effective use of movement.

Characterization

The better the students know the story and the characters in the story, the easier it will be for students to portray the various roles. Involving students in character webs, role-playing, and character sketches may increase their understanding and improve their character portrayal.

Developing Poise and Presence

Encourage students to use eye contact with the audience as they introduce, engage in, and conclude the story. Strong introductions and conclusions are important in building positive rapport with the audience.

Dealing with Blunders

Assure students that all storytellers make mistakes. However, the storyteller may be the only who knows a mistake was made. Practice mistake making and recovery with the students. Encourage them to go with the flow and to never apologize.

Chapter Three

Discussion of Multicultural Issues

Including Summaries and Excerpts from the Chapter, “Our Rich Mosaic,” in Donna E. Norton’s 1999 Fifth Edition of *Through the Eyes of a Child*.

Becoming more sensitive to the needs and hopes of all people in American society, educators have realized that reading and literature programs for children should include literature by and about members of all cultural groups. Such literature helps build respect across cultures, sharpens recognition of the common features of all individuals, and improves self-esteem of people who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. In *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Norton (1999) cites the English Journal Forum’s 1990 statement, “We believe that one of our country’s strengths is its diversity. We deplore the attitude that bilingualism and multiculturalism are problems to be solved rather than boons to be celebrated” (p.580). She goes on to reference (1) Bruce Sealey’s position that education should encourage children to accept and be sensitive to cultural diversity, to understand that similar values frequently underlie different customs, to have quality contact with people from other cultures, and to role-play experiences involved with other cultures and (2) David Piper’s recommendation of using traditional stories and fables from various cultural sources to focus on children’s cultural backgrounds. Educators and critics of children’s literature maintain that children should be exposed to multicultural literature that heightens respect for the individuals, as well as for the contributions and the values of cultural minorities (1999, p.580).

Many of the goals of multicultural education can be developed through multicultural literature, which can both reinforce the multicultural aspects of the literature and teach essential skills. In *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Norton cites Doni Kwolek

Kobus's 1992 reference to the goals of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child as being goals consistent with those for multicultural education:

1. the need to understand and respect each child's cultural identity;
2. the need for respect and tolerance of cultural differences, be they gender, language, race, ethnicity, religion, region, or disabilities;
3. the need for an understanding of and respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms;
4. the need to prepare children for responsible lives in free societies; and
5. the need to develop and nurture cross-cultural communication strategies, perspective taking, and conflict management skills to ensure understanding, peace, tolerance, and friendship among all peoples and groups (1999, p.581).

Multicultural literature helps children who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups more fully realize and value their cultural heritage and to see that their cultures have made important contributions to the United States and to the world. In addition to building self-concept and cultural identity of one's own culture, learning about other cultures allows children to understand that people who belong to racial or ethnic groups other than their own are real people with similar feelings, emotions, and needs – and not merely stereotypes. Through multicultural literature, children begin to discover that while not all people may share all of their personal beliefs and values, individuals from different cultural backgrounds can and must learn to live in harmony.

Multicultural literature, including traditional literature from the oral storytelling traditions of different cultures, helps children of the majority culture

learn to respect the values and contributions of minority groups, both in the United States and in other parts of the world. In addition, according to Norton (1999), children broaden their understanding of history, geography, and natural history when they read about cultural groups living in various regions of their country and the world. Exposure to the wide range of multicultural themes helps children develop a better understanding of social change.

Realizing the importance of exposing children to multicultural literature brings us to the next question: How can teachers provide literature that is accurate and respectful of the different cultures? In Norton's texts and university classes, she stresses the importance of beginning the development of an understanding of different cultures with a study of the cultures' traditional literature (myths, legends, folktales, and fables discussed in Chapter Four). In her graduate seminar on multicultural children's literature, she requires each of her students to conduct an in-depth study of one culture, beginning with the traditional literature and then moving forward through the genres of historical fiction, picture books, non-fiction (informational and biographical), poetry, and contemporary realistic fiction. The significance of the initial study of the traditional literature, as explored here with its oral storytelling roots, is the fact that through such a study, students become familiar with the universal and specific value and belief systems of a particular cultural group which carry forward throughout the centuries and are incorporated in the later genres of literature. By having a background in these cultural values and beliefs, it is possible to critically read contemporary literature with a respectful understanding of the underlying themes and values influencing a

particular culture and to determine if the newer literature “rings true” as being an authentic depiction of the cultural group.

In *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Norton (1999) cites seventeen points that should be considered in evaluating any multicultural literature:

1. Are the characters portrayed as individuals instead of as representatives of a group?
2. Does the book transcend stereotypes?
3. Does the book portray physical diversity?
4. Will children be able to recognize the characters in the text and illustrations?
5. Is the culture accurately portrayed?
6. Are social issues and problems depicted frankly, accurately, and without oversimplification?
7. Do nonwhite characters solve their problems without intervention by whites?
8. Are nonwhite characters shown as equals of white characters?
9. Does the author avoid glamorizing or glorifying nonwhite characters?
10. Is the setting authentic?
11. Are the factual and historical details accurate?
12. Does the author accurately describe contemporary settings?
13. Does the book rectify historical distortions or omissions?
14. Does dialect have a legitimate purpose and does it ring true?
15. Does the author avoid offensive or degrading vocabulary?
16. Are the illustrations authentic and nonstereotypical?
17. Does the book reflect an awareness of the changing status of females?
(p.585)

Obviously, some of the above items are purely modern in subject and cannot be easily linked to a culture’s traditional literature. However, a sound grounding in the culture’s historic values and beliefs provides the background necessary for an accurate assessment of the literature.

A thorough discussion of a particular culture’s value and belief system cannot easily be covered in a few pages. However, the Values and Beliefs sections of Part II’s chapters on specific cultures, will hopefully provide enough knowledge to establish a sound context for a respectful multicultural storytelling experience and spur you, as

readers, on to gain a more thorough understanding of multicultural issues. These Part II sections precede the sample stories and simpler background for children and are divided into three parts: (1) a short summary of general historical background regarding the particular culture, (2) a listing and discussion of values and beliefs often found in the particular cultural group's traditional as well as more contemporary literature, and (3) guidelines for evaluating the quality of literature from and about the noted culture, including the avoidance of possible stereotypes.

Chapter Four **An Introduction to Traditional Literature:**

Including Summaries and Excerpts from the Chapter, “Of Castle and Cottage,” in Donna E. Norton’s 1999 Fifth Edition of *Through the Eyes of a Child*

Traditional tales are stories that have been orally handed down from generation to generation. Unlike modern stories, they have no identifiable author. Norton (1999) cites four types of traditional tales, drawing from categories and definitions recommended by folklorist William Bascom: folktales, fables, myths, and legends.

The first type of tale, folktales, are recognized as fiction; “they are not viewed as dogma or history; they may or may not have happened, and they are not taken seriously” (cited in Norton, 1999, p.279). They are generally timeless and placeless and usually tell the adventures of animal or human characters. They contain common narrative motifs, such as supernatural adversaries (ogres, witches, and giants), supernatural helpers, magic and marvels, tasks and quests, and common themes such as reward of good and punishment of evil. Similar to folktales, fables are brief tales in which animal characters that talk and act like humans indicate a moral lesson or satirize human conduct (Norton, 1999, p.281).

Myths, on the other hand, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past and are accepted on faith, taught to be believed, usually considered sacred, and often associated with theology and ritual. Myths often account for the creation or origin of the world and humans, as well as for everyday natural phenomena, such as thunder and lightning; and for human emotions and experiences, such as love and death. Legends, like myths, are regarded as true by the teller and his audience, but they are set in a less remote period when the world was more as we know it today. Legends

embroider historical facts of human wars and migrations, brave deeds, and royalty; are more often secular than sacred, and generally have principle characters who are humans (Norton, 1999, p.282).

Significant reasons exist for including traditional literature in the education of children. Traditional literature helps children to understand the world and identify with universal human struggles. In *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Norton (1999) cites Ruth Kearney Carlson's eight respects in which world understanding is increased through traditional literature including:

- (1) Traditional tales help children better understand the nonscientific cultural traditions of early humanity.
- (2) Traditional tales show the interrelatedness of various types of stories and narrative motifs.
- (3) Children learn about cultural diffusion as they observe how different versions of a tale are dispersed.
- (4) Traditional tales help children develop an appreciation for the culture and art of different countries.
- (5) Traditional tales provide factual information about different countries— information about geography, government, family patterns, food, celebrations, likes, and dislikes.
- (6) Traditional tales familiarize children with the many languages and dialects of cultures around the world.
- (7) Traditional tales provide marvelous stimulation for creative drama, writing, and other forms of artistic expression.

- (8) Traditional tales encourage children to realize that people from all over the world have inherent goodness, mercy, courage, and industry (pp.282-284).

From a psychoanalytic approach, Norton (1999) cites Bruno Bettelheim's claims in his 1976 *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* that nothing is so enriching as traditional literature in allowing children to learn about human progress and possible solutions to problems. Because traditional tales usually state problems simply and briefly, children can understand them. They subtly convey the advantages of moral behavior and help children to learn that, although struggling against difficulties is unavoidable, they can emerge victorious if they directly confront hardships. The straightforward and simplistic manner in which characters who are both good and bad are presented allows children to identify with the good and reject the bad. They can then empathize with honorable characters and their struggles and apply lessons to their own lives, realizing that while they may experience difficulties or rejection, they, too, will be given help and guidance (1999, p.284).

Last, but not least, Norton (1999) points out that traditional literature is extremely popular with children, especially, according to F.Andre Favat, children between the ages of five and ten—roughly kindergarten through fifth grade. Norton (1999) notes Favat's connection between folktales and children's characteristics as ascribed by Jean Piaget:

(1) Children believe that objects, actions, thoughts, and words can exercise magical influence over events in their own lives. (2) Children believe that inanimate objects and animals have consciousness much like that of humans. (3) Young children believe in punishment for wrongdoing and reward for good behavior. Folktales satisfy children's sense of justice.

(4) The relationship between heroes and heroines and their environments is much the same as the relationship between children and their own environments (pp.284-285).

The following examples of folklore in Part II from the African/African American, Asian, Jewish, Latino, Middle Eastern, and Native American cultures fall into the categories of folktale, fable, myth, and legend discussed above. When an understanding of folklore is combined with an awareness of the values and beliefs of these specific cultures, the stories reveal both specific characteristics and common truths. In order to encourage children to learn about their own and other cultures in a respectful way, it is necessary to provide a well-informed context to the traditional literature from various cultures. The samples of traditional folklore included in Part II of *A Mosaic of Stories* come from compiled and translated collections of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which, when written, were generally directed at adult audiences. In order to maintain the integrity of the retellings, the revisions in this collection's restating of the folklore selections have been, whenever possible, limited to those necessary for the clear understanding of the story's text or the removal of words not appropriate for young children. However, as has been discussed further in this book's section on storytelling techniques, it is expected that teachers will adapt the stories to their particular audiences when they retell them—in fact, this is the way oral traditions have evolved through the centuries. For this reason, in some cases, our adaptations are more significantly altered. In addition to the storytelling techniques provided in Part I, Chapter Two, the remainder of *A Mosaic of Stories* also contains hints and suggestions for specific stories as well as annotated bibliographic information concerning other sources of traditional literature that can be used in conjunction with or independently of these samples and suggested student

activities to complement the storytelling and enhance learning. Hopefully the end result will be a fully contextualized multicultural storytelling experience.

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PART II

THE WHAT AND THE

HOW...

CHAPTER ONE

African/African American Traditional Literature

African/African American Values and Beliefs : General Historical Background

The first known collection of African tales was published for European audiences in 1828. This collection, *Fables Senegalaises Recueillies de l'Oulof* was translated into French by the French commandant of Senegal, le Bon Roger (Norton, 1999, p.586). Others were published in ensuing years for numerous reasons, including by missionaries who wanted to study the values and beliefs of the people, African intelligencia who wanted to defend the position for independence by establishing the heritage of African traditional literature before other influences, and scientists and historians who were interested in studying migration. Unfortunately, many of these early collections ignored the richness of the stories themselves, the attitudes of the storytellers, and the active participation of the audiences. The many stories available today, however, provide educators with an opportunity to help children, in Norton's(1999) words, "discover a rich literary heritage, gain a respect for the creativity of the people who originated the stories, develop an understanding of the values of the originators, and share enjoyable experiences that have entertained others in centuries past" (p.586). The traditional literature includes tales indigenous to countries on the African continent, stories transported to Caribbean islands, and those originating or adapted in the American South (Norton, 1999).

The African tales can generally be considered in the categories of (1) how the natural and tribal worlds began, (2) reflections of values, beliefs, and cultural patterns, and (3) depictions of societal problems and solutions (cited from Norton lecture notes).

Included in these categories is the palaver or dilemma tale where a right answer is not presented, but rather the listener must determine who was to blame and/or a possible solution to a problem. Through the centuries, these stories have been characterized by a mixture of mimicking dialogue, sound and word repetition, body action, audience participation, and rhythm, often including musical accompaniment (Norton, 1999, p.636). Typical story openings and closings are often humorous and rhythmic, including such rhymes as these West Indies examples quoted by Norton:

1. Once upon a time, a very good time

Not my time, nor your time, a very good time

2. Once upon a time, a very good time

Monkey chew tobacco and spit white lime

(or closings)...

1. Chase the rooster and catch the hen

I'll never tell a lie like that again.

2. They lived in peace, they died in peace

And they were buried in a pot of candle grease. (p.636)

The new or adapted folktales that developed when Africans were sold into slavery in North America fell into four main categories, according to the divisions elected by Virginia Hamilton (1985) in her collection of tales, *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales*: (1) animal tales, (2) extravagant and fanciful experiences, (3) supernatural tales, and (4) slave tales of freedom (Norton, 1999). Norton (1999) goes on to point out that the American tales also reflected the changes in environment, the need of the African Americans to protect their families and develop friendships that were

tempered with distrust, and the theme that the spirit cannot be taken away even when the people are subjected to terrible conditions.

Values and Beliefs

The values and beliefs depicted in the African and African American traditional literature provide important background to understanding all African/African American literature, as well as show the many common threads of the cultural values and beliefs with other cultures. They include:

- Importance of friendship
- Importance of family loyalty
- Genuine hospitality
- Use of wit and trickery in unequal relationships
- Strict code concerning ownership and borrowing
- Importance of showing gratitude for help rendered
- Concern for marital deceit
- High risks in excessive pride
- Care for the wise handling of the feelings of those in authority
- Respect for individuality
- Appropriate awe of the supernatural
- Cunning, wit, and deception only weapons against oppression
- Greed and selfishness are harmful.
- Kindness and generosity are beneficial
- Love of language
- Respect for wit

- Reverence for elderly
- Love of beauty, humor, work, courage, imagination, and perseverance
- Wasting resources or taking more than is needed to satisfy hunger will be punished.
- Need to humble those with excessive pride
- Importance of keeping promises and shame of broken promises
- Supernatural seen in goblins, ghosts, monsters, and superhumans (Norton, 1999).

Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of African/African American Literature

The criteria set forward by Dr. Donna Norton in her graduate seminar include:

- Dignity of character should be preserved without stereotypes--no caricatures.
- Problems should be honestly presented.
- Literature should be natural--not exaggerated features.
- Clothing should not suggest anything primitive.
- Characters should not be glamorized or glorified just because they are black.
- Setting should be authentic.
- Author should not use a patronizing tone.
- Characters should not be a tool for political exploitation.
- Historical or factual events should be accurate.
- If a dialect is used, it should ring true and blend naturally with the story.

Concerning the last item about dialect, it seems that the question of using or not using dialect in the telling of African/African American folktales is particularly pertinent.

In his foreword to *The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit*, Julius Lester(1987) tackles the question of dialect as well as other presentation problems such

as the original Joel Chandler Harris presentation of Uncle Remus as a happy slave telling stories to the little white son of the plantation owner, rather than relaying the important role the tales played in the lives of the African Americans themselves. He explains his approach in his retelling as following:

Thus, the stories are written in a modified contemporary southern Black English, which is a combination of standard English and black English. Sometimes *kind of* is used, and other times *kinna*. How a word is pronounced depends on where it is in a sentence and whether the sentence requires the harder sound of *kind of* or the softer flow of *kinna*. In black English sound is as important as meaning. Thus, *their hands* and *they hands* mean the same thing, but the music is different. What is incorrect grammatically in standard English, e.g., *They was married*, is correct black English because of sound. (p.xviii).

Lester (1987) goes on to discuss his feeling concerning the appropriateness of changing the tales to incorporate contemporary references by saying that folktales are not meant to be cultural artifacts, but rather are mirrors in which we can see our particular stories (p.xx). He also gives his position regarding the telling of black folktales by white people:

One final word: I have been asked many times whether it is all right for a white person to tell black folktales. "I can't tell them the way you do," is the inevitable plaint.

Of course not, but why should that be a consideration? Undoubtedly, a black person with roots in the southern black tradition will bring an added dimension to the telling of these tales to which most whites will not have access. That does not bar whites from telling them.

The most important element in telling these tales, or any folktale, is, do you love the tale? After all, what is a tale except a means of expressing love for this experience we call being human. If you love the tale, and tell it with love, the tale will communicate. If the language you speak is different from the language I speak, tell the tale in your language. Tell the tale as you would, not I, and believe in the tale. It will communicate its riches and its wonders, regardless of who you are. Trust the tale. Trust your love for the tale. That is all any good storyteller can do. (pp.xx-xxi)

The Stories:

The two types of folklore exhibited in the following African and African American stories are pourquoi and trickster tales. The pourquoi tales are, in essence, “why” tales that answer a question or explain how animals, plants, or humans were created and why they have certain characteristics (Norton, 1999). The pourquoi tale, “The Story of the Lightning and the Thunder” is from Southern Nigeria/West Africa, while “How the Skunk Became the Terror of All Living Creatures—A Short Chapter

Furnished by Big Angy” was told by African American storytellers. The trickster tales are found in oral traditions around the world; in particular, they are often found in African/African American, Native American, and Latino folklore. In the trickster tales, the tricksters are often animals with magical powers, cunning, wit, and deception who use these weapons to overcome oppression from a more powerful adversary. The Brer Rabbit folktales, one of which is included here, are among the most popular tales collected from African Americans on southern plantations and are thought to symbolize the experience of slavery as the oppressor. The rabbit trickster found in Brer Rabbit reflects both its adaptation to the American environment with the harsh realities of slavery and its African roots, where a rabbit trickster overcoming more powerful animals is a frequent storyline (Norton, 1999).

The Story of the Lightning and the Thunder

Props: crown

Storytelling Techniques

Lift arms upward

Point toward rear of room

Narrative

In the olden days, the thunder and lightning lived on the earth amongst all the other people, but the king made them live at the far end of the town, as far as possible from other people’s houses.

