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Drama in the High School English Classroom: Pedagogical Theory and Practical Application

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DRAMA IN THE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSROOM:
PEDAGOGICAL THEORY AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

by

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Master of Arts, Middlebury College, 1990

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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This dissertation, submitted by Ann Siegle Drege in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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PERMISSION

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ABSTRACT

Drama in education is not limited to elementary skits or junior/senior class plays. It can be used in the high school English classroom to engage students in active learning. Drama in the classroom is a pedagogical method, which focuses on the learning process of the participants rather than a polished performance for an audience. The purpose of this dissertation is to address the limited use of drama in the classroom by providing a pedagogical rationale for its use and concrete drama activities for the high school English classroom.

There are multiple pedagogical advantages for using drama as a method. Drama pushes students' cognitive learning. As active learners they do not just absorb information; they formulate questions, interpret ideas, and synthesize connections. Drama offers a balance with affective learning. Through drama, students are intrinsically motivated to learn. The collaborative aspects of drama are beneficial as peers push each other, stimulated by the work of the group. Students develop communication skills as they listen to each other as well as convey their ideas clearly. Because drama meets students at their level, it is a method that builds students' self-confidence. When a student's self-confidence is enhanced, the outcomes are positive for that class and for a lifetime of learning.

The dissertation is divided into genre chapters, which explore drama activities related to dramatic literature, fiction, poetry, and classroom writing. The drama

activities illustrate concrete ways drama is applicable to today's English curriculum. Several of the activities are designed for texts that are a part of the standard high school canon. Other activities are provided for texts which are not typically taught in high schools with the hope of encouraging teachers to expand the canon. An appendix also describes warm-ups which are applicable for the high school classroom.

The specific drama activities developed in this dissertation facilitate teacher's use of drama in the classroom. With these concrete activities as models, teachers can also begin to create their own ways of using drama in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

The classroom desks are pushed back to the wall, and students are actively engaged in drama. This does not mean they are rehearsing a play. Rather, the students are doing drama in the classroom, a pedagogical method focused on the learning process of the participants instead of a polished performance for an audience. Drama in the classroom is not a new pedagogical construct; proponents of drama in the classroom have been advocating it for several decades. The problem lies in the minimal use of drama in high school English classrooms today. While drama in the classroom has strong pedagogical viability at the high school level, it has failed to gain momentum as a predominant classroom method.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address the limited use of drama in the classroom by providing concrete drama activities that can be used at the high school English level. I believe that more high school teachers would use drama if they realized the multiple pedagogical advantages of drama as a classroom method. Many high school English teachers do not know how to begin incorporating drama into their current curricula. Much of the literature on drama in the classroom is theoretical and general; indeed, there is very little published in the field that provides concrete applications of drama to high school English curricula.

I have created and adapted specific drama activities that can be used in high school English classrooms. The genre chapters of the dissertation explore drama activities related to dramatic literature, fiction, poetry, and classroom writing. Because

drama in the classroom is a method for learning, the use of drama in the study of various genres is not intended to negate the unique features of each genre. Instead drama becomes an effective tool for exploring the characteristics of different genres. My goal is to illustrate concrete ways drama is applicable to today's English curricula. Several of the texts I have chosen to work with are part of the standard high school canon. For frequently taught texts, teachers can augment their lesson plans with drama activities. I have also selected texts which are not typically taught in high schools with the hope of encouraging teachers to expand the canon. With concrete activities in hand for both standard and new texts, teachers can begin using drama in their own classrooms.

The drama activities described in each of the chapters are meant to be practical and clear enough for teachers to apply directly to their lesson plans. The drama activities are created to highlight key features in individual texts. Because of this approach, there is not a standard order or list of activities for all texts. With some texts, I have suggested pre-reading drama activities; with others I focus more on literary elements such as characterization or theme. The drama activities are arranged in an order that highlights particular features of each text. For example, the drama activities that emphasize the stream-of-consciousness style in Katherine Anne Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" are described first for that text. Some of the drama activities can be used in multiple ways, either as a pre-reading activity or as an exercise during the study of a text. None of the drama activities described in this dissertation is meant to be a teacher's sole method of exploring a text with students. Discussion and classroom methods already in place are integral to a rounded study of the material. These drama activities are intended to augment and supplement exploration and learning in the classroom.