The thunder was an old mother sheep, and the lightning was her son, a ram. Whenever

Make an angry face

the ram got angry, he used to go about and burn houses and knock down trees; he even did damage on the farms and sometimes killed people. Whenever the lightning did these things, his mother used to call out to him in a very loud voice to,

Loud, concerned voice

“Stop and do no more damage!” But the lightning did not care in the least for what his mother said, and when he was in a bad temper, used to do a very large amount of damage. At last the people could not stand it any longer and complained to the king.

Normal voice

Shake head disapprovingly

So the king made a special order,

Place crown on head

Deep, masculine, commanding voice

“The sheep (Thunder) and her son, the ram (Lightning), should leave the town and live in the far bush!”

Normal voice & remove crown

This did not do much good because when the ram got angry he still burnt the forest, and the flames sometimes spread to the farms and consumed them.

Talk faster

Shrug shoulders

So the people complained again, and the king banished both the lightning and thunder from the earth and made them live in the

Point upward

sky, where they could not cause so much destruction. Ever since, when the lightning is angry, he commits damage as before, but you can hear his mother, the thunder, rebuking him and telling him to stop.

Hold finger up

Sometimes, however, when the mother has gone away some distance from her naughty son, you can still see that he is angry and is doing damage, but his mother's voice cannot be heard (Dayrell, 1910, pp.70,71).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Reverence for elderly
- Care for the wise handling of the feelings of those in authority

Activity Suggestions for *The Story of the Lightning and the Thunder*

1. Have the students draw pictures and write captions to illustrate the lightning and thunder stories from their own childhood.
2. Create a cause/effect chart to outline cause/effect relationships from the story. Have the students relate this to actions and consequences in their own lives.
3. Have the students write a sequence of journal articles that revolve around actions and their consequences.

**How The Skunk Became the Terror of All Living Creatures—A Short Chapter
Furnished by Big Angy**

Props: Plastic Easter egg (two halves that fit together)

Storytelling Techniques

Narrative

Normal voice

Skunk was Mountain Lion’s young brother.

Shake head back and forth

Skunk was a disgrace to the family from the day he was born and he was sneaky and cowardly.

Beady eyes

He was thievish, too, for that matter. He thought more of getting at a bird’s nest and stealing a few half-rotten eggs than of

Hold arms up as in disbelief

seeking and overpowering worthy prey. He gave his strength to catching field-mice and even grasshoppers and locusts. Even

Sarcastic laugh

gophers and moles despised more than feared him. Added to this, he was the most

Angrily

impertinent and insulting little beast that could be imagined—when he was in a safe place, he could call to those whom he

In awe and disbelief

wished to offend from a distance. He even showed disrespect to Grey Wolf.

Deep, authoritative voice

This was not to be tolerated, so Grey Wolf called all the animals together and demanded, “What should be done?”

Normal voice

With one voice, the answer came:

Loud and enthusiastically

“Destroy him. He is of no use whatever.”

Normal voice

Now Mountain Lion and Black Wolf said nothing. Mountain Lion could not excuse, but would not condemn, his brother. Black Wolf had plans of his own for the culprit to carry out.

Hold finger up as if thinking

Grey Wolf, thinking that all were agreed, was about to destroy the miserable skunk, but the contemptible creature flattened himself out at the feet of his master and begged, “Oh, please spare my life! Even if you have to take away all that is good and pleasant.”

A little faster and pleading

So, in contempt rather than kindness, Grey Wolf spared the life of Skunk, but at the same time he shrunk and shriveled the creature till he was scarcely larger than Gopher. He pared his claws and shortened his teeth. This done, the other animals scornfully departed without taking leave, Mountain Lion going next after Grey Wolf.

Normal voice

Move hands toward each other

Use hands to demonstrate small size

Black Wolf had only gone a little way when he turned and went softly back.

Deep, reassuring voice

“Be of good cheer, little brother,” he said to the dismayed Skunk. “Brother Grey Wolf has seen fit to arrange matters so that you shall be in terror of all things breathing. Now, I come to put all things, even Grey Wolf himself, in awe of you.”

Normal voice

This, he promised, not because he loved Skunk, but because it delighted him to thwart the intentions of Grey Wolf.

Evil smile

Then Skunk lifted up his head and thanked Black Wolf, and asked,

Look upward curiously

Soft, sad, curious voice

“What can you do? My strength is gone, my claws are as grass and my teeth as willow-twigs.”

Deep voice, point to self

“Watch me,” said Black Wolf.

Normal voice – Excitement

So Skunk watched and saw Black Wolf take an egg from a deserted nest and put in it sweat from his own body, the breath of a buzzard, wind that had passed over the field where the dead still lay after the battle, and a little water from a green, stagnant pool.

Take plastic egg apart

Wipe sweat from forehead

Act as if catching wind

Act as if scooping water

Act as if stirring in egg

Hold egg out

Deep, commanding voice

When he had stirred these things together, he gave the egg to Skunk and said,

“Wear this, and you shall be the great conqueror. Your strongest enemies shall turn sickly and feeble before you. Not horns, claws, teeth, sinews, or bulk shall make any difference to you.”

Normal voice & smile

Long pause & look intently at audience

Disgusted face & act as if running

So Skunk took the gift with a joyful heart & **...tried its power on Black Wolf at once.**

Black Wolf, sick and howling, fled as fast as he was able from the presence of the ungrateful Skunk he had so terribly helped.

Then Skunk knew for a certainty that Black Wolf had told him the truth about the gift, so he set out to find his enemies and get revenge. When he found them, they fled, every one, from least to greatest.

Evil smile

Evil laugh

Satisfied voice

Then Skunk contentedly laid himself down under a tree and went to sleep (Owen, 1893, pp. 190-192).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Cunning, wit, and deception only weapons against stronger powers
- Care for the wise handling of the feelings of those in authority and consequences of going against them
- Use of wit and trickery in unequal relationships
- Importance of family loyalty
- Need to humble those with excessive pride
- Need for respect for elderly (gray wolf, “gray hair”)
- Importance of friendship --- but the need to carefully choose friends
- Selfishness is harmful

Activity Suggestions for *How the Skunk Became the Terror of All Living Creatures*

1. Have the students work on a puppet show that explains how an animal came to be.
2. Have the students make up porquoi tales to explain how animals of their choice came to be. Encourage the students to dramatize the stories for the class.
3. Have the students write headlines to express the main idea of the story. Compile a newspaper of articles that the students write in reflection of the main events of the story.

Brer Rabbit’s Cool Air Swing

Props: old branch, rope

Storytelling Techniques

Smiling & normal voice

Narrative

Mr. Man he have a fine garden.

Brer Rabbit he visit Mr. Man’s garden every

A little louder & shake head

Hold finger up & angry voice

Act as if setting trap

Point toward back of room

Act as if walking & check trap

Smile & look down

Deep, happy voice & look down

Rub hands together & lick lips

Put hand in pocket

Reach up & act as if tying to tree

Rub hands together & lick lips

Move arm in swinging motion

Swing arms in opposite direction

Act dizzy

Walk with a heavy step

day and destroy the lastest thing in it, twell

Mr. Man plum wore out with old Brer

Rabbit.

Mr. Man he set a trap for old Brer Rabbit

down ‘longside the big road.

One day when Mr. Man going down the

cross-roads, he look in his trap, and sure

‘nough, there old Brer Rabbit. Mr. Man say,

“Oh, so old man, here you is. Now I’ll have you for my dinner.”

Mr. Man he take a cord from his pocket, and

tie Brer Rabbit high on a limb of a sweet gum tree, and he leave Brer Rabbit swinging

there twell he come back from the cross-

roads, when he aim to fotch Brer Rabbit

home and cook him for his dinner.

Brer Rabbit he swing thisaway in the wind

and thataway in the wind, and he swing

thisaway in the wind and thataway in the

wind, and he think he time done come. Poor

old Brer Rabbit don’t know where he’s at.

Presently here come Brer Wolf loping down

the big road. When Brer Wolf see old Brer

Look up & act curious

Rabbit swinging thisaway and thataway in

Deep voice & loud

the wind, Brer Wolf he stop short and he

say, “Gosh a’mighty man! What you doing
up there?” Brer Rabbit he say,

Carefree, happy voice

“This just my cool air swing. I just taking a
swing this morning.”

Normal voice

But Brer Rabbit he just know Brer Wolf

going to make way with him. Brer Rabbit

Concerned

he just turn it over in his mind which way he
going to get to. The wind it wing poor Brer

Arms in swinging motion

Rabbit way out thisaway and way out

thataway. While Brer Rabbit swinging, he

Put finger to brain

work his brain, too.

Deep, mean voice

Brer Wolf he say, “Brer Rabbit, I got you
fast; now I going to eat you up.”

Happy, carefree voice

Brer Rabbit he say, “Brer Wolf, open your
mouth and shut your eyes, and I’ll jump

plum in your mouth.”

Normal voice

So Brer Wolf turn his head up and shut his

eyes. Brer Rabbit he feel in his pocket and

take out some pepper, and Brer Rabbit he

Amused

throw it plum down Brer Wolf’s throat.

Brer Wolf he nigh ‘bout ‘stracted with the

Cough

Point toward the back of room

Cough

Arms in swinging motion

Bob head back and forth

Arms in swinging motion

Look up

High pitched voice

Normal voice

Happy, carefree voice

Normal voice

Arms in swinging motion

Fold arms & smile

High pitched voice, pleading

Normal voice

misery. He cough and he roll in the dirt, and he get up and he strike out for home,

coughing to beat all. And Brer Rabbit he swing thisaway and thataway in the wind.

Presently here come Brer Squirrel. When Brer Squirrel he see the wind swing Brer Rabbit way out thisaway and way out thataway, Brer Squirrel he that ‘stonished,

he stop short. Brer Squirrel he say,

“My Wonder, Brer Rabbit, what you done done to yourself this yer time?

Brer Rabbit he say,

“This yer my cool air swing, Brer Squirrel. I taking a fine swing this morning.”

And the wind it swing Brer Rabbit way out thisaway and way back thataway.

Brer Rabbit he fold his hands and look mighty restful and happy, like he settin’ back fanning hisself on his front porch.

Brer Squirrel he say,

“Please sir, Brer Rabbit, let me try your swing one time.”

Brer Rabbit he say,

Happy and carefree voice

Normal voice

Happy and carefree voice

Normal voice

Act free (shake arms & spin)

Act as if tying up squirrel

Arms in swinging motion

Big smile

Happy and carefree voice

High pitched, content voice

Big smile and act as if running

Sarcastic laugh

Arms in swinging motion & smile

“Certainly, Brer Squirrel, you do me proud,”

Brer Rabbit he make like he make haste to turn hisself loose. Presently Brer Rabbit he say, “Come up here, Brer Squirrel, and give me a hand with this knot,”

and Brer Squirrel he make haste to go up and turn Brer Rabbit loose, and Brer Rabbit he make Brer Squirrel fast to the cord. The wind it swing Brer Squirrel way out thisaway and way out thataway, and Brer Squirrel he think it fine.

Brer Rabbit he say,

“I go down to the spring to get a fresh drink. You can swing twell I come back.”

Brer Squirrel he say, “Take your time, Brer Rabbit, take your time.” Brer Rabbit he take his time, and scratch out for home fast as he can go, and he ain’t caring how long Brer Squirrel swing.

Brer Squirrel he swing thisaway and he swing thataway, and he think it fine.

Presently here come Mr. Man. When Mr.

Look up surprised

Man he see Brer Squirrel, he plum

‘stonished. He say,

Deep, shocked voice

“Oh, so old man, I done hear of many and many your fine tricks, but I never done hear you turn yourself into a squirrel before.

Powerful kind of you, Brer Rabbit, to give me fine squirrel dinner.”

Rub hands together & lick lips

Mr. Man he take Brer Squirrel home and cook him for dinner.

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Respect for wit and use of wit and trickery in unequal relationships
- Cunning wit and deception only weapons against oppression
- Love of beauty, humor, work, courage, imagination, and perseverance
- Respect for individuality

Activity Suggestions for *Brer Rabbit’s Cool Air Swing*

1. Assign different parts of the story to the students. Have them get in small groups and retell the story according the roles (or parts) they were assigned. Allow them to perform for the class. Encourage the students to use storytelling techniques and make the story their own.
2. Have the students pretend they are news-reporters that have happened upon the rabbit. Have the students write some interview questions that they will ask the rabbit throughout the story. Allow the students to act this out on an impromptu basis using members of the audience as the rabbit and the squirrel.
3. Have the students write a sequel to the story in which the main character must use his/her imagination in outwitting a central character.

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CHAPTER TWO

Asian Traditional Literature

Asian Values and Beliefs: General Historical Background

The development of a "general" Asian historical background is difficult due to the vast number of areas and cultures being addressed. For example, in Cathy Spagnoli's (1998) *Asian Tales and Tellers*, she retells stories from Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Pakistan, India, Korea, the Phillipines, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Taiwan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Spagnoli (1998) reports that more than half of the earth's current population lives in Asia; nine of the world's 15 largest cities are Asian, and the Asian American population in the United States has doubled in the last ten years (p.13).

From a historical perspective, Spagnoli (1998) notes the importance of trade in early Asian cultures including silks, medicines, spices, etc. and the blossoming rich cultural growth that ensued, marked by alternating periods of peace and fierce wars. She notes the more recent centuries of European colonial rule resulting in "economic, cultural, and emotional damage in much of Asia" (p.13). Spagnoli (1998) also discusses the rich mosaic of Asian religions and philosophies ranging from Buddhism that is followed in most of East and Southeast Asia to Islam that is dominant in the south and southeast. She notes combinations of Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist philosophy in Vietnam, Korea, China, Taiwan, and Singapore and Hinduism as important in parts of Southeast Asia, India, and Nepal. Almost 85% of the Phillipines is Christian as well as a significant population in Korea (p.111).

In providing more specific historical and cultural background during a recent graduate seminar, Dr. Donna Norton discussed factors causing difficulties in studying Chinese folklore, including the long period through which it extended, the size and scope of the territory, the mixture of cultures constituting the Chinese Nation, the possible distortion of the Chinese language by the powerful scholarly class, and the interference by missionaries and/or ethnographers attempting to impose European beliefs or systems on Chinese data.

In discussing philosophies that influenced the maintenance of Chinese folklore, Dr. Norton noted the influences of (1) the Chow Dynasty whose philosophers, historians, and theologians preserved and reinterpreted the ancient beliefs and customs, (2) the Confucianists who maintained that the Chinese must return to the practices of the wise rulers of earlier times, resulting in research into the past and codification of legends and rituals in the Five Classics of the Confucian canon, and (3) the Taoists who had a central "pope" and thousands of convents of priests and nuns who devoted their lives to the attainment of The Way.

In addition to being familiar with the geography, history, religions, and philosophies of the Asian world, it is important to understand the traditions and rituals affecting the ancient art of storytelling. In discussing differing storytelling tools and techniques, Spagnoli (1998) addresses language, gestures, music, and props. For example, she notes that in Buddhist and Hindu cultures, the lotus is a sign of purity and the white elephant is indicative of royalty. Bamboo is a symbol of beauty and gentle strength throughout Asia, while the coconut tree is considered both graceful and giving, since every part is useful (p.27). Many Asian tales have riddle sequences, whether they

are used in courting, settling arguments without weapons, or answering challenges, often with riddles being answered by other riddles (Spagnoli, 1998, p.28). Repetitions and lists are also often used, as are word sounds and plays. As with other cultures, Asian folklore often has ritual openings and closings, including both the straightforward *Mukashi*, *mukashi* which means "long, long ago" in Japanese and the very long involved endings which often characterize tales from India. Gestures, too, vary from country to country, with the Japanese favoring a quiet style, often lighting a candle and telling with hands folded and face subdued, or with professional tellers using a *rakugo* style that begins from a kneeling position and relies on facial and vocal expressions and different body postures to show emotions and characters. Indian tellers, on the other hand, often move their whole bodies miming or gesturing with eloquent, moving hands and expressive eyes. Korean tellers, called p'ansori, generally stand and gesture with a hand holding a fan, sometimes falling to the ground for dramatic effect, while Chinese tellers often use formal gestures, some adapted from Beijing Opera (Spagnoli, 1998, pp.32-33). In noting gestures that should be avoided in telling Asian tales, Spagnoli (1998) notes the following:

- Beckoning towards a person with the palm up--interpreted to mean "Come" as used with animals.
- Touching the head, considered disrespectful to this sacred part of a person.
- Prolonging eye contact with elders, viewed lacking in respect.
- Touching or pointing with your feet, considered the lowest body part.
- Pointing at someone with a finger, considered scolding or insulting. (p.34).

In addition to language and gestures, music and props play an important part in Asian storytelling. Many stories are chanted or told entirely in song. Spagnoli (1998) reports that Asia offers a wider variety of storyteller props than any other world region, including the following:

- Costumes
- Patas - vertical scrolls up to twenty feet long with rectangular panels showing scenes from a story. The scrolls are unrolled as Hindu or Muslim tellers in Northeast India tell their stories.
- Phad - long storytelling scrolls set up on bamboo poles as the teller (bhopa) tells, sings, dances, and plays a fiddle. It is found in the Rajasthan state, North India.
- Kavadi - storytelling box found in North India with panels that are unfolded as story is told.
- Tankas - ornate silk hangings from Tibet often illustrated with Buddhist themes.
- Hmong Story Cloths - exquisite story cloths sewed by the Hmong people who fled Laos.
- Kamishibai - Large hand-painted story cards used by traveling story tellers in Japan.
- Fan - a folding fan used both in Japanese rakugo and Korean p'ansori telling (pp.38-41).

Values and Beliefs

Various values and beliefs portrayed in Asian folklore include the following:

- Importance of balance: Yin (female) – Yang (male) basic concept in Chinese culture – Balance of positive and negative forces of the universe such as male-female, heaven-earth
- Needs of the group take precedence over individual - cooperation important
- Importance of friendship, loyalty, and obligation
- filial piety - serve, obey, and help parents even after death
- Ancestor worship
- Importance of helping others
- Value in showing kindness
- Greed will be punished.
- Hospitality is important.
- Study, learning, and diligent work are important and rewarded.
- Shift of seasons creates strong feelings.
- A fine garden represents "paradise on earth" (Spagnoli, 1998, p.104).
- Rivers are considered sacred.
- Mythical animals, such as dragons, are prevalent in the literature.
- Marriages between animals and humans often in tales
- Animals are often symbols (cow in India, crane in Japan, tiger in Korea, twelve animals ruling calendar in East Asia) (Spagnoli, 1998, 103).
- Importance of grandparents
- Supernatural figures common in tales - both for good and bad purposes.
- Comic characters and tricksters offer humor in stories.

- Stories of foolish scholars, magistrates, and officials helped common people to ridicule more powerful.
- Dislike for imperial authority by common people
- Power of dreams
- Importance of sharing
- Good deeds are rewarded
- Importance of Jade
- Strong associations with nature and ecology
- Strong influence of Confucianism, ancient philosophy of life and code of ethics
- Quest motifs common, with change in character through trials
- Dishonesty is punished
- Knowledge and cleverness are rewarded
- Scholars considered more important than royalty
- The importance of the eldest son to the family

Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Asian Literature

In *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Norton (1999) notes the common stereotypes portrayed in books about Asian Americans, especially in past years as noted in a 1976 Asian American Children's Book Project, including the suggestions that all Asian Americans look alike, live in "quaint" communities in the midst of large cities, and cling to alien customs. Other criticisms cited by Norton (1999) include the tendency to measure success by the extent to which Asian Americans assimilate to white, middle-class values and to encourage working hard, keeping a low profile, and speaking English.

Quality literature should transcend such stereotypes and provide authentic, factual settings.

The Stories

Asian literature is broad reaching, since it encompasses many different countries and cultures. The following samples of Asian folklore include (1) an excerpt from India's *The Book of Good Counsels* in which the good King or Raja, Sudarsana, asks the great Sage, Vishnu-Sarman, to teach his sons wisdom and knowledge of India's Sacred Writings through the use of tales of "the Crow, the Tortoise, The Deer, and the Mouse" (Wilson, 1900, pp.5-7), (2) a legend from Japanese traditional literature, "The Castle of the Sea Dragon," (3) a Chinese folktale, "The Pearl Lantern," and (4) a Korean folktale, "The Tale of the Sesamum-Seed Merchant."

The Story of the Black Snake and the Golden Chain

Props: rubber snake

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Frightened voice & hold up snake

Normal voice

Feminine voice

Hold out snake

Narrative

A pair of Crows lived in a certain tree, the hollow of which was occupied by a black

snake, who had often devoured their young.

The Hen-bird, finding herself breeding

again, thus addresses her mate,

"Husband, we must leave this tree; we shall

never rear young ones while this black snake

lives here! You know the saying

Hold finger up

‘From false friends that breed thee strife,
From a house with serpents rife,
Saucy slaves and brawling wife—
Get thee out, to save thy life.’”

Masculine crow voice

“My dear,” replied the Crow, “You need not
fear; I have put up with him ‘til I am tired.
Now I will put an end to him.”

Feminine voice

“How can you fight with a great black snake
like that?” said the Hen-bird.

Hold snake out

Masculine crow voice

“Doubt nothing,” answered the other—
‘He that hath sense hath strength; the fool is
weak --
The Lion proud died by the Hare so meek.’”

Feminine voice

“How came that about?” asked the Hen-
Crow.

Masculine voice

“Thus,” replied her mate, by telling “*The
Story of the Lion and the Old Hare*. It goes
like this:

Hold finger up & to chin

On the Mandara mountain there lived a Lion
named Fierce-of-heart, and he was
perpetually making massacre of all the wild
animals. The thing grew so bad that the
beasts held a public meeting, and drew up a

respectful remonstrance to the Lion in these words --

Hold arms out

‘Wherefore should your Majesty thus make carnage of us all? If it may please you, we ourselves will daily furnish a beast for your Majesty’s meal’ The Lion responded, ‘If that arrangement is more agreeable to you, be it so.’

Fearful voice

Deep voice

and from that time a beast was allotted to him daily, and daily devoured. One day it came to the turn of an old hare to supply the royal table, who reflected to himself as he walked along, ‘I can but die, and I will go to my death leisurely.’

Masculine crow voice

Soft, high-pitched voice

Now Fierce-of heart, the lion, was pinched with hunger and seeing the Hare so approaching he roared out,

Masculine crow voice

Fierce & loud voice

‘How darest thou thus delay in coming?’

High-pitched, fearful voice

‘Sire,’ replied the Hare, ‘I am not to blame. I was detained on the road by another lion, who exacted an oath from me to return when I should have informed your Majesty.’

Fierce & loud voice

‘Go,’ exclaimed King Fierce-of-heart in a rage; ‘show me, instantly, where this insolent villain of a lion lives.’

Masculine crow voice

The Hare led the way accordingly till he came to a deep well, where he stopped, and said, ‘Let my lord the King come hither and behold him.’

High-pitched voice

Masculine crow voice

The Lion approached, and beheld his own reflection in the water of the well, upon which, in his passion, he directly flung himself, and so perished.”

Feminine voice

“I have heard your story,” said the Hen-Crow, “but what plan do you propose?”

Masculine crow voice

“My dear,” replied her mate, “the Rajah’s son comes here every day to bathe in the stream. When he takes off his gold anklet and lays it on the stone, do thou bring it in thy beak to the hollow of the tree and drop it in there.”

Normal voice

Shortly after, the Prince came, as was his wont, and taking off his dress and ornaments, the Hen-Crow did as she had

Hold out snake

Throw it away

Hold finger up

been asked; and while the servants of the Prince were searching in the hollow, there they found the Black Snake, which they at once dispatched.

Thus it was said in the *Book of Good Counsels* that strategy excels force. “It was well said...go! And may thy path be prosperous!” (Wilson, E., 1900, pp.44-46).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those from other cultures.

- Quest motifs common, with change in character through trials
- Knowledge and cleverness are rewarded
- Stories of foolish scholars, magistrates, and officials helped common people to ridicule more powerful.

Activity Suggestions for *The Story of the Black Snake and the Golden Chain*

1. Have the students make a mobile to demonstrate the sequencing of the major events of the story.
2. Have the students retell the story by changing one major event. Discuss how the change resulted in a different outcome.
3. Have the students make up hand gestures (following the storytelling traditions) for this story. Allow them to work in groups and perform for the class.

The Castle of the Sea Dragon

Props: toy boat, crown (to be used for Princess Rich Gem), fishing hat (to be used for Hohodemi), two fake gems – a red one to symbolize *ebb* (stop) and a green one to symbolize *flow* (go).

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Hold finger up

Act as if fishing & put fishing hat on

Hold arms out & act dismayed

Shake head back and forth

Remove fishing hat

Hold arms up

Put fishing hat on

Narrative

Two brothers, Hosuseri and Hohodemi, made fishing and hunting their hobbies. Hosuseri liked fishing and Hohodemi preferred hunting. But Hohodemi decided that he would like to trade hobbies and asked Hosuseri to trade with him. When, however, Hohodemi tried his luck at fishing, he not only failed to catch anything but also lost the hook which his brother had lent him. This became the cause of a quarrel. Hosuseri taunted Hohodemi on the foolishness of the original exchange and demanded to have his hook back. It did not even satisfy him that Hohodemi had his own sword made into a thousand hooks to make up for the lost hook. Upset and wandering by the seashore, Hohodemi met

Look down & kick at ground

Hold up toy boat

Make drifting motion with toy boat

Make the outline of branches with arms

Act as if climbing in tree

Remove hat & walk femininely

Act as if drawing water

Look up as if surprised

Put on fishing cap & hold out arms

Act as if removing necklace

Remove fishing hat

Walk like carrying a heavy item

Put crown on & look up (at tree)

Give a flirtatious expression

Remove crown

the Kami (head of the household or leader) of the ocean. The Kami advised him to consult his daughter. He sent him to sea in a “stout little boat.”

After drifting for a time, he found himself at a palace beside which grew a many branched cassia tree overhanging a well. He climbed into the tree and waited. Presently the handmaidens of Princess Rich Gem, daughter of the ocean Kami, came to draw water, and seeing a shadow in the well, they detected Hohodemi in the cassia tree. At his request, they gave him water in a jeweled vessel, but instead of drinking, he dropped a gem from his own necklace into the vessel. The handmaidens, unable to remove the gem, carried the vessel to the princess. Then the princess went to look and, seeing a beautiful youth in the cassia tree, “exchanged glances” with him. The ocean Kami quickly recognized Hohodemi, led him in and seated him on a pile of many

Act as if preparing a nice seat

layers of sealskins overlaid by many layers of silk rugs. Next, he made a banquet for him and gave him Princess Rich Gem for his wife.

Put crown on

Put on fishing hat & hold 3 fingers up

Three years passed tranquilly without the bridegroom offering any explanation of his presence. At the end of that time, thoughts of the past visited him and he “sighed.”

Sigh & act depressed

Remove hat & put crown on

Princess Rich Gem took note of his despondency and reported it to her father.

Remove crown

For the first time, her father inquired about the cause of Hohodemi’s coming.

Hold up arms questioningly

With great importance

Thereafter all the fishes of the sea, great and small were being questioned about the lost hook. It was declared that the tai had recently complained of something sticking in its throat and preventing it from eating.

Enthusiastically

So the lost hook was recovered, and the ocean Kami instructed Hohodemi, when returning it to his brother, to warn him that it was a useless hook. He was to tell him that the hook would not serve its purpose. The hook would lead its possessor to ruin. He

Gravely

further instructed him to follow a method of growing rice knowing that the foolish brother would also ignore this good advice. Since the ocean Kami would rule the waters in favor of Hohodemi,

Hold out hands

he gave him two jewels. One

Hold up the red gem

had the property of making the tide ebb, and one that made it flow. These jewels were to be used against Hosuseri, if necessary.

Hold up the green gem

Finally the Kami of the ocean instructed a crocodile to carry Hohodemi to his home.

Put fishing hat on

This was accomplished, and, in token of his safe arrival, Hohodemi placed his knife on the crocodile's neck to let the Kami know he had made it safely. Because of Hosuseri's lack of following the Kami's good advice, he grew constantly poorer and angrier and finally organized a fierce attack upon his younger brother.

Sad and angry face

His younger brother simply used the

Put on the fishing hat

tide-flowing jewel and overwhelmed his attackers with water until they begged for mercy.

Hold up the green gem

Hold up the red gem

The power of the tide-ebbing jewel was used to save them. The result was that Hosuseri and his men promised to guard

Remove fishing hat

and respectfully serve his brother day and night. In this episode the Hayabito had their origin. They were palace guards, who to their military functions added the duty of occasionally performing a dance which represented the struggles of their ancestor Hosuseri, when

Hold up the green gem & smile

he was in danger of drowning (Brinkley, 1915, pp.20,21).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Importance of jade
- Importance of helping others
- Value in showing kindness
- Importance of balance
- Strong association with nature and ecology

Activity Suggestions for *The Castle of the Sea Dragon*

1. Have the students do a demonstration of the concept of ebb and flow. Allow them to use water sources and any equipment necessary for their demonstration.
2. Have each student make a collage that displays various people helping others. Generate a discussion with each collage.
3. Discuss the concept of “balance”. Have the students come up with topics that might have to do with balance and generate a discussion about them. Have the students make a “matching” game where they match pictures or words with other pictures or words that are an appropriate balance.

The Pearl Lantern

Props: toy lizard, large rock, basket, imitation pearl

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Pretend to be holding an egg

Hold up the toy lizard

Hide it behind the rock

Show arms extended & ugly expression

Strut around the room & brush hair back

Narrative

A little girl, playing in the wood near her father’s cottage, found a small gray egg which she kept and cared for. After a while, a lizard hatched and the little girl took care of it. She was afraid others would harm the baby lizard so she kept it hidden among the rocks. It shared her food and was her sole companion in her sports. It grew large, rugged, and ugly, while she grew tall, fair, and winsome; but the two were close friends and understood everything about each other. When the time came for the maiden to be

Act puzzled

wed, her chief trouble was in planning for the lizard's secret transfer to her future home. She knew that the loving,

Hold finger up

hideous creature that she never dared bring into her mother's house, could

Shake head back and forth

have no welcome among her new husband and in-laws. She was worried that she might not be able to find healthful lodging for her pet near her new home. She explained to the

Hold toy lizard up & speak to it

lizard all the difficulties that she was

Feminine, soft voice

powerless to avoid. She said, "It will grieve me to be apart from you. Will you go with me to a new life with unknown

Set toy lizard in basket

surroundings?" Then the lizard, at her invitation, curled itself into a little basket, which she took with her in the sedan-chair

Carry basket toward door

that took her to her husband's house. When she got there, she placed it in a drain –the only place she could find to hide it. There she fed it daily from her own portion and talked to it in moments of leisure.

But her mother-in-law finally saw that she

Act as if hiding something in pocket

furtively pocketed bits of food, watched to see what she did with them, and discovered her feeding the lizard in its refuge. The mother-in-law refused to let the lizard stay there. Nothing she could say would change the mother-in-law's mind. The poor girl

Feminine voice & upset

went to the lizard and cried, "You are in danger. You need to leave!" The lizard

Pet the toy lizard

appeared to understand, and as she bent to stroke it, it shed a shining tear which

Hold pearl up

became a pearl in her hand, and then it turned away toward the distant woods and

Hide lizard

disappeared. The pearl ever after shone with such brilliancy whenever she carried it in

Hold pearl up

her hand that she never needed any other lamp after dark (Field, 1895, pp.190, 191).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Strong associations with nature and ecology
- Importance of sharing
- Value in showing kindness
- Importance of friendship, loyalty, and obligation

- Importance in helping others
- Good deeds are rewarded

Activity Suggestions for *The Pearl Lantern*

1. Have the students generate a discussion about their pets. Compile a bar graph to represent the distribution of pets owned by your students' families.
2. Have the students make up adventure tales featuring themselves and their pets as the central characters. If any students do not own a pet, have them make one up. Allow the students time to share their stories in a storytelling format.

The Tale of the Sesamum-Seed Merchant

Props: Straw hat (farm hat), stuffed grain bag (burlap)

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice & hold grain bag

Hold hands out & shake head

Put farm hat on

Remove hat

Shake head & look concerned

Raise eye-brows

Narrative

There was once a dealer in sesamum seed who, strive as he would, could scarcely make both ends meet. He spent much time in bargaining with the farmers in order to get it a little cheaper, and he traveled far with his grain in order to find the best market.

Notwithstanding all his efforts, his accounts at the end of the year barely balanced. Now sesamum seed is the most valuable of all Korean grains, and is a luxury which can only be indulged in by the rich, who use it for food. There is, therefore, only a limited

Hold one finger up

Carry grain bag

Hold finger up

Act as if protecting head from rain

demand, for the poor cannot afford so expensive a luxury. As the capital of Korea is the center to which all the rich and noble gravitate, he hoped that here at least he would find a ready market, and so one day he loaded several oxen with seed and set out for Seoul. Imagine his disappointment on finding that the Seoul market was already overstocked, and that he could only dispose of his seed at a serious loss. He heard, however, that the crop in the southern part of the country was a failure, and thinking that he might sell his grain better there, he set out for the province of Chol La. Just as he reached the borders of this province, a heavy storm arose, and he was compelled to take shelter in a deserted house by the roadside. Towards evening the storm broke and the sky became clear, but as he had lost much time, and the nearest village was miles away, he determined to remain there for the night. It was a clear moonlight night, and he

Act as if looking through a peep hole

Act restless & thoughtful

Look encouraged

Act as if roasting seeds

Distribute seeds

Cross arms & relax

lay awake for a long time, when suddenly he heard a great noise in the courtyard. Making a small hole through the paper of the door (in Korea, doors and windows are made by pasting paper over a framework), he saw a large number of weasels. Now in Korea the tails of weasels are valuable, the hair being used to make pens with which the schoolboys learn to write. That night he could scarcely sleep for planning how to catch the weasels. One device after another was dismissed from his mind, either as impossible to put into execution or likely to prove unsuccessful. Suddenly an idea occurred to him, which the next day he proceeded to carry into execution. During the day a large number of small pits were dug, just large enough to afford entrance to the weasel's body. In the evening, he roasted some of the sesamum seed, and placing a little in the bottom of each hole, he retired to his room and waited. Now sesamum seed contains a great deal of oil,

Rub tummy & lick lips

and when roasted has a delicious flavor.

Kneel down & rub hands together

Weasels also are very fond of it, and, unless care is taken, injure the growing grain. The merchant had not long to wait, for the weasels soon collected in larger numbers

Rub hands together & act eager

than the previous night, attracted by the odor of the roasted seed. They tumbled over one another in their haste to get at the seed, and after some difficulty succeeded in squeezing

Act as if squeezing through an entrance

their bodies through the entrance and began greedily to eat the seeds. The holes were just of sufficient depth to admit a weasel's

Look back (as if looking at a tail)

body, and consequently their tails all stuck out of the holes. While they were feeding, the merchant came quietly out of the house

Laugh sarcastically

and mowed off all the tails with a sharp sickle before they had time to emerge from

Gather the tails & place in bag

the holes. The next morning he gathered up all the tails, and loading his oxen, returned to the capital, where he sold them to great advantage. He made enough money to

Place straw hat on head

enable him to settle down on a farm and live quietly for the rest of his days.

Remove hat

Act helpless & pitiful

Act as if doing needlework

Act as if suddenly feeling better

A little more energetic

Masculine voice

Louder & enthusiastically

Point upward

Keep pointing upward

Point higher upward

Normal voice

Now the seed merchant had a neighbor, a thriftless being, who spent most of his days in idleness, whilst his wife supported him by doing needlework and washing for the neighbors. Seeing that his neighbor the seed merchant became comparatively wealthy without any effort, he thought that he, too, would attempt the same device and fill his empty purse. Obtaining the details from the seed merchant, he said to his wife:

“I am indeed a lucky man. I am not compelled to work for my living any more, for I intend to go to the province of Chol la, and GET RICH in the same way as our neighbor the seed merchant. With the money I thus obtain, I will purchase a government appointment, and my support will then be assured; for I can borrow money from my neighbors and friends, and they will not dare refuse me, as I shall always be able to purchase influence and power at the capital.”

The idle neighbor invested all his available

Grab seed bag

Act pleased

Act as if roasting & placing seed

Walk along slowly & curiously

Act shocked

Matter of fact

money in sesamum seed, even selling his house and furniture, and set out for the southern part of the peninsula. He found the deserted house without difficulty, and all the holes were there, just as the merchant had left them. Roasting the seed, he placed it in the holes. That night the weasels came in large numbers, and the idle neighbor took his sickle, and creeping quietly along, attempted to mow off their tails. He soon saw, however, that the weasels were all tailless. They were the same ones whose tails had been cut off a few weeks before by the merchant. He was compelled to return home a poorer man, having lost even the little he possessed; and, furthermore, he was compelled to work harder than ever before, in order to obtain the necessary food and clothing (Landis, 1897, pp.285-287).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Strong associations with nature and ecology

- Knowledge and cleverness are rewarded
- Comic characters offer humor in stories
- Greed will be punished
- Diligent work is rewarded
- Stories of foolish magistrates and officials helped common people ridicule more powerful

Activity Suggestions for *The Tale of the Sesamum-Seed Merchant*

1. Have the students compare and contrast the two money-making endeavors. Have them discuss why the first merchant was more clever and more successful.
2. Have the students write advertisements for the first merchant's product.
3. Have the students story-tell a sequel to the story.
4. Discuss how the neighbor's ambitions to be a government inferred the common people's opinions about such officials.