In conjunction with the chapters demonstrating drama used with exploring literature and generating writing, I have included an appendix describing classroom warm-ups. Warm-ups are specific activities that can be used in a couple of ways: early in the school year to introduce students to creative drama and help in students' theatre skill development, and throughout the school year in the first few minutes of class to focus students on the task at hand.

My goal overall is to provide high school English teachers with a variety of ways to incorporate drama into their curricula. Because English teachers are usually inundated with work, they will more readily try a new method, such as drama in the classroom, if they are provided with concrete ways of applying it. Once teachers have begun to see how drama can add depth to their students' learning through activities presented in this dissertation, they can develop their own drama activities to fit their individual lesson plans. My hope is that the use of drama in the classroom will grow in contemporary English classrooms.

CHAPTER I

PEDAGOGICAL THEORY FOR USING DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM

Answering a simple question such as “What is a blind person?” could take alternative forms. As Brian Way categorizes them, the forms might be “informative” or “direct experience.” A traditional academic answer would be “A blind person is a person who cannot see,” which is a concise, correct intellectual response. An alternative form might suggest, “Close your eyes and, keeping them closed all the time, try to find your way out of this room.” The answer to this form “leads the inquirer to moments of direct experience, transcending mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind” (1). The understanding of blindness in these two contexts is quite different. A mere intellectual response is limited compared to the holistic response of experiencing blindness. In contemporary classrooms, the methods used for facilitating learning have a powerful impact on the scope of learning that occurs there.

Charles Dickens’ nineteenth-century portrait in *Hard Times* of the austere, disciplined teacher Thomas Gradgrind, who embodied knowledge and operated under the philosophy that he would pour that knowledge into the waiting vessels that were his students, needs to be banished from contemporary educational practice. It is an educational philosophy that cannot work effectively in schools today. Gradgrind demands a correct answer for his question, “What is a horse?” and Bitzer responds with a

clinical answer. In looking at the mere details of the description, the student misses the essence of the beautiful creature that is a horse (409-410).

Arthur Applebee describes a historical tension between three competing traditions in the teaching of English: a cultural heritage model that stresses the "need for a common base of knowledge," a skills competency tradition that favors practical application of skills, and a student-centered tradition that emphasizes the need for "learning through experience and students' involvement in appropriate and interesting tasks." All have advocates in philosophical forums (*Literature in the Secondary School* 3-4). The tension plays itself out in classrooms by engendering an eclectic composite of teaching methods used in day-to-day teaching.

Today there are a growing number of educational theorists who lean toward the student-centered, constructivist theory. They are stressing the need for active students who see the total picture and do not get lost in the rote memorization of minute details. Being able to identify and construct overall frameworks is more relevant for education today. Maxine Greene discusses in her book, *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*, the move among educators to see students as "potential active learners" who question and are asked to account for what they say and think as they move beyond where they currently are (13). Learning cannot be limited to mere recitation of facts. Many facts are outmoded as soon as the lecture is delivered. Students need to develop skills of thinking about issues, formulating questions, exploring possibilities, and creating constructs. That way, regardless of the detail in course content, students will be learning how to learn. As content changes in this fast-paced, technologically-driven era, learning occurs in dynamic ways. Students are not limited to

a finite body of acquired knowledge, but carry out sustained exploration with developed critical thinking skills. In order to facilitate students' active learning, teachers need to have an eclectic bag of methods, which they use with imagination in the classroom.