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CHAPTER THREE

Jewish Traditional Literature

Jewish Cultural Values and Beliefs: General Historical Background

(Primarily cited from lecture notes taken in Dr. Norton's graduate seminar on Multicultural Children's Literature)

The Jewish people are often known as "People of the Book" because of their dedication to their religious teachings, scholarship, and reading. Since for 25 centuries the Jewish people were unable to return to their homeland, their literature was in fact their "home." Many tales in the Jewish Bible tell of the search for human existence. The Torah (5 Books of Moses), Proverbs, and Books of Esther, Ruth, and Psalms contain sacred teachings in artful text of prose and poetry. The Talmud, a huge collection of religious thought and folklore was put together around the Second Century A.D. (Sherman, 1993).

In identifying what it means to be Jewish, Dr. Norton cites three different definitions (attributed to Rabbi Kertzer):

- (1) Religious-One who accepts the Jewish faith.
- (2) Spiritual-One who seeks a spiritual base in the modern world by living the life of study, prayer, and daily routine dedicated to the position that Jewish wisdom through the ages will answer the big questions of life such as why people suffer, what is life's purpose, and is there a God?
- (3) Cultural-One who is without formal religious affiliation and possibly with little Jewish practice, but who regards the Jewish teachings, ethics, folkways, and literature as his or her own.

A study of the ancient folklore of the Jewish people is often considered the best way to understand the culture. Commentaries and collections of the folklore have been made since the 11th Century, and a systematic study of the folklore was conducted in the 16th and 17th Centuries. In 1887, Moses Gaster, in his *Jewish Folklore in the Middle Ages* divided the folklore from two different approaches: (1) How it demonstrated moral lessons and Divine Truth and (2) social phenomena, including folk imagination and reaction to heroes and their ideas. In 1938, the Institute of Jewish Research numbered their collection at 32,442 proverbs, 4,989 folk beliefs, 4,673 children's tales, 4,411 folk songs, 3,807 anecdotes, 2,340 folktales, 1,000 stories about customs, and 79 plays.

In her seminar lecture, Dr. Norton noted several historic purposes and traditional audiences for telling Jewish stories:

- Comic or sentimental tales--told at weddings by entertainers
- Stories of the patriarch and/or about Elijah the prophet--told by grandfathers to their grandsons.
- Wonder and magic tales--told by mothers and grandmothers to children.
- Scary ghost or demon tales--told by students after their teachers left for prayers.
- God's wonder tales--told by teachers to the boys.
- Parables and allegorical tales—told by the rabbis to illuminate truths and give moral instruction.
- Tales of Leaders--told by disciples of Hasidic Rebbes.

In addition to parables and wonder tales, pious tales were often told to relay ethical messages or reflect persecution; legends were told to tell of religious characters such as Moses, Abraham, and Solomon; humorous tales were told to reflect fools and

simpletons or to expose human foibles and absurdities; supernatural tales were told about Golems, elves, ghosts, and goblins; and tales were told of clever folks and survivors.

Most Jewish tales are set in a place, such as a synogogue or at a wedding and are designated by time, such as "In the time of King Solomon ..."; frequently they are set on Jewish holidays and have a Jewish message or moral about faith, learning, hospitality, family, etc.

Values and Beliefs

When bearing in mind the vast number of Jewish folktales, it is realistic to expect the teachings contained within to relay innumerable values and beliefs. Some of the more prevalent ones include:

- Pious following of faith
- Sacred nature of the Sabbath
- Importance in following the religious teachings
- Importance in having faith
- Importance of family
- Good luck follows diligent, honest, sincere, and helpful individuals
- Danger of gossip
- Supernatural and magical transformations
- Importance of doing the right thing
- Need to survive by cleverness and kindness
- Respect for dreams
- Importance of obedience
- Importance of cleanliness

- Higher values of heaven
- Importance of parental approval
- Hospitality
- Importance of wit and a sense of humor
- Importance of wisdom, study, and learning
- Importance of using careful and good judgment
- Importance of preparing food properly
- Value of friendship and loyalty
- Value of telling the truth and honoring one's word
- Consequences of greed and selfishness

Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Jewish Literature

Certainly the guidelines given in Part I for evaluating any multicultural literature apply to this section. This is especially true in terms of avoiding stereotypes, expecting authentic and accurate historical accounts, and avoiding degrading or derogatory language. In fact, no doubt as a result of the serious scholarship found in the Jewish community, a wealth of quality Jewish literature exists. Certainly the Holocaust literature deserves special attention, since these works must be historically accurate and authentic to the time and circumstances. An examination of the censorship principles of Hitler's Germany against Jewish authors and depictions of honorable, noble Jewish characters provides proof of how cultures can be mistreated and wrongly portrayed.

The Stories

Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport (1937), in his book *The Folklore of the Jews*, stressed the ethical basis for all Jewish writing, noting that “even in his flights of fancy and

imagination, in his naïve beliefs, his legends and folktales, the Jew never forgets his God, the Creator of the Universe” (p.x, preface). In discussing his reasons for compiling his text on the eve of the looming Holocaust, Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport stated:

...an appreciation of true Judaism, of Israel’s faith mirrored even in Jewish Folklore and popular, pious fancies, may lead non-Jews to a better understanding and appreciation of a creed and a people so much maligned, especially at a moment when efforts are being made to deprive humanity of its very soul and its last refuge—God and religion. Such an appreciation will, I hope, be instrumental in dissipating prejudices, disarming passions and combating cruel and wicked calumnies (p.xi, preface).

The following Jewish folktales from the Rappoport collection clearly demonstrate the strong emphasis on morality and the clear code of conduct to which a devout Jew was and is bound.

The Bail

Props: men’s hat, crown

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Narrative

There were once two friends who loved each other dearly and were inseparable companions, but circumstances compelled them to part and to settle in different countries, where they became citizens. One

Place hat on head

day, while one of them was on a visit to his friend, a war broke out between their

Remove hat & lower head in shame

respective countries, so that the visitor was unable to return home. Being a citizen of the enemy land, he was seized, taken into custody and accused of being a spy. Led

Place hands together as if begging

before the King, he was condemned to be executed. Seeing that his end was near, he prostrated himself before the ruler of the land and begged him to grant him one last request before he died.

Deep, pleading voice

“Sire,” he said, “in the country of which I am a respected citizen, I carried on a large

Extend arms to symbolize “large”

business and frequently sold my goods on credit, trusting the buyers and never asking for debentures or promissory notes. My

Clasp hands together again

wife and children are quite ignorant of my business transactions, and should I now die without having communicated to my family the names of my debtors, they would be reduced to beggary. I therefore beg Your Majesty to allow me to proceed to my

Point down

country for a short time, settle my affairs and put my house in order, and I solemnly promise to return here and suffer the penalty which I am condemned to endure.”

Normal voice & smile

The King smiled at the daring and strange request.

Put on crown

Deep, commanding voice

“You ask me,” he retorted, “to let you go on parole, but what guarantee do you offer that you will keep your word and return?”

Hold arms up as if questioning

Remove crown & deep, pleading voice

“Sire,” replied the prisoner, “I have an old and trusted friend in this country who will not refuse to stand bail for me.”

Normal voice

The friend was immediately summoned into the presence of the King.

Place crown on head

Deep, commanding voice

“Are you ready,” asked the ruler of the country, “to stand bail for this man and to promise that should he fail to keep his word and return in time, you will suffer the penalty of death in his place?”

Remove crown & normal voice

Promptly the faithful friend replied,

Sincerely

“Yes, Your Majesty, I answer for my friend and will willingly substitute myself for him, for I have implicit faith in him.”

Place crown on head & deep voice

“By my life,” said the King, “I never thought that such things were possible,”

Normal voice & remove crown

and he forthwith granted the prisoner one

Hold up one finger

month’s time to return to his own country

and put his house in order, while his friend was taken into custody.

On the last day of the appointed time, the

King, skeptical in his mind, nevertheless

waited until sunset for the return of the

prisoner. The sun, however, was setting and

Shake head back & forth

no sign of the stranger was to be seen.

Weary of waiting, the King ordered the

friend who had stood bail to be led to the

Raise pitch, pause, & show suspense

place of execution, when suddenly a tumult

arose in the town and voices cried out:

With enthusiasm

“Look, the prisoner has returned.”

And indeed, the stranger was seen hurrying

to the place of execution, where he snatched

the sword from the hand of the executioner

and laid it upon his own neck. But the

With surprise

friend who had stood bail took hold of the

sword in his turn and offered his own neck.

Thus the two friends contended, each

Sincerely

saying, “Let me die in your place.”

Act shocked

The King, who had never believed that such friendship was possible, was greatly moved. He pardoned them both, set them free and heaped wealth and favors upon them.

Deep & sincere voice

“The strength of your love,” he said, “has moved me greatly, and I beg you to let me be the third participant of this indissoluble bond of friendship.”

Normal voice & smile

And thus the two comrades became the intimate friends of the ruler (Rappoport, 1937, pp. 138, 139).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Importance in having faith
- Importance of family
- Good luck follows diligent, honest, sincere, and helpful individuals
- Value of friendship and loyalty
- Value of telling the truth and honoring one’s word

Activity Suggestions for *The Bail*

1. Have the students write letters or draw pictures for a friend. Have them list positive things about their friends and share positive stories with the class about their friends.

2. Have each student recall a time when someone did something nice for him/her. Have them write thank-you notes to that person.

Ariel, or the Pious Man and the Lion

Props: men's hat, stuffed laundry sack

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Place hat on head

Holding laundry sack by side

Deep & pleading voice

Normal voice

Shake head back & forth

Hold hands out

In a questioning voice

Hold arms up as if contemplating

Narrative

It happened over one hundred and fifty years ago that a pious and just man had to leave the Holy Land on a long and weary journey, a journey that led over a desert and lasted twelve days. He told the leader of the caravan, "A rest should be observed on the Sabbath, I promise you will get additional pay for this day."

The caravan set out on the long journey, but when the evening of the sixth day of the week arrived, the leader, ignoring his promise, refused to make a halt, and all the begging of the pious Jew did not work. The poor man was torn between what the leader was doing and what he knew in his heart was right. Should he continue his journey and thus break the Sabbath, or should he stay behind the caravan in the desert and

expose his life to all kinds of danger and perhaps die?

Deep, concerned voice

“If I remain behind alone in this desert,” he thought, “I am certain of meeting with some misfortune, nay even death, but on the other hand, if I desecrate the Holy Sabbath, my soul will be endangered and I shall lose my share in the life to come.”

Normal & concerned voice

The conflict in his breast was of short duration and his mind was soon made up. He would never desecrate the Holy Sabbath.

Confidently & at a rapid tempo

Swiftly he dismounted from his mule, took his bundle upon his shoulder and left the caravan, which proceeded on its way across the desert.

Put laundry sack over shoulder

Pantomime (with arms) the sun setting

The sun soon set, and the pious Jew, turning his face to the East, recited with great

Remove hat

devotion the evening prayer in honor of the reception of Queen Sabbath. Producing from his knapsack some bread and wine, he recited the benediction in honor of the holy day, ate his frugal meal, and then started to sing the Sabbath songs. Suddenly he was

Pick up tempo & speak with fear

Quivering voice

Slower tempo & dismally

Look surprised

Speak with encouragement

Motion to space at feet

Smile & speak with confidence

Close eyes & act as if sleeping

Stretch & yawn

Loud & surprised

seized with a great fright, for the roaring of a lion had struck his ear. And, indeed, he soon beheld a lion slowly approaching.

“My end is near,” thought the pious Jew, as he prepared to die a miserable and untimely death in the desert. To his great surprise, however, the lion, instead of pouncing upon his defenseless victim, merely lay down in front of the frightened man and looked at him with pity and kindness in his eyes. The man was no longer afraid, and with even greater devotion he continued to sing his hymns of praise in honor of the Sabbath. The lion soon fell asleep, and the lonely traveler, now completely reassured, followed his example.

Dawn broke and morning came. The traveler awoke from a refreshing sleep, and lo! The lion was still crouching in front of him, gazing at him with friendly eyes. And the pious traveler now understood that the desert king had been sent for his special

Smiling & content

Cheerfully

Point toward feet

Place hat on head

Pick up bundle

Act as if mounting lion's back

Act as if bouncing along

Quivering voice & act nervous

protection. He recited his morning prayers, ate his bread and drank his wine, and thus he passed the day of the Sabbath in pious meditations, the singing of hymns and the recitation of Psalms. When evening came and the traveler had recited the prayer of Havdalah, separating the holy day of Sabbath from the incoming weekday, the lion, who had remained calm and almost motionless all the day, now rose up and, wagging his tail, licked the hands of the pious man like a faithful dog. He once more lay down at the pious traveler's feet as if inviting him to mount on his back. The Jew understood the meaning of the lion's docile actions, and placing his bundle on the latter's back, quickly mounted him and held fast to his mane. Immediately the lion, like a swift courser, started to run in the darkness of night across the desert, whilst the trembling rider heard the fearsome, dreadful howls of the numerous beasts of the desert.

Act as if dismounting

Remove hat & smile

Act as if wagging backside

Shake head

Point toward back of room

Hold hand above eyes as if looking

Hold hands together as if begging

Proudly & put hat on head

Dawn had just broken when the Jew reached his caravan and found his traveling companions still resting in their tents and surrounded by their camels and mules. Like a camel, the lion now bent down to allow the rider on his back to dismount, and the pious man, his face aglow with joy, dismounted. Thereupon the lion rose, wagged his tail, shook his mane, and swiftly returned to the desert. The astonished gaze of the traveler followed the lion but very soon lost sight of him.

The leader of the caravan now regretted his unkindly action and humbly begged the pious man's pardon, whilst all his fellow travelers now looked upon him as a friend of God.

The Jew henceforth became known as Ariel, that is the lion of God, and his descendants are still living in the town of Hebron

(Rappoport, 1937, pp,183-185).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Pious following of faith
- Sacred nature of the Sabbath
- Importance in following the religious teachings
- Importance in having faith
- Importance of doing the right thing
- Importance of obedience

Activity Suggestions for *Ariel, or the Pious Man and the Lion*

1. Discuss the cultural practice of the Sabbath Day. Have the students read picture books that share the value of the Sabbath.
2. Discuss the rewards gained by Ariel for having faith and being obedient to his religious custom. Have the students draw pictures to represent the main events of the story. Have them place them in order and create a comic strip for the story. Have the students share their comic strips by telling them in storytelling style.
3. Have the students make autobiographical posters displaying pictures of themselves and their families. Encourage them to share pictures revealing cultural or religious customs. Have them share their posters by telling stories about the various pictures.

Greed Punished

Props: men's hat, fancy necklace, men's shoe (costume jewelry)

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Narrative

In the city of Cordova there lived a man of the name of Jacob. He was an agent by profession, a kind-hearted and honest man

Hold up necklace

who enjoyed the entire confidence of all his customers. One day a man entrusted to him a costly necklace and asked him to sell it for five hundred gold pieces. It was an exceedingly beautiful necklace of artistic workmanship and set with fine gems and

Hold up necklace & act as if walking

magnificent pearls. One day, when the agent was carrying with him the necklace trying to find a buyer, he met one of the high officials of the royal court who asked him,

Remove hat & speak curiously

“Where did you get the jewelry and what are you going to do with it?”

Place hat on head & masculine voice

“Sir,” said Jacob, “this necklace has been entrusted to me for sale, and I am to get five hundred gold pieces for it.”

Remove hat & ask earnestly

“Wouldst thou perhaps take four hundred for it?” asked the courtier, but Jacob refused, because the owner had insisted on the price mentioned and he could not accept less.

Normal voice

Thereupon the covetous official, anxious to possess the necklace, said,

Eagerly & deep voice

“Come along with me to my house where I will show the jewel to my wife, and should

it please her, I will buy it and pay thee the price asked for it.”

Normal voice & put hat on

The honest man, suspecting no fraud, followed the courtier to his house. At the door, the latter took the necklace from the hand of the Jew, and telling him to wait a moment, he entered his house and shut the door after him. The poor agent waited outside for a long time, and when evening came and the door remained shut, he returned home sorely grieved. He went to bed without taking any food but could find no sleep, so greatly he worried about the loss of the necklace.

Act as if handing necklace over

Whistle & act impatient

Sigh and act as if walking

Early the next morning Jacob hurried to the house of the courtier and was relieved to meet the latter on the point of leaving for the court.

Walk briskly

Deep voice & hold hands out

“Sir,” said Jacob, “wilt thou buy the necklace or shall I sell it to some other customer?”

Remove hat & act confused

“I do not know of what necklace thou art talking,” replied the courtier.

Put hat on & act discouraged

“I mean the pearly necklace,” said the crestfallen Jew, “which thou didst take from my hand yesterday to show it to thy wife.”

Remove hat & speak angrily

“Thou art mad,” cried the courtier, “and if my sense of honor did not prevent me from punishing thee for such insolence, I would gladly cut thy throat.”

Run finger along throat

Normal voice

When the Jew saw how incensed the courtier was, he grew frightened and ran away, going straight to the court of justice. The judge looked at him and read in his face the signs of great trouble.

Authoritative, concerned voice

“What has happened to thee?” he asked Jacob, “for thy countenance is changed.”

Put hat on, low pace & act dejected

“Sir,” said Jacob, “I am in great trouble, but I dare not tell thee what has happened, for thou wilt surely give no credence to my words.”

Remove hat, firm & reassuring voice

“Tell me everything,” said the judge, “for I know thee as an honest and truthful man whose tongue never lies.” Encouraged by these words, Jacob now related to the judge all that had happened, saying that he was in

such distress that death alone could be his refuge.

Loud & point finger up

“Take courage,” said the judge, “I will help thee to get the necklace back.”

Normal voice

On the following day the judge invited all the nobles of the city and the old wise men into his court as he was often wont to do when he wished to consult them. Before their arrival, he said to his servant,

Deep & cautious voice, slow tempo

“When such and such courtier comes, and as soon as he leaves his shoes in the vestibule of the court, take one of his shoes and hurry at once to his house; there thou wilt ask his wife to hand thee the necklace which her husband bought yesterday, because he is anxious to show it to his friends and let them admire its magnificence. As a proof of the truth of thy words thou wilt show her the shoe which her husband has given thee.”