The use of drama in the classroom is one of these imaginative and effective modes of learning. Cecily O'Neill and Alan Lambert describe it as "pupils' active identification with imagined roles and situations" which allows them to "learn to explore issues, events and relationships" (*Drama Structures* 11). Through drama, students are able to learn through more direct experience, which opens up the depth and breadth of the learning. In *The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach*, Howard Gardner emphasizes the need for students to have "frequent opportunities to adopt multiple perspectives and stances" in their work with curricular course material. If students are not given the chances to explore a variety of perspectives, they tend to adopt a "one-dimensional view of the topic or material" (237). Drama is a mode of learning which encourages students to examine multiple perspectives and stances, by pushing them to flesh out their visions of a particular poem and widening the dimensions of students' ideas in their writing. A leader in American creative dramatics, Geraldine Siks describes classroom drama in the following way: "The emphasis is on the processes of perceiving, imaging, forming or improvising, and communicating and then evaluating" (Landy 20). Not only does the use of drama involve a creative process for students, it also asks students to communicate those ideas as well as spend energy reflecting on the process.

Background of Drama in the Classroom

Many names have been applied to the approach of using drama in the classroom: creative dramatics, role drama, educational drama, process drama, or drama-in-education. All encourage active student involvement. The goal is not to create the future equity actors of stage and screen. Rather the goal is to focus on the learning process of the participants. The goal is not a polished performance for an audience, although that might be what first comes to mind when many think of drama in the classroom. The traditional school play performance is a different concept from drama in the classroom. Brian Way delineates the difference between theatre and drama by identifying theatre as being “concerned with *communication* between actors and an audience” while drama is “concerned with *experience* by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience” (*Development* 2-3). In the classroom, the energy is applied to drama as a learning medium, allowing students to explore various perspectives and ideas.

Drama-in-education and creative dramatics are the two most common labels for process drama in the classroom. Drama-in-education tends to apply to the approach that has its roots in Great Britain and has been led by Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton, and Brian Way. Betty Jane Wagner describes drama-in-education as an approach where “practitioners transform texts, sometimes using them as starting points, but always exploring the spaces between episodes in a story to create an imagined world and change the story into something quite new” (*Educational Drama & Language Arts* 7). The emphasis is on using various dramatic techniques to enter into characters and texts in order to experience and problem-solve within that world. Wagner cites a description of

Cecily O'Neill's, who refers to drama as a way of "... explor[ing] a particular experience through a nonlinear layering of episodes that cumulatively extends and enriches the fictional context" (7). Creative dramatics tends to refer more to the American-based approach led by Winnifred Ward with students Geraldine Siks and Nellie McCaslin. The focus with creative dramatics, as Wagner differentiates it from drama-in-education, is to put enacting a story at the core and use a variety of dramatic techniques to build on the story (6-7). The classroom drama activities which are presented in the following chapters will tend more toward the British Heathcote approach, encouraging student exploration of the "spaces" within a text rather than enacting the story plot itself.

While educational drama has existed throughout most of the century, the use of drama in classrooms is not as prolific as it should be. In the mid-sixties, American and British educators at a conference at Dartmouth College reached a consensus regarding some recommendations for the field of language arts. One recommendation emphasized the need for more writing in the schools, another stressed the importance of a reader-response approach to literature, and the third major recommendation stated the importance of more drama being incorporated into the English curriculum at all grade levels (*Educational Drama & Language Arts* 11). While increased writing and a reader-response approach have been embraced by the discipline in the past three decades, the use of drama in English classrooms remains minimal. Proponents of educational drama continue to emphasize the effectiveness and validity of its use, but the amount of drama used in classrooms is nothing compared to the burgeoning follow-through of the writing and reading recommendations. Wagner consulted the *Dissertation Abstracts International* and found that since 1989, 17,671 dissertations were reported in reading

and 16,542 in writing, but only 71 were reported in educational drama in the last ten years (2-3). Use of drama in the classroom has not “taken off.”

Much of the work that is being done with drama in the schools is in the elementary classroom. Drama in the high school English classroom is minimal. Whether it is because of perceived curricular time restraints or teacher self-doubt about being able to use drama effectively, the void is there. Leaders in the field of English encourage the use of drama, but it is not finding its way into regular lesson plans of high school English teachers. It is my hope for those imaginative teachers who are willing to use a dramatic approach in the high school English classroom, but who are feeling somewhat insecure or tentative about how to use it, that this text will provide concrete ways to include drama in high school English classroom lesson plans.

Pedagogical Validity

For those teachers who wonder about the validity of using drama at the high school level and for those who wonder how to convince school administrators that students are learning through a dramatic approach, there are many ways one can support the pedagogical validity of drama in the English classroom.

Cognitive Development

One of the educational advantages of using drama in the classroom lies in the cognitive arena. Tarlington and Verriour bring up the common misconception that drama is simply all fun. The misinformed may see drama as a way to allow participants to be expressive but certainly not pushing students with any cognitive demands (9-10). Though there are affective components of drama in the classroom that I will deal with shortly, there are definite cognitive demands placed on students using the dramatic

approach. Students become actively engaged in thoughtful work. O'Neill and Lambert describe the learning that occurs through drama as a "growth in the pupils' understanding about human behavior, themselves and the world they live in" which facilitates and necessitates "changes in customary ways of thinking and feeling" (*Drama Structures* 13). A mode of learning which pushes students to process the material that they are working with and revamp their thinking along the way needs to be encouraged.

Too often students have been trained in true Pavlovian form to look to the teacher for the *answers*. In working their way through the school system, students have felt their own ideas to be inferior to the teacher's interpretation or the class anthology instructor's edition, complete with correct answers. After a while, unfortunately, instead of fighting to make a "case" for their own ideas, students passively sink into an acknowledgement of the system—the teacher will tell the student the "right way" to think about a text, an issue, or an idea. Drama as a mode of learning does not adhere to this typical classroom system. Through drama, students are encouraged to be independent thinkers instead of relying on a teacher for the right answer. Students are encouraged to explore the text or the idea and do their own thinking. Critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills are developed through drama. A delineation of thinking skills that M. Yau cites emerging from work with drama in the classroom includes "...inventing, generating, speculating, assimilating, clarifying, inducing, deducing, analyzing, accommodating, selecting, refining, sequencing and judging" (McMaster 582). An approach like drama that facilitates the use and increased skill level in these cognitive areas is invaluable.

Drama encourages exploring the possibilities within a text. O'Neill and Lambert describe drama as a learning mode with an emphasis on "discovery rather than on mere

implementation of factual knowledge” (17). Learning is not simply absorbing a set body of information. Rather, learning is a process of discovery, an unfolding and opening up of ideas. James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner note that providing students with the opportunity to explore the realm of possibilities within a context through drama makes the author's choice in that context more meaningful. Students analyze the authorial decision-making instead of seeing the choice made as the author's only option (98). If students contemplate many options to a situation, they add breadth to the text and push their thinking. Enhancing the “flexibility of the mind” (O'Neill and Lambert 21) is a benefit of drama in the classroom. Comparing possibilities, interpreting texts, making evaluative judgements, and discriminating among ideas all push students' skills to higher levels of thinking. Though students may be having "fun" with the drama activities, the rationale for incorporating drama in the classroom is not limited to "fun." Drama makes cognitive demands on students.

The study of literary texts is a main focus of some of these cognitive demands in the high school English classroom. New Critical theory propounds the idea of a text as a “well-wrought urn” that embodies its own meaning. One has only to study the text closely enough to know the inherent meanings in the stationary text. Judith Langer cites studies that mark New Critical theory as still the dominant approach in the high school English classroom, although reader-based theory has been lauded by English education leaders (24). Typically, instruction starts with the text and ends with the teacher's standard interpretation rather than beginning with the reader's initial impressions upon reading and ending with an interpretation thought-through and supported by the reader (25). Wolfgang Iser proposes, in his theory of aesthetical response, that meaning does

not reside solely in the text or in the “subjectivity of the reader.” Rather, the interaction between reader and text produces the “dynamism” Iser affirms. What a reader brings to a text impacts the reading of that text. Iser’s theory stresses the active relationship between reader and text (20-21).