Hold man’s shoe up

The servant did as he was bidden, and the courtier’s wife, seeing her husband’s shoe, suspected nothing and handed over the

Pick up necklace

necklace to the messenger, who swiftly

Act as if walking swiftly

returned with it to his master. When all the nobles and the wise men who had been invited had left the court of justice, the judge asked his servant whether he had brought the necklace, and when the messenger produced the jewel, the judge sent for Jacob.

Deep & satisfied voice

“Cease to worry,” he said to the Jew, “for have the necklace which I have rescued from the robber.”

Hold the necklace up

Put hat on & smile

When Jacob saw the necklace, he was overjoyed and kissed the hands of the clever and noble judge (Rappoport, 1937, pp.239-241).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Importance of doing the right thing
- Good luck follows diligent, honest, sincere, and helpful individuals
- Importance of using careful and good judgment
- Value of telling the truth and honoring one’s word
- Consequences of greed and selfishness

Activity Suggestions for *Greed Punished*

1. Discuss the concept of “trust” and how it pertains to this story. Emphasize the numerous parts of the story where trust is an issue. Have the students

- write poems about trust. Encourage them to think about issues such as establishing trust with someone and how trust can be damaged through bad choices.
2. Have the students write journal entries about a time when they trusted someone and found that they made a bad choice. Encourage them to include what they learned as a result of the experiences and what they would change about their choices.
 3. Play a classroom version of the gameshow “Greed”. Use questions formulated from the story for the game.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Latino Traditional Literature

Latino Values and Beliefs: General Historical Background

The richly mixed ancestry of the peoples in the Latino group may include such diverse areas as Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and other Latin American and South American countries. Even the preferred name to be applied to this culture is unclear; although the more all-encompassing terms such as Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano are all frequently used, the more specific terms such as Mexican or Puerto Rican, are generally preferred if the reference is to a specific country or group. In Dr. Norton's graduate seminar on multicultural children's literature, she notes that Latino traditional literature reflects both different cultural regions and the melding of cultures over many centuries.

In the centuries prior to the Spanish conquest are such cultures as the Olmec and the Toltec, as well as the Maya. Many of the tales associated with these early people showing flayed gods, feathered serpents, were-jaguars, obsidian butterflies, and snake women were lost at the hands of the Spanish Christian priests who burned codices that they believed were inspired by the devil. Luckily, however, a few of the early Aztec and Mayan tales were recorded for European audiences by Spaniards in the sixteenth century and other tales and histories were written down by Aztecs who learned to read and write in the Spanish Texcoco Seminary. Such early collections by both Spaniards and Aztecs provide most of the sources used by current folklorists and retellers of the tales.

It is particularly important to recognize the cultural background of the Latino population in the United States, since it represents an immense and growing portion of our society. Unfortunately, as Dr. Norton points out in her lectures, there are fewer

books about Latinos than either African American or Native Americans and the books published tend to go out of print faster than do books from the other cultures.

Interestingly, however, the oral storytelling traditions of the Latino population seem to be more alive than in some other cultures, so storytelling presents a unique opportunity to connect with the Latino students' roots and to encourage family involvement.

Latino Values and Beliefs

During the Mayan classic period in southeastern Mexico and Guatemala from A.D. 200-800, the early Mayans developed sophisticated art in painting, sculpture, and architecture, as well as a system of writing. The Mayan people's mythology and folktales both explained creation and expressed strong beliefs. Various beliefs attributed to the Mayans include:

- Strong beliefs in their gods and deities including the Lord of the Thirteen Hills and Chac, the Rain God. Death maker, the underworld ruler of the dead, was also a strong personage.
- The belief that the future was divinely decreed.
- The folklore characters, in addition to deities, included demons, monsters, and witches.
- Cleverness was valued.
- Wasting time was not valued.
- Corn was considered so important that it was believed to be the flesh and blood of mankind.
- Cultural practices included the paying of a bride price through service by the husband to the bride's father.

Translated Toltec poetry reveals the following:

- Toltecs admired storytelling, learning and art, indicating the true storyteller considered language noble and boldly used words of joy, while the bad storyteller was careless and said useless words without dignity.
- The true doctor was wise, gave life, understood herbs, and experimented in Toltec poetry.
- Advice to Toltec sons and daughter stressed values still important today.

Aztec folklore contains some similar values to the Mayan and adds others, including:

- A belief in strong deities who will destroy a world that is faulty.
- A belief in gods and goddesses who are jealous and must be appeased.
- Creation stories of subsequent worlds explaining many aspects of nature.
- Reasons and importance of human sacrifice to Aztec people who believed that humans must sacrifice their lives to appease the gods.
- Before Christianity was introduced, the Aztec people worshipped the elements of rain, sun, wind, and fire.
- Beliefs in the myths and other folklore include belief in supernatural and sometimes frightening characters with seeming enjoyment of frightening stories about fearful monsters as well as stories of the great gods.
- Cleverness and sharing are valued, while greed and evil actions are not.
- It is important to battle evil, and good prevails over evil.
- Fear may also be a tool to maintain obedience.

- Since the gods gave plants to humans, humans are responsible for caring for the plants and for retaining their beauty.
- The sun's light and golden corn are valuable forces.
- Helping the needy is important and brings good things, like crops, where failure to do so brings consequences, like destroying crops.
- In the agricultural society, corn is of great value.

Like the Mayans and Aztecs, the Inca and other South American folklore also includes legends, myths, and riddles, as well as *pourquoi* tales explaining why and how natural occurrences came about. The folktales of all the Latino groups include tales of animals acting in human-like ways. As noted earlier, many of the folktales from Mexico, South and Central America, and the Hispanic southwestern part of the United States reflect a blending of cultures, and although many of the ancient values, beliefs, and characteristics are still found in more recent traditional literature, the dramatic differences coincide with the arrival of Cortes and the Spanish. Much of the folklore reflects interactions between the ancient peoples following the introduction of Christianity and the Spanish or African cultures. Some of these tales show the clash of cultural values while others simply change settings, such as the Aztec version of *Aesop's Fables*. Values and beliefs resulting from the blending of cultures and advent of Christian beliefs include the following:

- The Spanish preoccupation with gold.
- Hard work is the best way to gain riches.

- Trickster tales are common where a less powerful character uses wits to overcome rich and powerful characters including politicians, priests, and even the devil.
- The belief in the supernatural and in the devil who plots deaths.
- A belief that gods can take human form and that people are servants of gods and must do their bidding.
- The new belief in Jesus who did not demand human sacrifice and blood.
- Merger of Spanish-Catholic and Aztec Indian heritages with belief in God, trust and faith in the Lady of Guadalupe.
- European traders influence hunters and expand their greed. (For example, in Harriet Rohmer's adaptation of traditional tale, *The Invisible Hunters*, native hunters are punished for breaking their promise and forsaking their people.)
- Love is an important value.
- God favors those who are generous.
- People have moral obligations to themselves, their communities, and to the spirits or God.
- Greed and wrong doings will be punished.
- Honorable actions result in a clear conscience.
- Age and experience, love and singing are valued.
- The healer's role is important in society.
- Serving the community brings honor and rank.
- Bringing honor to oneself and one's family is extremely important.
- Believing in miracles and good omens helps bring success.

- Completing tasks is necessary.
- Corn is vital to survival; a thrash and burn agricultural system was followed to clear the land for agriculture.
- Respect for elders, love of history and nature, responsibility for the care of the earth, and a belief in God are all valued.
- It is important to live in harmony with nature.
- It is important to respect the past and learn its lessons, as well as respect people who have knowledge of the past.
- Recognize that the supernatural has a natural place in life.
- Dreams, signs, and superstitions are important.
- The people remain close in spirit to their dead.

Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Latino Literature

Since a primary purpose for becoming familiar with a particular culture's traditional literature and corresponding values and beliefs is to determine the authenticity and appropriateness of more contemporary literature, a sound understanding of the Latino culture from ancient times forward makes it easier to evaluate Latino books and stories in terms of their consistency with the culture.

Guidelines to keep in mind when evaluating Latino literature include:

1. Does the book or story suggest that poverty is a natural condition for Mexican-Americans or Latinos?

2. Are problems handled individually, allowing the main characters to use their own efforts to solve their own problems or is intervention by Anglo-Americans required?
3. Are problems handled realistically or superficially? For example, are all problems solved by learning English?
4. Is the cultural information accurate? Are Mexican American, Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, or other Latin American and South American cultures realistically pictured?
5. Do the illustrations depict individuals, not stereotypes?
6. Is the language free from derogatory terms or descriptions?
7. If the author portrays dialects, are they a natural part of the story and not used to suggest a stereotype?
8. If the author uses Spanish language, are the words spelled and used correctly?

The Stories

The wide cultural areas for Latino folklore include Mexico, South and Central America, Cuba, and the American Southwest. The folklore incorporates pre-Spanish tales of the Aztecs, Maya, and Incas, as well as reflecting Spanish influences that are sometimes intermingled with other groups colonized by the Spanish such as the Apache and Pueblo Native American tribes.

As with other cultures' traditional literature, Latino folklore includes myths that explain (*ejemplo*), folktales and fairy tales (collectively called *cuentos*), and legends. The folklore included in this section includes two Mexican folktales, "The King and his Three Sons" and "The Boy Who Was Afraid," and two legends, "A Story about Santo

Domingo” and the “Legend of the Aduana De Santo Domingo.” The first story’s theme of a father trying to teach his sons wisdom, with the youngest son being the most willing and deserving recipient, is found in many different cultures and the second tale is reminiscent of the tale about the little boy who cried, “Wolf,” so familiar in European-derived folklore. Both of these first stories have been adapted for very young as well as older students. The two legends, although suitable and enjoyable for younger audiences might be more effectively used with older students who can tie the stories to their history studies of early Mexico and New Mexico and hone their authentication skills in checking out the validity of the legends.

The first legend contains strong ties to both the Catholicism brought to the New World by Spanish explorers and colonists and beliefs of the Tewa Indians of a New Mexican Pueblo who believed that very old people might turn into infants (Freire-Marreco, 1916). The last is an enjoyable love and marriage legend told of real individuals who lived in Mexico City in the early 1700s.

The King and His Three Sons

Props: crown, pin, hat

Storytelling Techniques

No props, normal voice

Put on crown

Hold three fingers up

Deep voice

Remove crown

Smile & act eager

Narrative

Long, Long ago in what today is Mexico, there was a king who had three sons.

One day the three sat down with their father who said, “We will go away today to hunt.” The sons were happy to hear of this adventure and were in a hurry to get ready

Straight face

Deep voice & hold up finger

Enthusiastically

Act as if gathering things up

Walk toward a door

Bend down & pick up needle.

Act curious (tilt head)

Shake head back and forth

Deep voice

Normal voice

Point to ground

Deep voice

Crazy look on face

Sarcastically & holding up hands

Normal voice

Stern voice

Normal voice & hold up finger

Put on hat

and go.

The father said,

“Then get ready. Remember, take time and care to get what you may later need.”

They went gleefully about their preparation.

First, they armed themselves. Next, they brought great provisions befitting of king’s sons on a hunt! Finally the day arrived of departure set by the king.

They gathered all their weapons and provisions and departed from the King’s house.

Along the way, the King saw a needle lying on the ground. He stopped and picked it up.

The eldest son said to his father,

“Why do you stop the hunt to pick up that worthless needle?”

The father shook his head and said,

“Never mind, it will serve me.”

The hunt began again until the father discovered a pin at another place along the path. He said to his eldest son,

“You pick up that pin.”

The eldest son was indignant. He said,

“Why should I get my hands dirty picking up a useless pin?”

The middle one agreed with his elder

brother, “Yeah, why should you pick up dirt to get a pin?”

However, when the youngest one saw that they would not pick up the pin, he stopped

Bend down & pick up pin

Stick pin in hat

Remove hat

Eyes wide open and voice slow

Speed voice up

Fear in voice

Deep and loud voice

Act like shooting

Eyes wide & with fear

Move arms as if running

Point to the right

Point to the left

Act as if sniffing around

Sniff to the right

Walk slowly to the right

Stand up swiftly – eyes wide

Pain in face and voice

Shake head back and forth

Disappointed voice

and picked it up.

He stuck it in his hat.

The hunt continued until they came to a wide ravine through which it was almost impossible to pass. But the adventuresome lot did their utmost and finally made it through. They then traveled a great distance and came upon a prairie where they saw from afar a ...

wild --- and ---dangerous--- animal.

It came quickly upon them and the sons were frightened and wondered what they should do. Their father shouted,

“Shoot that animal!”

They began to shoot, but they saw it always came nearer.

It was unstoppable!

Then they made up their minds to separate and run in different directions.

The eldest one turned into the grass, and the father went to another spot.

The wild beast arrived and smelled about.

It smelled the son hidden in the grass and followed him. But the eldest son was on the alert. He threw himself into a hole where the wild beast could not see him. But in doing so, he fell on a painful splinter and thought, “How should I pull it out?”

He remembered he had not picked up the pin. “Now I will have to leave the hunt and go home. There is no help here.”

Suspense in voice

The wild animal continued to search and found the middle son. Again it went after him, but he also hid, and the very same thing happened to him as to the first one. He ran a painful splinter into himself and said,

Curiously

“Now with what shall I pull out this thorn? I did not bring a needle and I did not pick up the pin which was there. I know; I will cut it out and endure the pain.”

Look of suffering & failure

By the time that he, too, arrived at his house, he was miserable and suffered much.

Normal voice

Well, don't think the loathsome beast gave up – he continued his search for a juicy hunter. He went first to where the father had

Walk to the left

hidden. He, too, like his sons had been stuck by a splinter in his rush to escape the deadly animal chasing him. When he was sure that he was hidden where the wild

Act as if holding needle up

animal could not see him, he took out his needle and began to pull out the thorn until he got it out. By the time he arrived home his foot was healed and hurt him no more.

Smiling

Meanwhile, that awful beast kept searching, but found nothing. He finally tired and went away. He did not even see the youngest son

Mean look on face

who fled quickly. But, on the way home, the youngest also stuck himself with a thorn.

Put on hat

Of course, this was not a problem because he just pulled the pin out of his hat --- you

Hop around as if hurt

remember, the one he picked up on the road --- and pulled the thorn out. He reached

Smiling (coy)

home safely and happily since it did not hurt him any more.

Celebratory

The father and sons, glad to be alive, greeted one another and each told of his dangerous escape from the beastly beast.

Deep voice & point finger

The father said to his two older sons, “Now do you see that you needed a pin? Why did you say that it was worthless? You did not see the need for a simple pin because as sons of a king you do not know poverty and fear. As simple a thing as a pin could save you. If you knew how it felt to be poor, you would see that even what is very small may be worth a great deal. Therefore, never despise what you may see as being of no service, because the day will come when the least among us will be the greatest of service” (Boas and Haerberlin, 1924, pp.364-367).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Cleverness
- The use of fear and warnings as a cautionary tool for maintaining obedience (making the right decision because you are afraid of the consequences)
- The value of age and experience
- Respect for elders

- The importance of respecting the past and learning its lessons, as well as respecting people who have knowledge of the past

Activity Suggestions for *The King and His Three Sons*

1. Have the students paint pictures of someone in their families to whom they should always listen and follow directions. Allow volunteers to orally share short stories about these.
2. Have the students write a sequel to the story. They should be sure to include a change in the plot based on lessons learned during the first hunt. Evidence of cultural authenticity and sensitivity should be included.
3. Construct a character sketch of an elder in each student's family from whom he/she receives life lessons. Include a description of this person as well as examples of life lessons handed down.
4. Conduct interviews with elders and members of the community regarding personal experiences of disobedience and life lessons. Use the interviews to begin biographical writing.

The Boy Who Was Afraid

Props: rubber snake

Storytelling Techniques

Soft voice

Seriously

Fearful voice

Normal voice

Narrative

Long ago in a small village in what is now Mexico, there lived a lonely widow and her only child. She loved her son very much because he was all she had. So, as you might imagine, he was very spoiled and when she gave him something to do to help her, he did not always want to do it. For example, when she ordered him to get water, and he did not want to do it, he would say, "I can't go because there is a snake at the waterhole!"

Not wanting her precious son to get hurt, the old woman would do the work herself.

Enthusiastically

One day, the boy's friend suggested they go to the water hole together for fun. The boy then eagerly went into his house and said to his mother,

Eagerly

"I should like to go get some water for you."

Concerned

His mother said, "But what about the snake?"

Normal voice

This time the boy bravely announced,

Loud and bold

"I am not afraid. I will go."

Normal voice

He took his pitcher, and he and his friend went to get water. But when they arrived at the water hole, indeed, he did see a snake rising out of the water.

Slow pace, lift & swirl snake

The boy wanted to run away, but the snake's look paralyzed him.

Fearfully, fast pace

Hold snake at arms length

Slowly the creature crept towards the boy.

Slow pace, move toward audience

Humorously

When the other boy saw the snake creeping towards his friend, he ran away to his house leaving the boy
aaaalllll aaaaallllloooooonnnnnne (all alone)

Very slow and drawn out

Speeding up the pace & concerned

The boy began to hit at the snake, but it was impossible for him to free himself from the deadly stare.

Point snake's head at audience

With relief in voice

Finally an old donkey came to the water hole and the boy cried in relief,

Crying and pleading

"You must deliver me from this terrible snake that is creeping towards me!"

Normal voice

The old donkey who was calmly warming himself said, "I myself am unable to help you because there is ingratitude in this world." The boy responded,

Deep, old voice

"How can there be ingratitude in the world?"

whiney, fearful voice

Deep, old voice

"Yes, there is ingratitude. For when I was young and strong, my master said he would never chase me away, but now since I am old and cannot be of any use, he drove me away. He

does not give me anything to eat or to drink. No, I can't help you, but why don't you go to that old horse over there and see whether he will deliver you."

Slowly, softly

The snake continued to hold the boy with his stare and inched closer. The boy cried to the old horse who had walked up to the water hole to please help him. But the horse said,

Deep and monotone

"I am warming myself right now and it is impossible for me to deliver you because there is ingratitude in this world." The boy cried,

Whiney and desperate

"How so is there ingratitude?" The horse replied,

Deep and monotone

"Because when I was young and strong, my master told me that he would never chase me away. But now that I am old he will not give me anything and he chases me away. No, I cannot help you, but go speak to the old bull over there and see if he will deliver you.

Normal voice

The boy, now frantic at the thought of the snake reaching him at any moment again cried out,

Frantic and pleading

"Please old bull, deliver me from this terrible snake!" But, as you can probably guess, the bull

Deep and loud

replied, "It is impossible for me to deliver you because there is ingratitude in this world." The boy said, "How so is there ingratitude?"

Whiney and desperate

Deep and loud

"There is, for when I was young and strong my master gave me things. He gave me water to drink and now, because I cannot help, he chased me away here. But why don't you go ask that eagle over there and see if he will deliver you."

Normal voice

Desperate, the boy cried to the eagle living nearby,

Crying

“Maybe you will deliver me from this terrible snake that is crawling towards me.”

Very calm and slow

The eagle calmly asked, “Why does it creep towards you?” The boy shamefully answered,

Head down, kick at the ground

“Because every time when my mother ordered me to get water and I didn’t want to go, I told her that I would not go because there was a snake. Then, when I came today with my friend, this snake really did come after me. The eagle calmly said,

Calmly & authoritatively

“Well, just wait for me a while. Then I shall deliver you.”

Gleefully

“Yes, I will wait for you, if only you will deliver me”, the boy thankfully cried.

Surprised & quick

The snake came at that time and grabbed the boy.

Calmly

The eagle said, “Now, indeed it is time for me to help you, but you must not be afraid. I shall seize the snake and lift it upward for you; when you feel that it lets go, run to your house.”

Grabbing motion, lift snake up

Normal

The eagle seized the snake with his beak and carried it up. He let it go again. He came again and seized it until at last the snake let him go and the boy ran away. When the boy arrived at his house, needless to say he was a very different boy than the one who had gone to the watering hole. His adoring mother asked him what had happened. He confessed the truth and told her all that had happened to him. His mother shook her finger and said,

Feminine, authoritative voice

“Have you now learned that when somebody gives you something to do, not to say that you don’t want to because there is a snake?”

The boy promised,

Put one hand up, sincere voice

“I will never say it again.”

Normal

From that day on, he treated his mother and others with honesty and gratitude.

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- The use of fear as a tool for maintaining obedience (making the right decision because you are afraid of the consequences)
- People have moral obligations to themselves, their communities, and to the spirits or God
- Greed and wrong doings will be punished
- Honorable actions result in a clear conscience
- Completing tasks is necessary
- Respect for elders
- Animals acting in human-like ways

Activity Suggestions for *The Boy Who Was Afraid*

1. Have the students make an animal character collage using pictures out of various magazines and coloring books. Allow them to discuss the animals and what role they portrayed in the story.
2. Cut snake shapes out of butcher paper. Have students color them and write 2-3 chores/rules that they must adhere to around their house.
3. Make a flannel board presentation of the story. Allow the children to present the story using the flannel board. Include additional animal characters and encourage the children to add new parts to the story.

4. Have the students make a comic strip portraying the story and how the boy's actions changed as a consequence of his experience.

A Story About Santa Domingo

Props: spoon, bowl

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Normal voice

Imitate the swinging of a cradle

Hold spoon up

Act as if riding a horse

Walk like a cowboy

Narrative

As many of you may have studied in your history classes, what is now known as New Mexico used to be inhabited only by the Native Americans of the area - many of whom lived in pueblos. One such Native American tribe was the Tewa Indians. As the Spanish conquered, explored, and settled this part of the country, Catholic Priests built missions and worked to convert the Native Americans to their form of religion. Before many years passed, the people in what we now call New Mexico were a combination of pure Spaniards, Native Americans, and mixtures of the two. Many of the ways of the people showed this great mixing of cultures. Only very great people were named saints by the Catholic church, but in time these North Americans had some of their very own. This is a story about how Santa Domingo came to be called a saint.

Santa Domingo, before he was a saint, lived at home with his father and mother; they were very, very old, and so small the he kept them in two cradles, like babies, and fed them with a spoon. On Sundays he saddled his horse, rode to mass, and tied his horse to the Cross. He then went over to the church without taking off his spurs;

pat a student's cheeks

use a sweet and proud voice

Normal voice

Hold up bowl

Act as if mixing

Act as if dividing

Hold finger up

Make knocking gesture

and in mid-mass, as soon as the *padre* gave the blessing, he came out and untied his horse and rode away. He went straight back to his house and found his little father and mother, one on each side of the fire; and they patted his cheeks, like babies, and called him...

“tata.”

One day there came an *almitayo* to the church. An *almitayo* is a sort of man with a long beard down the middle – we don’t know exactly whether he is a Mexican, or a saint, or an Indian, or perhaps something that God made (*quisas Dios puso*). *Almitayo* were never from towns. Instead, they came from the mountains. This one who came to Santa Domingo’s church could tell whether people had a good heart or not (*quisas Dios le puso tambien a ese hombre*) – and this is how he did it. He had a little dish; and when he went into a house, he used to mix corn-meal porridge in it and divide the porridge in two parts with a spoon; and if the owner of the house had a good heart, they both went on eating, and the porridge was still there. So, the *padre* asked this *almitayo* to find out why Santo Domingo went out from mass in such a hurry. The next Sunday in mid-mass, when the *padre* had blessed the people, Santa Domingo ran out and went home, and the *almitayo* followed him. He went to his house and knocked at the door. “*Pase, senior.*” He came in, and saw the little old parents, and Santo Domingo giving them water out of a spoon. The *almitayo* said,

Deep voice

“I should like to stay here the night”. The *almitayo* lay in the inner room, but all night instead of sleeping, he was praying. The next day he went back and told the *padre* what care Santo Domingo took of his old parents; and then the *padre* made him a saint (Freire-Marreco, 1916, p.537).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Corn was considered important
- Strong beliefs in their gods and deities
- Respect for elders
- Bringing honor to oneself and one’s family is extremely important
- God favors those who are generous
- Love is an important value
- Merger of Spanish-Catholic and Native American heritages
- Tewa cradles were suspended from the roof by long strips of rawhide or cords. The Tewa Indians believed that very old people might turn into infants
- Belief that the supernatural has a natural place in life (Almitayo’s magical powers)

Activity Suggestions for A Story About Santa Domingo

1. Have the children make cornhusk dolls to represent someone who takes care of them. Encourage the children to take care of the dolls in the same manner that Santa Domingo took care of his parents and with the same care that they are provided.

2. Discuss the name “tata”. Have the students brainstorm names that they are called by their parents or other adults. Write the nickname of each boy or girl in the middle of construction paper cutout. Have the children decorate the front of the cutouts to resemble themselves. Have them list adjectives that describe themselves on the back.
3. Discuss how Santa Domingo was rewarded for doing the right thing. Have the children make an award certificate, clay trophy, first-place ribbon, etc. for someone whom they feel deserves special recognition for doing something nice. Allow students to discuss their champion.
4. Have the students research the role of the *padre*. Have them compare and contrast the *padre* to people in similar positions from other cultures. The students may compile their research in a variety of formats (i.e. classificatory paper, chart, poster, web, character sketch, etc.).
5. Allow the students to identify other legends where goodness is rewarded at the end. Next, have the students research some of the old missions/pueblos or specifically research the Tewa Indians in New Mexico. Have the students make up a legend regarding their research. Encourage them to share their stories during a storytelling session.

Legend of the Aduana De Santo Domingo

Props: A feminine garment (purse, skirt, scarf, wrap, etc.)

A masculine garment (hat, mustache, blazer, etc.)

**If one person is telling it, we suggest something simple. When the feminine role is being told, simply pick up the purse. When the masculine role is being told, put the purse away and slip on the hat or mustache.*

***If two people are telling the story, the storytellers may be more fully costumed.*

Storytelling Techniques

Feminine Role

Fervently

Narrative

There was once a gentleman who for love’s sake conquered his coldness and his laziness and became all fire and energy. His name was **Don Juan** (Don Juan Gutierrez Rubin de Celis). He was a caballero of the Order of Santiago. Some say that he wore also the habit of Calatrava – and the colonel of the regiment of the Tres Villas. He was of a lovable nature, and

Shrewdly

ostentatious and arrogant, and in all ways dilatory and apathetic to the very last degree. So great were his riches that not even he himself knew the sum of them. On an occasion of state (the entry into the city in the year 1716 of the new Viceroy, the Marques de Valero), pearls to the value of thirty thousand pesos were used in the mere trimming of his casacon. Being of an age to take part so nobly in that noble ceremony and when the matters whereof I now am telling you occurred, he must have been a gentleman well turned forty.

Act impressed

Masculine Role

Hold hand to heart

He was falling most furiously in love with a very beautiful young lady. His falling in love in that furious fashion was the very first sign of energy that in all his lifetime he had shown. The name of the beautiful young lady with whom he fell so furiously in love was **Dona Sara** (Dona Sara de Garcia Somera y Acuna). She was less than half as old as he was, but possessed of a very sensible nature that made her do more thinking than is usually done by young ladies. She was of a noble house, and a blood relative of the Viceroy's.

Sadly

Feminine Role

Hold finger up

The love-making of this so notoriously lazy gentleman did not at all go upon wheels. This was because Dona Sara set herself (as was her habit when dealing with any matter of importance) to

Act as if pondering

thinking about it very seriously. The more that she thought about it the more she made her mind up that so dull and so apathetic a gentleman – who,

Act as if gossiping

moreover, was old enough to be her father – would not in the least be the sort of husband that she desired.

Masculine role

But, alas, because of her good sense, she perceived that much was to be said in favor of entering into wedlock with him. This was due to his rank and his great wealth that made him one of the most

Act proud

important personages in the Vice-Kingdom. And, although he was old enough to be her father, he was still a very personable man. And so she thought hard in both directions, and still could not make up her mind.

Sarcastically, yet uncertain

Shake head back and forth

Feminine Role

While matters were in this condition (Don Juan furiously in love with Dona Sara and Dona Sara thinking in that sensible way of hers about being temperately in love with Don Juan), something happened that gave a new turn to the whole affair. The thing that happened was that the Viceroy – who was a great friend of Don Juan's; and who was a kinsman of Dona Sara's, and much interested in all that was going forward – appointed Don Juan to be prior of the Consulado. This position is also known as President of the Tribunal of Commerce that was a most honorable office in keeping with his rank and his riches. Due to all the work that could be done by a deputy or even left undone, the office fit in perfectly with Don Juan's lazy apathy.

Sarcastically – laugh

Masculine role

Now at that time, the building of the Aduana de Santa Domingo, or custom house, was in progress. So, it had been in progress for a number of years with no great result from the work that laggingly was done on it for a number of years. The charge of the making of this edifice rested with Consulado and naturally, the new Prior of the consulado was even more content than had been his predecessors to let the lagging of it go on.

Feminine Role

Proudly

Then Dona Sara thought of a notable project for proving whether Don Juan's lazy apathy went to the very roots of him. Or, if at the very roots of him (over and above the energy he had shown in his furious love for her) he had energy that she could arouse and could set a-going in practical, useful ways. Her reasoning was this: if Don Juan could be stirred by her urgency to do useful work with vigor, then was it likely that her urgency would arouse him from all his apathies? If so, might this recast him into the sort of husband that she desired to have? Therefore, Dona Sara told Don Juan that she would marry him only on one condition. That condition was that he should finish completely the long-drawn-out building of the Aduana within six months from that very day!

Persuasively

Hold up one finger

Enthusiastically

Masculine Voice

And Don Juan was so furiously in love with Dona Sara that in the same instant that she gave him her

Confidently

Somewhat uncertain

Back to confidently

With awe

Boldly

condition, he accepted it. Although he had never done a hand's turn of work in all his lifetime, he promised her that he would do the almost impossible piece of work that she had requested. He assured her that the Aduana would be finished completely within six months from that very day! And then all the city was amazed, including Don Juan himself, for the fire and the force and the breathless eagerness with which he set himself to the task that Dona Sara had put upon him. In a single moment he had gone to every one of the architects in the city urging them to **TAKE CHARGE** of that almost impossible piece of building. Every one of the architects claimed that even a miracle could not accomplish the task. Even still, Don Juan took charge of it with the furiousness that matched the furiousness of his love for Dona Sara.

Feminine Role

What Don Juan did in that matter was done as though in the insides of him were tempests and volcanoes! From the Tierra Caliente region, he magically brought up myriads of workmen to do the digging and the heavy carrying. He crammed stone-cutters in every quarry around the City. He set every

*The masculine role should
be acting as if working.*

mason to work at wall-laying. Every carpenter was making the doors and windows. Every brickyard was to make the tiles for the roof and the floors. Blacksmiths were making locks, hinges, window-grating, and balcony rails. And in the midst of his

Speed up tempo

Continue increasing tempo

Aghast

Slow & calm

Slower

Move arms upward

Hold up three fingers

Smiling

Act as if carrying key

Masculine Role

swarms of laborers, Don Juan himself worked harder than all of them put together. He was among them urging them to hurry. If anyone even showed the slightest sign of lagging, scorpions, snakes, and toads came volleying out of Don Juan's mouth! He appeared as a frenzied person due to his raging energy. But it was a frenzy that had no real madness in it. Everything he did and that he had done was directed by a most sensible discretion. Not a moment of time nor the turn of a hand was wasted. Every single instant the building grew and grew. The upshot of it all was that he accomplished just what he had made his whole soul up that he would accomplish. He did so within the six months that Dona Sara had allotted – and he even had a little time to spare. Three full days before the last of his six months ended, the Aduana was finished to the smallest detail. Don Juan, all aglow over his triumphant fulfillment of Dona Sara's almost impossible condition, carried the key of the perfectly completed vast structure to the Palace and placed the key of it in the Viceroy's hand!

So that all the world might know why the work had been accomplished and for whom it had been accomplished, Don Juan had a most artfully contrived inscription carved on a wall of the building. The inscription included his own name, the names of the consuls associated with him, and the date of the Aduanna's completion. It was arranged so that the first letters of the five lines of it

Hold up finger

together made the initials of Dona Sara's name. Don Juan thus having done what Dona Sara had set him to do, and what all the architects in the city declared could not be done, proved that at the very roots of him was more blazing energy than the equipment of a half hundred ordinary men.

Feminine Role

Dona Sara was well satisfied. Her urgency having stirred him to do that great useful work with such masterful vigor and arouse him from all his apathies would recast him into the sort of husband that she desired to have. Therefore, Dona Sara immediately gave her hand to Don Juan in marriage. The Aduana is still standing precisely where Don Juan had built it --- faster than a miracle.

Enthusiastically

Look at ring finger

Masculine Role

Proudly

One should take to time to look at it and to read the inscription showing Dona Sara's initials. This shall prove the truth of this curious story and that Dona Sara's choice of a husband was well made (Janvier, 1910, pp.43-51).

Author's Note

Carved over an arch half-way up the main stairway of the ex-Aduana (the building is no longer used as custom house) still may be read Don Juan's acrostic inscription that sets forth the initials of Dona Sara de Garcia Somera y Acuna, the lady for whom he so furiously toiled (Janvier, 1910, p.149). The Aduana ceased to be a custom-house many years ago and is now occupied by the Secretaria de comunicaciones.

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Wasting time was not valued
- Hard work is the best way to gain riches
- Love is an important value
- Completing tasks is necessary
- Believing in miracles and good omens bring success
- Bringing honor to oneself and one's family is extremely important
- Cleverness is valued

Activity Suggestions for *Legend of the Aduana De Santo Domingo*

1. Allow the students to work in groups and research architecture. Have the groups decide on “mini-structures” that they are going to build. Give them a time frame in which they must complete their structures. Allow them a few minutes each day to plan and build. Work with the students until a reasonable goal is set. Finally, have the students come up with stories pertaining to their structures. Allow them to present their structures and stories for the class in the format of a storytelling presentation. Encourage the students to include Latino values and beliefs in writing their stories. Ask how some of these beliefs are also common to other cultures.
2. Have the students write acrostic poems using the names of someone they love. Encourage them to use creativity in putting their poems together. Have them make envelopes out of construction paper and present the poems to their loved ones.
3. Have the students do “before and after” posters and descriptions of Don Juan. Allow them to express how Don Juan changed as a result of his love and sense of duty to Dona Sara. Encourage students to share their before and after posters by telling short stories of the events that changed Don Juan's life.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Middle Eastern Traditional Literature

Middle Eastern Values and Beliefs: General Historical Background

The best known of the classical Arab folktale collections is the *Thousand and One Nights*, better known as *The Arabian Nights* in which the bride, Shahrazad (also translated Scheherezade) weaves continuing stories for her husband for a thousand nights as a means of saving her life. However, the oral storytelling traditions of the Middle East go far beyond these tales and play an important part of life continuing even into current times. Patai (1998) notes the important purpose of preserving the Arab folktale "as an invaluable source of knowledge of the mental world of traditional Arab culture" (p.7). Any summary of Middle Eastern folklore must consider it from the perspective of the overriding influence of the Moslem faith in every detail of life and the segregated social life dividing storytelling between the folktales (hikaye) told by the women in their homes and the stories (qissa) told by the men in their coffeehouses (Muhawi and Kanaana, 1989).

The Moslem faith, the religion of Islam, is based on the Koran, which the Moslem followers believe was dictated by the angel Gabriel to the prophet Mohammad in the early seventh century (Bushnaq, 1986). According to Bushnaq (1986), the five pillars (or duties) of Islam include:

- Belief that God (Allah) is the only God and that Mohammad is His prophet.
- Observance of five daily prayers (dawn, noon, middle of the afternoon, sunset, and night).

- Fast for the whole lunar month of Ramadan from first light until sundown to remind Moslems of the plight of the less fortunate.
- Almsgiving or zakat to Allah .
- Hajj, which is the pilgrimage to Mecca.

There is no doubt the common culture of Islam across numerous countries and the Hajj have been instrumental in spreading stories. Bushnaq (1986) notes the yearly Hajj, with its weeks in the company of like-minded travelers, seems particularly suited to the telling and spreading of stories: "If one short journey between Southwark and the shrine of Thomas `a Becket yielded *The Canterbury Tales*, may not twelve centuries of the Hajj have played a similar role for Arab tales?" (p.xxi).

Sources seem to differ concerning the differing nature of the stories told by men in their coffeehouses and the women's tales among themselves and to children told in the homes with Patai (1998) noting more commonality than Muhawi and Kanaana (1989) who attribute the tales (including proverbs, animal fables, jinn tales, magical tales, etc.) more to the women and children and the epic stories with more realistic heroes to the men. However, as Patai (1998) points out, the men obviously knew both, having heard the folktales as children. According to Muhawi and Kanaana (1989), the folktales (hikaye) are told with little gesticulation or physical movement, while the stories (qissa) involve considerable physical movement, narration, and acting out.