When texts are viewed as transformative, the interaction between reader and text becomes key. Interpretations are broadened by what the reader brings to the text. New Critical practitioners do not condone the idea that texts can be “read” differently by many. New Critics perceive differing readings as a way of diminishing the meaning of a text. A reader-response theory, however, does not prohibit variable readings of the text. Purves, Rogers, and Soter attempt to quell anxiety about the complete fluidity of texts. In their view, a reader-response approach does not claim that every reading is unique, and there is no commonality to be expected out of a text. Rather, they discuss thoroughly the inevitability of certain unified interpretations among students because of the text (52-55). The fear of some teachers that opening up a text to any interpretation will prevent the analysis of choice interpretations is not typically a problem. In the end after discussion and reflection, accepting every interpretation is not feasible. While students bring their own experiences and perceptions to a text, and there is a fluidity in the individuality of that, there are still “common boundaries for meanings” (Purves 52). Aspects of the text steer responses in certain directions and how students communicate those responses takes interpretation in certain directions (Purves 55). Part of the excitement for all students of literature is exploring and reflecting on the diversity as well as the connectedness in responses. The goal in education is to “see” that diversity and commonality.

Drama becomes an excellent medium for exploring the common responses students have to texts as well as being a medium that allows for the uniqueness that individual students bring to a text. Drama facilitates students exploring the spaces within literary texts and extending the texts. Theresa Rogers recounts Elliot Eisner's view of the expanded "range of competencies" students exhibit when they approach a text through drama. He sees students "interrogate, represent, transform, and interpret the emerging meaning" of the text through drama (*Transforming Texts* 42). Multiple worlds of meaning are created as students bring their own experience to the text through drama and relate it through others' experiences, both unique and universal.

Often what is a struggle for students and thus for teachers is the limitations in students' abilities to respond to a text. After reading a poem, students may shrug their shoulders in the frequent question-answer exchange and say, "I don't know what to say about it." Immediate verbal response may be unrealistic. Students may have had a visceral response to a poem but not know how to put that into response-to-the-teacher mode. Students may not even feel their visceral response qualifies as a "correct answer." Drama provides a way of responding to texts. The response then is not limited to an intellectual response. It may be another creative response, and the drama serves as a venue for it. Purves recounts a student's reading of poetry—pairing and alternating lines between two poems. The positioning of the pairing was insightful, and when the reading was finished, there was not much more to add to it. The student's pairing of the poetry was a meaningful response to the poetry (118).

Through drama, students deepen their interaction with a text because it becomes an experiential event. Dramatic encounters with literature, as Brian Edmiston describes,

allow students to have “rich” experiences that are enhanced by the reflection on the literature engendered by the dramatic work itself or by the reflection after the drama (252-53). Dorothy Heathcote strongly advocates using moments in class for “dramatic encounters” where students are challenged into new ways of thinking. Edmiston quotes Heathcote in her description of drama-in-education as an experience: “Drama is not stories retold in action. Drama is human beings confronted by situations which change them [students] because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges” (Edmiston 251). Interacting with the drama and the literature becomes an experience, so the response to the literature is deeper.

A key to drama's working well with students' study of literary texts lies in drama's ability to make the abstract concrete. Dorothy Heathcote stresses the concretization as a definite outcome achieved through drama (Wagner, *Drama as a Learning Medium* 227). Heathcote's phrase “now and imminent time” describes the immediacy of an experience happening now rather than in the past. When students discuss a book, the world of that book is separated from their reality both in time and place. When students take part in drama as they study that book, students feel that they are right in the middle of events—the situation is occurring *now* and that sets up an urgency and immediacy that does not allow students to be detached (Edmiston 256-257). A common whine that teachers hear from students is that the book has no relevance for them. Students wonder, “What does this have to do with anything?” and it is a valid question. Students should question how a text relates in any way to their own lives. Often, though, students do not want to take the next steps in the process of unearthing the relevancy. Drama is a learning mode where the immediacy of a theme or an event is

brought to the foreground. As Laurence Olivier observed, drama has the "...potential to fill in the abstraction of thought with flesh and blood concreteness" (Donmoyer 91).