In describing an all male audience in a coffeehouse of the 1930s during Ramadan, approximately two hours after sunset, Patai (1998) notes:

The listeners' participation in the story was so intense that the qassas (storyteller) seemed to be leading the audience

as if it were a large orchestra, and the whole scene was one of group action rather than of a solo performance. (p.1)

Bushnaq (1986) describes the separate experience of the women and children:

Such was the entertainment of the women and the children. Theirs were the household tales about princes and princesses, about Djinn and Ghouls and magic rings and hidden treasures, about younger sons and daughters despised and ill-treated who triumphed in the end. (p.xvi)

Irrespective of the gender of the storytelling, it seems clear that the art was and is carried on after dark, with Bushnaq (1986) noting the thought that to spend good daylight hours spinning tales is ill-omened and telling of the Iraqi superstition that anyone telling stories in the daytime "risks growing horns and having his gold turn to iron" (p.xv). A typical opening to an Arab tale is *Kan ma Kan*, meaning "There was, there was not" (Bushnaq, 1986), although Muhawi and Kanaana (1989) note the most common opening to the folktales is "Testify that God is One!" given as a kind of invocation to dispel the influences of jinn and ghouls, indicating the magical process of the tellings (p.5).

In Arab folklore, the royalty or rulers, be it the caliphs, sultans, or emirs, were the masters of life and death of their subjects, who had no recourse against the ruler's verdicts or whims that could spell wealth or poverty, happiness or misery, or even life or death (Patai, 1998). In fact, in the Middle Eastern folklore, death is treated in a very matter-of-fact manner, largely because of the Muslim's fatalistic belief that all major events are predetermined so railing against them is useless (Patai, 1998). In further discussing the strong belief in fate and predetermination, Muhawi and Kanaana (1989) conclude, "Those

individuals who succeed most fully in embracing their destiny unquestioningly are, then, the heroines and heroes of our tales" (p.48). Standing out, even as a hero or heroine, is frowned upon; most heroic action consists of isolation (journey motif) followed by reunion with the collective group (Muhawi and Kanaana, 1989).

Just as God (Allah) controls everything and the rulers have authority over their subjects, so do men have control over women and the household in the Middle Eastern culture. In the folklore, having co-wives was not uncommon, leading to a number of stories concerning jealousy between and among the wives and their respective children, favored and neglected wives and children, etc. The wife's position was precarious, since the husband could divorce her at will or whim (Patai, 1998). However, Patai (1998) points out that in the folklore, at least, the subservient view of the woman had to be questioned:

In light of the folktale, this picture has to be modified...We learn that along with downtrodden daughters and wives there existed women who not only knew their own minds but managed to have their will, and who were decisive actors and factors in the affairs of the family. (p.13)

Patai (1998) also notes that in most Arab folktales in which husband and wife relationships figure, the wife is the dominant partner who takes the initiative, suggests tasks to her husband, seems more clever, manages the house, and tells him what to do (p.14).

Just as the patriarch is the head of the family, the family unit and extended clan is and has been through the ages the most important part of Arab social life, with individuality discouraged and collective family loyalty as the goal. Marriages are

considered business arrangements melding family alliances with the bridegroom having to pay a price for the bride; they are arranged by the father, with the children expected to obediently follow instructions (although here, too, folktales abound with examples of daughters who refuse to accept the bridegroom selected and find opportunities to fall in love elsewhere—sometimes from only a glimpse at a distance) (Patai, 1998). Although the marriages themselves are often dealt with in the literature in a single sentence from first meeting to marriage, the festival surrounding the event can extend for several months. Similarly, although death is taken very matter-of-factly, funeral ceremonies are major social occasions where the women (only) are expected to show great demonstrations of grief (Patai, 1998). The family dynamics, subjugation by the rulers, and overriding influence of Islam work together to create the Middle Eastern culture depicted in the folktales.

Values and Beliefs

- The Religion of Islam is most important factor in life
- Family honor must be defended, even if penalty is death
- Father makes decisions about who sons/daughters marry
- Higher moral power controls actions
- Brother is guardian of sister's honor
- Male has authority over female
- Older has authority over younger
- Respect for tradition
- Obedience to parental authority expected, even if unfair or cruel
- Wrong to go against dictates of family

- Family loyalty all important
- Individuality not encouraged
- Marriage of cousins common
- Food is the most important material resource
- Hospitality and generosity two basic values of Arab culture
- Best to give anonymously or when no chance for personal gain
- Good and evil work against each other-clear distinction between two
- Belief in fate and predestination
- A clever woman gets along with her husband's family
- Seasonal events are important
- Details of farm life are important
- Filial love is important, even in light of mistreatment
- Homicide and violent death, even for small offenses or minor character flaws common
- Blood revenge is common
- Belief in the pleasures of Paradise (heaven)

Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Middle Eastern Literature

Certainly the general guidelines included in Part I should be considered in evaluating Middle Eastern literature. The number of Middle Eastern books designed for young readers is less than for some of the other cultures, with the traditional literature (such as *The Arabian Nights*) probably being the most common. Close attention needs to be paid to author's notes to ensure that the translations are authentic and accurate and that stereotypes are avoided.

The Stories:

The stories for this section are divided between Turkish fables (although admittedly Turkey also has links to Asian and European folklore) and Syrian folklore collected from early Syrian immigrants to America.

Turkish Fables

In his text, Turkish Literature, Epiphanius Wilson (1901) noted that, while Turkey was, in effect, an oriental country transplanted into a European environment, its truest affinities were with the far East, Arabia, and Persia (p.iii). The following fables, which were translated into English for the first time by Wilson, both remind us of the Greek Aesop's fables and retain a unique quality of their own.

The Candle

Props: a candle, a brick

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice & hold candle up

Sigh

Speak with dismay

Hold brick up

Narrative

A Candle, made of soft and pliant wax, lamented over the fact that the slightest touch injured it. It did nothing but sigh, and burst out into bitter complaints against its dismal lot, especially dwelling upon the fact that bricks, although at first tender and pasty, grow hard from heat and thus acquire

Pound on brick

an age-long durability. In order to acquire

Take a small leap

the same hardness, and to reap the same advantages, it leaped into the fire, melted, and was consumed.

Hold finger up

Moral: It is useless to rise up in irritation and revolt against the disadvantages which are inherent in our nature, our constitution, or our position (Wilson, E., 1901,p.12).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Belief in fate and predestination

Activity Suggestions for *The Candle*

1. Have the students construct a flannel board version of the story. Allow them to share it with the class.
2. Have the students write their own fables and share them in storytelling fashion with the class.

The Wolf and the Donkey

Props: hat for the donkey

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Narrative

The Wolf, having come upon a Donkey who was in prime condition, wished to eat him.

Then the Donkey said:

Use a silly voice & plead

“I beseech you, Mr. Wolf, cure me of a wound which I have in my foot; an abominable nail has pierced it, and produces intense suffering. Afterward, you can eat me, for God has destined me to be your food.”

Normal voice

The Wolf accordingly went behind the Donkey for the purpose of extracting the nail; but at that moment the Donkey flung out a kick with all his strength, which struck the Wolf and smashed his teeth. The Wolf, weeping bitterly, reflected: “It is right that I suffer this disaster, for being by nature a butcher, no one can make a blacksmith of me.”

Louder & enthusiastically

Act as if sobbing

Moral: This fable shows many people are filled with sorrow and regret, from attempting to practice arts and accomplishments which they have never learned, and which are unsuited to their lives (Wilson, E., 1901, pp.18,19).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Individuality not encouraged
- Belief in fate and predestination

Activity Suggestions for *The Wolf and the Donkey*

1. Have each student work independently to change the ending of the fable and create a new moral of the story. Allow them to share their stories and guess at the implied morals.
2. Have the students make a compare/contrast poster in which they compare the values and beliefs of this story and culture to those of another cultural group.

The Horse and His Rider

Props: men's hat

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Put hat on & deep, calm voice

Remove hat & deeper, upset voice

Narrative

The Horse complained to his Rider, saying that it was unjust that a fair and powerful creature, such as he was, should be a slave and carry so weak a thing as man.

His Rider replied, "I feed you, I shelter you with a roof, and I show you where water and grass are to be found."

"But you take away my liberty, and put a hard bit in my mouth. You weary me with

Put hat on & loud and commanding

long journeys, and sometimes expose me to the dangers of battle,” answered the Horse. “Take, then, your liberty,” said his master, removing the bridle from his head and the saddle from his back.

Remove hat & point toward back of room

The Horse bounded off into the mountains, where grass and water abounded. For many weeks he enjoyed ease and plenty. But a pack of wolves, seeing him in good condition, pursued him. At first he easily outstripped them, but he was now heavy with much nourishment, and his breath began to fail. The wolves overtook and threw him to the ground.

Smile & speak enthusiastically

Slower & speak with suspense

When he found his last hour was come, he exclaimed mournfully.

Speed up the tempo

Louder

“How happy and safe I was with my master, and how much lighter and easier were his bridle and spur than the fangs of these blood-thirsty enemies!”

Sadly

Moral: This fable shows that many people do not estimate duly the blessings of their condition, and complain about those duties,

the performance of which is the sole condition of their life and safety (Wilson, E., 1901, pp.21,22).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Individuality not encouraged
- Higher moral power controls actions

Activity Suggestions for *The Horse and His Rider*

1. Discuss the concept of patience. Generate a discussion about times when we must practice patience. Have the students role-play instances that call for patience.
2. Have the students write journal entries about a time when they were not content with a situation in which they found themselves.

Syrian Folklore

When Howard Barrett Wilson(1903) compiled his collection of Syrian folklore from the Syrian population residing in Boston in 1903, he noted that the aim of most Syrians coming to America at that time was to escape the tyranny of Turkish oppression. He indicated that the Syrians related two kind of folktales: the ordinary tale and the allegorical tale. Wilson explained the allegorical tale as following: “That is to say, *A* makes a remark which seems preposterous to *B*, for, as *A* intended, *B* does not understand the figurative or allegorical use of *A*’s words” (p.144). The meaning of the words is then

brought out in the story itself, as is illustrated in the following tale, originally told to Wilson's storyteller when he was a small boy in Damascus.

The Simmering Coffeepot

Props: crown, coffee pot, straw hat

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice & put crown on

Hold coffeepot to ear

Hold arms up & shrug

Hold coffeepot to ear

Make angry expression

Hold three fingers up

Hold coffeepot up

Narrative

One day while the king and his premier were discussing matters, the king asked him what it was that the coffeepot said as it simmers on the fire. This was the first time the premier had ever heard such a question as that, and he was unable to give an answer. It irritated him, for he had never thought that any one could answer such a question. But the king was determined to know, and insisted on his discovering what the real words which the simmering coffeepot says were. When the premier was unable to find out what they were, the king grew angry and threatened to kill the premier if, at the expiration of three days, he could not tell him the words of the simmering coffeepot.

Remove crown

The poor premier did his best to find out; he asked everyone, but no one could enlighten him. What was worse, some of those he asked laughed at him and thought he was crazy.

Laugh as speaking

Hold up two fingers

It was the afternoon of the second day, and still he had been unable to solve the mystery. In despair he gave up all hope of finding any one in the world who knew what the simmering coffeepot says, and to seek relief for his troubled mind, he departed from the city to a place unknown. As he was walking along in the country, he met a peasant who was returning home from the city, and he asked him where he was going. The peasant told him that he was from a village which was located about an hour's walk from the city. So the premier thought that he would accompany him to that village, not knowing in his perplexity what else to do. After they had walked together for a few minutes, the premier asked the

Hold arms up in surrender

Hold coffeepot to ear

Place straw hat on head

Point off in the distance

Remove hat & act as if pondering

Point to shoulders

Put on hat & look surprised

Speak in a weary voice

Remove hat & normal voice

Act misunderstood

Shake head back & forth

Speak persuasively

peasant if he did not think that it would be a good plan for them to take turns, each letting the other ride on his shoulders for a short distance in order that they might neither become very tired on the way. The old peasant was amazed to hear such a question and said, "My son, how do you expect me to let you ride on my shoulders while I am so feeble and advanced in years?"

Of course the premier did not mean by his suggestion what the peasant understood, and consequently, discovering that the peasant did not understand what he meant, they walked on together in silence for nearly half the distance.

The premier really meant by his suggestion that they should take turns telling stories and that thus the way would not seem so long and tiresome as it would if they walked in silence.

After a short time, they came across a cornfield and again the premier initiated the

Put on hat & act surprised

Act insulted

Remove hat & normal voice

conversation by asking if the owner of the field had already eaten the corn or not. The peasant was again amazed at the question of his companion, for it was evident to any one that the cornfield was at its best. He merely replied, "My son, I do not understand what you mean by a question like that, for it is not difficult for any one to see that this cornfield has not been harvested yet. Why, then, do you ask me if it has been eaten or not?" The premier did not allow himself to become angry at this reply, for he had perceived from the first that the peasant was not one of those who could understand his allegorical language.

The premier meant by his question whether the owner of the cornfield had borrowed the money for the seed, in which case, soon after the harvest was over, after paying off the debt he had contracted for the seed in the spring, he would have nothing left to eat; or whether he owned the crop without debt.

Put hat on & act angry

They walked on, and when very near the village a funeral passed them. Again the premier asked his companion whether the man was really dead. At this question the peasant was nearly beside himself he was so angry, and said, "How in the world can you doubt of the death of this man, for you see they are taking his body to the cemetery to bury, and therefore it is foolish to ask such a question as that."

Remove hat & act apologetic

The meaning of the premier was again mistaken. He meant that if the dead man had any sons, he was not really dead, for they would still keep his name alive.

Point to two different directions

By this time they had entered the village, where they were obliged to separate. The custom in those days was that a stranger who had no place to which he could go should go to the mosque and spend his time there. But as the place was entirely unknown to the premier, he asked the peasant if he would not kindly show him the

Put hat on

way. After doing so, the peasant departed and when he had reached his home he was so astounded and his mind was so full of the incidents that had happened, he told his family about the man he had met and how strangely he had talked. In his family,

Put on feminine scarf

however, there was a daughter and, fortunately for the premier, she could understand the true meaning of his words.

Hold seven fingers up

So after her father had related what he had heard, she told him that it would be very kind of him if he would take some supper to the stranger. She took seven loaves of bread and a large bowl of Modzun, an old-fashioned soup made of thickened milk, rice, and meat, and gave them to her father, telling him to give them to the stranger with

Soft, sweet voice

her respects, and to say to him: "Our moon is full, and our week has seven days."

Put on hat & greedy voice

But the old man, being very hungry on account of his journey to the city, could not

Lick lips & rub tummy

resist taking a few sips of the broth, and one of the loaves of bread, thinking that it would never be discovered that he had done so.

Act as if handing food over

When he handed the food to the stranger, he gave him his daughter's message as she had directed. But the stranger, immediately

Remove hat

detecting the theft, said, "No. Give your daughter my respects and tell her that your moon is not quite full, and that your week has but six, instead of seven, days." The

Put hat on

peasant took back the message of the stranger to his daughter, and she, at once understanding what had been done, was somewhat provoked at her father. He, in

Act surprised

turn, was greatly amazed when she told him what he had done, and could not possibly conceive how she had found out that he had

Hold arms up

taken some of the stranger's supper, for he was quite certain that no one had seen him eat it.

Act as if pondering

The next morning the girl desired very much to see the stranger who had so aroused her curiosity by her father's report of him. So

Put scarf on

Point finger toward door

she sent her father to invite him home. On the previous evening the premier had perceived that this peasant girl was such a person as he wanted to find, and so he was very glad to accept her invitation, and went home with the old man. It was the custom in those times for such people (i.e. those who spoke in allegories) when they met, to use allegorical language, making their remarks as difficult to comprehend as possible. Accordingly, the stranger and the girl competed with one another, each asking the other the most difficult questions imaginable. The premier could see to his great surprise that this peasant girl was one of the cleverest persons he had ever met. After they had both enjoyed themselves in competition, the premier was discovered to be no common person, but a nobleman disguised as a poor man so as to try to conceal his identity. He thought that because she was so clever, she could help

Remove scarf & act impressed

Enthusiastically

Hold finger up

Hold coffee pot up

With awe

Soft, sweet voice

Normal voice

him out with the situation regarding the king's anger due to his not knowing what the simmering coffeepot says. But she greatly soothed his troubled mind, and encouraged him by telling him that it was the easiest thing in the world to answer. The premier was very much surprised, for in all his life and in all his studying he had never heard of such a thing, and none of his companions had either. As he was so anxious to hear what the coffeepot says as it simmers on the fire, the girl told him---and this is what she said:

*My stream glides down the sunny glade
Brings life to flower, and grass, and tree.
But thus my kindness is repaid;
They feed the blaze to torture me.*

The Arabic verse is said to be extremely beautiful, and at best only the general idea can be translated. The premier, rejoicing, when back to his city, and told the king that he had found out the words which the

coffee-pot sings as it simmers on the fire

(Wilson, H., 1903, pp.144-147).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Wrong to go against dictates of family
- Respect for tradition
- Hospitality and generosity as two basic Arab values
- Details of farm life are important
- Homicide and violent death even for small offenses is common
- Food is the most important material resource

Activity Suggestions for *The Simmering Coffeepot*

1. Have the students construct coffeepots and write messages on them that only they can translate. Have the students come up with clues to try and guess what the messages means.
2. Bring in several food items and have the students create food symbols for their secret messages.
3. Have the students write journal entries in which they reflect on a time when they were misunderstood. Have the students construct silhouettes of themselves. On one side of the silhouettes have them write descriptive words in regard to the misunderstanding. On the reverse sides, have them write descriptive words in regard to the truth of the matter.

Middle Eastern Glossary

(Excerpts from Bushnaq, 1986, pp.xxvii – xxviii)

- Caliph – a successor of Mohammad as one of the spiritual and political leaders of the nation of Islam.
- Djinn – invisible beings created by God out of smokeless fire. They can be good or evil and appear to humans in many disguises.
- Ghoul – a fabulous desert monster that lies in wait for the unwary traveler and devours human flesh.
- Sheikh – literally “one who is old” therefore a venerable patriarch. A Beduin Sheikh is the head of a tribe; a religious sheikh is a scholar learned in the Koran.
- Sultan – an absolute ruler or king. (Sultan is the title of the Ottoman rulers and is used in the tales interchangeably with king.)
- Suq – a market or bazaar.
- Wazir – a minister or chief courtier.
- Yammah – in direct address this means “oh mother”. It is also used as an exclamation of fear.

Annotated Bibliography

Hickox, Rebecca. *The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story*. Illustrated by Will Hillenbrand. Holliday House, 1998. An Iraqi Cinderella story in which a kind and beautiful girl who is mistreated by her stepmother and stepsister is helped by a magic fish.

Travers, P.L. *Two Pairs of Shoes*. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. Viking Press, 1980. Retellings of two folktales reveal how two pairs of shoes show the true character of the men who own them.

Various versions of *The Arabian Nights* to include:

Riordan, James. *Tales from the Arabian Nights*. Illustrated by Victor G. Ambrus. Hamlyn, 1983. Collection of illustrated tales retold for children.

Wiggin, Kate Douglas & Smith, Nora A. (editors). *The Arabian Nights: Their Best-Known Tales*. Illustrated by Maxfield Parrish. Barnes and Noble Books, 1993. Recent collection of the famous tales written in a style more appropriate for older children.

CHAPTER SIX

Native American Traditional Literature

Native American Values and Beliefs: General Historical Background

Native American tales are considered the only truly indigenous stories to the United States. In studying Native American stories, it is necessary to realize that there is no one collection of folklore, but rather the folklore differs from tribe to tribe and region to region. In *Through the Eyes of a Child*, Norton cites sources who caution against a too-broad look at Native American culture. Specifically, she highlights several facts:

- Native American cultures cover a vast stretch of history from ancient times.
- Most of the history has been recorded by Europeans or Anglo-Americans with the resulting loss of significant amounts of the native peoples' authentic oral language.
- Widely diverse physical environments influence the different Native American cultures including the Arctic tundra, woodlands, MesoAmerican jungles, plains, prairies, plateaus, swamps, and mountains.
- Linguists estimate that at least 200 languages were spoken in North America before European contact and some 73 language families were prevalent at the time of contact.
- Even today, 500 federally recognized tribes and approximately 300 federal Indian reservations exist, with no one federal or tribal definition clearly establishing a person's identity as an Indian (Norton, 1999, p.603).

Unfortunately, past literature for children about Native Americans has often lumped the many groups together in a stereotyped version of an Indian, usually--

according to Norton's sources--fitting three typical versions: (1) savage, deprived, and cruel, (2) noble, proud, silent, and close to nature, or (3) inferior, childlike, and helpless (Norton, 1999, p.583). Often these stereotypes are reinforced through degrading language and images. Fortunately, more recent books are being authored by Native Americans or serious authorities on Native American culture and are more authentic and sensitive to the heritage and individual tribal identities of the vast native peoples of North America. Norton(1999) cites the map in Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac's *Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities* (1991) as a good source to illustrate to children the cultural areas and tribal locations of Native North Americans around 1600 (p.643).

Although both vast and individual in their identities, Native Americans share strong oral storytelling traditions depicting many common motifs. Storytelling was and is an important part of Native American life, and stories were and are still passed down from one generation to another, often with clear restrictions on who has the right to retell the sacred tales. The Native American stories follow specific styles with traditional openings and endings and Norton (1999) stresses the importance of conveying to children these rituals as a means of increasing understanding and respect for cultural heritage and values. Examples include the frequent Navaho openings of "In the beginning, when the world was new" and "at the time when men and animals were all the same and spoke the same language" and the Iroquois frequent ending with "Da neho!" which means "That is all" (Norton, 1999). Early Native American storytelling was often conducted around campfires or sitting in circles in the homes, and the children were expected to not interrupt and to be attentive. In 1938, Morris Opler reported that the Jicarilla Apache

storytellers gave young listeners kernels of corn to eat during storytelling, believing that the sacred nature of the corn would help them remember the substance and importance of the stories (Norton, 1999, p.643).

In her text, Norton (1999) reports that generally, Native American stories fall under four categories labeled by John Bierhorst: (1) setting the world-in-order tales, (2) family drama tales, (3) trickster tales, and (4) threshold tales (cited in Norton, 1999, p.644). The first category includes the creation myths and the tales explaining natural phenomena; the second includes both family and tribal dramas; the third follows the worldwide tradition of the trickster to teach lessons or outwit stronger forces; and the fourth deals with various "crossings over" including dying, facing puberty, going into or out of the animal or spiritual world, etc. By recognizing the individual and common qualities of Native American traditional literature, seeking out authentic and respectful versions of Native American stories, and communicating to students the importance of Native American storytelling traditions, educators can increase the meaning and enjoyment of sharing Native American folklore.

Native American Values and Beliefs

As noted above, it is impossible to accurately identify all the values and beliefs of the vast number of Native American tribal groups. However, common threads seem to weave through the stories including the following often expressed or inferred values and beliefs:

- living in harmony with nature
- considering religion as a natural phenomenon closely connected to nature
- respect for wisdom gained through age and experience

- the importance of acquiring patience
- the importance of group and extended family relationships over individual needs
- respect for the buffalo and thanks given to the buffalo or other animals for food and sustenance
- value in showing bravery and honor and willingness to avenge wrongs
- importance of corn as sacred gift to sustain life
- belief in magical, supernatural qualities
- animals with human-like qualities, often interacting with humans
- humorous trickster tales used to explain and teach about human nature--both good and bad behavior
- myths used to "set world in order"
- cycle tales often show personal growth
- disastrous consequences of not taking care of Earth
- importance of four sacred directions
- importance of symbol of circle to show interconnectedness with this world and the spirit world
- consequences of failing to obey Great Spirit
- importance of finishing tasks
- motifs of separation, initiation, and return
- reverence for creation, nature, and beauty
- songs, poetry, and dance reflect important symbolism and ritual (Norton, 1999).

Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Native American Literature

A primary purpose for becoming familiar with Native American traditional literature is to enable an educator, by understanding the ancient values and beliefs, to determine the authenticity and appropriateness of all Native American literature. Bearing in mind the values taught in the traditional literature, a recent graduate level lecture by Dr. Norton enumerated the following criteria for evaluating all Native American literature:

- Are Native American characters portrayed as individuals with their own thoughts, emotions, and philosophies?
- Do the Native Americans belong to one specific tribe?
- Does the author recognize the diversity of the Native American cultures?
- Does the author respect the Native American culture or is it inferior to the Anglo-American story?
- Does the author use offensive and degrading vocabulary?
- Are the illustrations authentic and realistic?
- If contemporary setting, does the author accurately describe the situation today?
- Conflicts to look for: (1) Who has the right to retell the stories; (2) how are literary style and translation presented, and (3) are there disagreements over literal versus metaphorical interpretations?

The Stories

As noted earlier, Native American tales are unique in that they generally are considered the only traditional tales truly indigenous to the United States. The traditional literature of the native peoples of North America reveals not one group of folktales, but tales that are different from region to region and tribe to tribe, although many tales have

certain motifs in common (Norton, 1999, p.310). The Native American myths retold here include three different tribal tales explaining the origin of corn, an important life-saving if not sacred food of both Native American and Latino cultures, and a pourquoi trickster tale of the Cherokees explaining “How the Deer Obtained His Horns.”

The Legend of Indian Corn: A Wabanaki Legend

Props: two sticks, one cornstalk

Storytelling Techniques

Narrative

Normal voice

A long time ago, when Indians were first made, there lived one alone, far, far from

Point off in the distance

any others. He knew not of fire, and

Hang head as if sad

subsisted on roots, barks, and nuts. This

Indian became very lonesome for company.

Put hands to head as if sleeping

He grew tired of digging roots, lost his appetite, and for several days lay dreaming

in the sunshine; when he awoke he saw

Act surprised & frightened

something standing near, of which, at first,

he was very much frightened. But when it

Pantomime long hair

spoke, his heart was glad, for it was a

beautiful woman with long light hair, very

unlike any Indian. He asked her to come to

Motion “come here” with arms

him, but she would not, and if he tried to

approach her, she seemed to go farther

Point toward back of room

away; he sang to her of his loneliness and besought her not to leave him; at last she told him, if he would do just as she should say, he would always have her with him. He promised that he would. She led him to where there was some very dry grass, told him to get two very dry sticks, rub them together quickly, holding them in the grass.

Rub sticks together

Jump back (away from spark)

Soon a spark flew out; the grass caught it, and quick as an arrow the ground was burned over. Then she said,

Feminine voice

“When the sun sets, take me by the hair and drag me over the burned ground.” He did not like to do this, but she told him that wherever he dragged her something like grass would spring up, and he would see her hair coming from between the leaves; then the seeds would be ready for his use. He did as she said, and to this day, when they see the silk (hair) on the cornstalk, the Indians know she has not forgotten them (Brown, 1890, pp.213-214).

Hold hair out

Hold up cornstalk

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Importance of corn as sacred gift to sustain life
- Myths used to “set world in order”
- Reverence for creation, nature, and beauty

Activity Suggestions for *Origin of Corn: A Cheyenne Tale*

1. Have the students make cornhusk dolls and retell the story using the dolls as props.
2. Have the students write their own creation tales.

Origin of Corn: A Cheyenne Tale

Props: beef jerky, cornstalk

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Hold up hoop

Point to head

Narrative

There was a large camp near a spring called old-woman’s spring. The people were amusing themselves by games, and were playing the “buffalo-game” with rolling hoops. Two young men were standing by, watching. They were painted alike and dressed alike, and wore the same headdresses, and both wore buffalo-robos. Finally one of them told the people to call everyone, and that all should watch him; that

Point toward back of room

Point to self

Act as if walking

Point to left side

Point to right side

Hold up cornstalk in left hand

Hold up beef jerky in right hand

he would go into the spring and bring back food that would be a great help to the people ever after. The other young man also said that he would bring them food. There was an entrance to the spring, formed by a great stone, and by this the two young men descended into the spring, both going at the same time. They found an old gray-headed woman sitting, and she showed them on one side fields of corn and on the other herds of buffalo. Then one of the young men brought back corn and the other buffalo meat, and the people feasted on both. And that night the buffalo came out of the spring; and there have been herds of them ever since, and corn has been grown too (Kroeber, 1900, pp.161-190).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Respect for the buffalo and thanks given to the buffalo or other animals for food and sustenance
- Importance of corn as sacred gift to sustain life
- Myths used to “set world in order”

- Importance of symbol of circle to show interconnectedness with this world and the spirit world
- Motifs of separation, initiation, and return

Activity Suggestions for *Origin of Corn: A Cheyenne Tale*

1. Have the students make up a hoop game and call it the “buffalo-game” as indicated in the story. Allow the students to devise the rules and object of the game.
2. Have the students research the importance placed on the circle as a symbol. Encourage them to research historical documents as well as popular culture.
3. Have the students research Indian dress and headdress. Discuss the importance placed on these sacred garments.

Origin of Corn: Myth of the Jicarilla Apaches

Props: bow, seeds, ear of corn

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Deep voice & gobble

Hold up one finger

Run finger across throat

Normal voice

Narrative

An Apache who was an inveterate gambler had a small tame turkey which followed its master about everywhere. One day the Turkey told him, “The people are tired of supporting you because you gamble until you lose everything that we in charity give you. We will give you one more stock of supplies, and if you make away with it, you shall be killed.”

Knowing that he could not resist the temptation to gamble if he had any property

in his possession, he decided to leave the tribe before their wrath should overtake him.

The next day he began

to chop down a tree from which to build a boat. The Woodpecker, Tsitl-ka-ta, commanded him,

“Do not cut the tree; the woodpeckers will do it for you”.

They also cut out the inside of the trunk, so that he could get into the cylinder, after

which the spider sealed him in by making a web over each end. The woodpeckers carried the log, thus prepared, to the Rio

Grande River and threw it in. The faithful Turkey followed along the shore. In the

whirlpool above San Juan, the log left the main current and spun round and round until

the Turkey pushed it on into the channel

again. Farther down the river the log caught in the rocks in an upright position above a

fall, but the Turkey again started it on its journey. At the pueblo of Isleta, the boys

hailed out the log with others for fuel. The

Act like chopping

High pitched voice

Normal voice

Act like constructing a boat

Act like carrying a heavy log

Make a spinning motion

Act like pushing the log

Roll eyes & push again

Roll eyes & push again

Roll eyes & push again

Point toward back of room

Act like scooping up duck feathers

Hold up bow & point to string

Hold up four fingers

Deep voice & gobble

Normal voice

Point in all four directions

Point to east

turkey rescued the log and placed it in the water; and again, at another pueblo far down the river, the log was returned to the stream. Far to the southward, the log drifted out of the channel into a grove of cottonwoods. The man came out of the log and found a large quantity of duck feathers lying about. That night he had no blanket in which to sleep, so he covered himself with duck feathers. He killed a duck, and with the sinews of its legs made a bowstring. After he landed, the Turkey soon overtook him, and they remained there for four days. During this time the man cleared a small space and leveled it. “Why do you clear this place?” said the Turkey; “if you wish to plant something you must make a larger field.” Then the Turkey ran toward the east, and the field was extended in that direction: toward the south, the west, and the north he ran, until the field was large enough. Then he ran into the field from the east side, and the

Point to south

black corn lay behind him; from the south side, and the blue corn appeared; from the

Point to west

west, and the yellow corn was made; from

Point to north

the north, and the seeds of every kind of

Hold out seeds

cereal and vegetable lay upon the ground.

Spread seeds over ground

The Turkey told the man to plant all these seeds in rows. In four days the growing plants appeared. The Turkey helped his

Hold up four fingers

master tend the crops, and in four more days everything was ripe. Then the man took an

Act as if roasting ear of corn

ear of corn and roasted it, and found it good (Russell, 1898,pp.268,269).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Living in harmony with nature
- Importance of corn as sacred gift to sustain life
- Myths to “set world in order”
- Importance of four sacred directions
- Animals with humanlike qualities interacting with humans

Activity Suggestions for *Origin of Corn: Myth of the Jicarilla Apaches*

1. Have the students research the importance of the four sacred directions. Have them construct a poster revealing the cardinal directions and their relevance in this or other related stories. Encourage them to tell stories of their own incorporating the four sacred directions.

2. Have the students locate the Rio Grande River on a map. Have the students construct a timeline that looks like a river. Have them construct symbols to represent the major events in the story and place them along the timeline (river).

How The Deer Obtained His Horns

Props: deer horns (authentic or constructed), stick with feathers glued to it, rope, rock

Storytelling Techniques

Normal voice

Act as if holding up nice coat

Hold up horns

Hold horns to top of head

Narrative

In the old days the animals were fond of amusement and were constantly getting up grand meetings and contests of various kinds, with prizes for the winner. On one occasion a prize was offered to the animal with the finest coat, and although the otter deserved to win it, the rabbit stole his coat and nearly got the prize for himself. After a while, the animals got together again and made a large pair of horns to be given to the best runner. The race was to be through a thicket, and the one who made the best time, with the horns on his head, was to get them. Everybody knew from the first that either the deer or the rabbit would be the winner, but bets were high on the rabbit, who was a great runner and a general favorite. But the

Point to back side

Hold horns to head & tilt over

Hold up stick with feathers on it

Act as if looking around

Act like clearing out limbs

Point toward back of room

Tip-toe & act secretive

Speak with authority

rabbit had no tail, and always went by jumps, and his friends were afraid that the horns would make him fall over in the bushes unless he had something to balance them, so they fixed up a tail for him with a stick and some bird's down.

“Now,” says the rabbit, “let me look over the ground where I am to run.” So he went into the thicket and was gone so long that at last one of the animals went to see what had become of him, and there he found the rabbit hard at work gnawing down bushes and cutting off the hanging limbs of the trees, and making a road for himself clear through to the other side of the swamp. The messenger did not let the rabbit see him, but came back quietly and told his story to the others. Pretty soon the rabbit came out again, ready to put on the horns and begin the race, but several of the animals said that he had been gone so long that it looked as if he must have been cutting a road through the

Act offended

With authority

Deep & angry voice

Hold up horns

Shake head back & forth

Stretch rope across floor

Act like gnawing at middle of rope

Take a few steps back

Move forward a bit & leap toward rope

bushes. The rabbit denied it up and down, but they all went into the thicket, and there was the open road, sure enough. Then the chief got very angry and said to the rabbit, “Since you are so fond of the business, you may spend the rest of your life gnawing twigs and bushes,” and so the rabbit does to this day. The other animals would not allow the rabbit to run at all now, so they put the horns on the deer, who plunged into the worst part of the thicket, and made his way out to the other side, then turned round and came back again on a different track, in such fine style that everyone said he had won the horns. But the rabbit felt sore about it and resolved to get even with him.

One day, soon after the contest for the horns, the rabbit stretched a large grapevine across the trail and gnawed it nearly in two in the middle. Then he went back a piece, took a good run, and jumped up at the vine. He kept on running and jumping up at the vine,

Hold horns to head

until the deer came along and asked him what he was doing.

High pitched voice

“Don’t you see?” says the rabbit. “I’m so strong that I can bite through that grapevine at one jump.”

Take a few steps back & leap

The deer could hardly believe this and wanted to see it done. So the rabbit ran back, made a tremendous swing, and bit

Act like taking a big bite

through the vine where he had gnawed it before. The deer, when he saw that, said,

Deep voice & determined

“Well, I can do it if you can.” So the rabbit stretched a larger grapevine across the trail, but without gnawing it in the middle. Then

Take a few steps back

the deer ran back as he had seen the rabbit do, made a powerful spring, and struck the

Leap at rope

grapevine right in the center; but it only flew

Speak louder & faster

back and threw him over on his head. He tried again and again until he was all bruised and bleeding.

Look defeated

“Let me see your teeth,” at last said the

High pitched voice

rabbit. So the deer showed him his teeth,

Normal voice

which were long and sharp like a wolf’s teeth.

Smile big & point to teeth

High-pitched voice

“No wonder you can’t do it,” says the rabbit.

“Your teeth are too blunt to bite anything.

Let me sharpen them for you, like mine. My

With enthusiasm

teeth are so sharp that I can cut through a

stick just like a knife.”

Normal voice

And he showed him a black-locust twig of

which rabbits gnaw the young shoots, which

he had shaved off as well as a knife could do

it, just in rabbit fashion.

The deer thought that was just the thing. So

the rabbit got a hard stone, with rough

Pick up rock

edges, and filed and filed away at the deer’s

Act like filing

teeth until they were filed down almost to

the gums.

High-pitched voice

“Now try it,” says the rabbit. So the deer

tried again, but this time he couldn’t bite at

all.

Laugh & high-pitched voice

“Now you’ve paid for your horns,” said the

Normal voice

rabbit as he laughed and started home

through the bushes. Ever since then the

deer’s teeth are so blunt that he cannot chew

Hold arms out

anything but grass and leaves (Mooney,

1888, pp.106-108).

Discussion

Discuss the following values and beliefs from the story. Compare and contrast these beliefs with those of other cultures.

- Animals with human-like qualities, often interacting with humans
- Humorous trickster tales used to explain and teach about human nature—both good and bad behavior
- Myths used to “set world in order”

Activity Suggestions for *How the Deer Obtained His Horns*

1. Divide the story into several parts. Place the parts in a bowl and have the students randomly “draw” a part out of the bowl. Have the students begin to dramatize their parts as they sequentially occur.
2. Have the students locate other trickster tales that use animals as the characters. Allow them time to read and learn the stories. Have a storytelling session in an effort to share the Native American trickster tales.
3. Have the students work in small groups to write their own trickster tales. Encourage them to share their stories with the class.

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