Another advantage to using drama in studying literature is that comprehension of texts is expanded. Part of this can be attributed to the visualization process students are engaged in with drama. M. Yau sees increased comprehension stemming from students' expanded capabilities in taking on different perspectives and creative thinking (McMaster 582). Drama activities involve reading between the lines, filling in textual gaps, evaluating what are the strongest choices to be made in particular situations, sequencing, and drawing inferences (McMaster 582). The skills in this list are important for students to develop as life skills as well as aiding in students' comprehension of textual material. Instead of dealing with a text held at arm's length and maintaining a distance from it, whether it is a novel or a poem, students eliminate distance by working closely with the text in dramatic activities. Visualization through drama makes the text more immediate and enhances comprehension.

Affective Development

Besides the cognitive demands drama puts on students, the affective aspects need to be addressed. Drama motivates students to learn and makes it enjoyable. Students become invested in the dramatic work as they explore a particular short story or novel. Any teacher who sees her students thoroughly caught up in the work knows the satisfaction of seeing learning in progress. The typical question-answer format of analyzing a text often leaves students disengaged. Classroom teachers all too frequently hear the question, "Do we have to know this? Will it be on the test?" Unfortunately, the primary motivation for many students is the inevitability of a test on the material, so the

wish for an A or B grade becomes more motivation than an intrinsic desire to push deeper into the course content. Traditional classroom structure involving study-guide worksheets for a literary text typically fail to arouse any passion for the literature. The only energy emerges in the desire to fill out the study guide as quickly and briefly as possible.

Drama activities put into action in the classroom energize the high school English student. Instead of studying a poem or novel because the teacher wants to, the students become interested. They begin learning on an active, instead of a passive, level and with interest piqued, the enjoyment kicks in. An advantage that Laurence Olivier believes comes from drama is “its potential to make intensity, passion, and motivation a part of intellectual activity” (Donmoyer 91). Learning with an internal motivation instead of teacher-directed, external motivation causes students to “...make their own relationships with the topic and articulate their own personal responses within the drama” (O’Neill and Lambert 20). Because the impetus to know about the subject comes from within, students of their own initiative venture into further research. External motivation cannot hold a candle to the depth of learning that internal motivation creates.

Traditional ideas suggesting that *real* learning cannot be fun need to be re-evaluated. Students' enjoyment of the process of learning through drama does not detract from its viability. Instead, the enjoyment makes it an even more valuable approach. Enjoyment generates motivation. True learning does not need to be characterized by students sitting rigidly in straight rows wearing dour faces. A dour face does not insure learning in progress. Classrooms with students up on their feet, actively pursuing avenues of their own inquiry are both productive and fun.

Collaborative-Skill Development

Social interaction is another benefit to using drama in the high school English classroom. A dramatic approach is a collaborative learning mode. Several positive results occur through this interaction. Because the learning is a group process, the group often pushes the depth of the learning. Brian Edmiston believes that the shared responses of students promote a more in-depth study of course material with more complex student response (258). A collaborative situation provides a shared context for exploring issues, questions, or themes. This is useful whether the English class is studying a literary text or working on their writing. The collaboration takes individual students beyond the thinking they are doing on their own, stimulating the progress of the group. Gavin Bolton feels students make progress through dramatic activity in their ability to see beyond their own views and have an “intellectual grasp of what is being created by [the] whole group” (*Toward a Theory* 136). Being able to compare one’s own perspective to the group’s perspective is an invaluable skill. The group work may at times change or reinforce the individual’s perspective. Regardless, the individual works at finding a place for her/his ideas within the collective group.

Collaborative work through drama also develops students’ social skills. Being a part of a working group requires individuals to take responsibility for their role within the group. If an individual fails to uphold his/her responsibility, the group work breaks down. Students in collaborative work learn to cooperate with each other. The social dynamic within a group is important. Trust and the feeling one can count on the others in the group are critical characteristics of a healthy group. Gavin Bolton sees dramatic work helping students develop their ability to “read” the needs of the group (136). Members

who develop sensitivity to the dynamics of the group help keep the group on task. They can confront and question each other about issues within the group. When everyone feels comfortable in the group, it functions more effectively. Carol Korty, a playwright and leader of educational drama believes that educational drama operates on basic levels of “human interaction” — people working together and sharing ideas. Each person “has his or her own space, respects each others’ ideas, and takes time to listen and to be heard” (Landy 36).

A valuable dynamic of a collaborative process in the classroom is the shift in power. An English classroom operating in small groups moves the onus of power from the teacher to a shared power with students. As Tarlington and Verriour put it, the teacher is not the center of the learning; rather the students take responsibility in their own learning as the teacher guides the collaborative process (10). The classroom becomes student-centered, rather than teacher-centered. Students and teacher together explore possibilities in the context of a shared process.

Communication-Skill Development

An advantage to using drama in the high school English classroom is that it provides a method for sharpening communication skills. Because it is a highly collaborative approach, students are interacting with each other. Students need to share their ideas with either small groups or the class as a whole, presenting them as clearly as possible. In doing this, students defend particular points of view, garnering reasons that back up their point of view. McMaster cites J. W. Stewig’s claims that “drama is thinking out loud” so it involves oral language skills as the student “defines, articulates, expresses, and verbalizes thoughts in the context of improvised activities” (575). The

listening component is also part of communication skill development through drama. Students need to listen closely to hear others' ideas and perspectives. Improvisation necessitates active listening in order for students to play off of each other in a drama activity. Stewig also brings up the evaluative listening that occurs in the classroom. As students in the large group listen to small group improvised activities, they consider the decisions the other groups have made, comparing them with their own decisions, and weighing the choices (McMaster 575). Drama in the classroom also becomes a tool for writing development. After students explore ideas and sequences through drama, they are more able to carry them out on paper. Often an oral process can facilitate a flow of ideas that students can then explore in writing. Drama provides an excellent vehicle for sharpening communication skills.

Self-Concept Development

Another benefit to using drama in the classroom lies in the development of students' self-concept. Both Dorothy Heathcote (*Drama as a Learning Medium* 226) and Gavin Bolton (136) cite progress in students' willingness to take risks, trying things they have not tried before. Students are not able to take risks unless they are feeling some confidence in themselves. There are always students who struggle with feelings of inadequacy in the high school classroom. Drama is a method of instruction that matches students' varied ability levels. It can motivate and stimulate students who frequently do not feel successful in the classroom. Ruth Heinig believes that enjoyment coupled with success in learning creates self-confidence in students (McMaster 583). Through drama, in Heathcote's philosophy, "students discover that they know more than they thought they knew" (*Drama as a Learning Medium* 227). An approach that helps raise students'

confidence in themselves not only aids in that particular activity, but has far-reaching effects in the students' attitudes toward learning and toward themselves.

The positive attributes to using drama in the classroom have multiple benefits for students in learning specific course content and developing ongoing skills. The current trend in education advocates learning formats that inspire critical thinking, problem-solving, relating ideas, and collaboration. The workplace expects and rewards skills in these areas. An educational approach that fosters the development of these skills becomes invaluable in the contemporary classroom.

Concerns about Using Drama in the Classroom

Teacher/ Students Relationship

Some teachers may have questions about using drama in the classroom. One concern of teachers new to educational drama is the perceived sense of losing control over what is learned. In more traditional teaching styles like question-answer/ discussion modes, the teacher is able to steer the talk in certain directions. Whether the discussion centers on particular themes or symbolism, the teacher is able to bring out the ideas she wants students to consider in light of the text. Drama in the classroom does not, at first glance, seem to offer the same kind of control over the subject matter. One needs to ask, though, in considering this concern, whether that control is necessary to the degree that it operates in more traditional classrooms. If students are involved in the literary text, when they are actively working with the text and each other in the directions the dramatic activity takes them, isn't that the chief goal?

Students may venture into thoughts about the material that the teacher had not considered before. That does not make the learning process and results any less valid.

With the reader-response philosophy that the text is not a static entity to be learned in a single way, but rather a transforming entity that changes as different readers interact with it, there is not a static list of things one has to “know” about a particular text. While the teacher may want to highlight certain points about the text, the students may be more intrigued with others. Students may take their learning about a text in different directions than the teacher initially thought. The mindset of the teacher needs to shift toward the validity of student inquiry. It is a misconception, though, to think that the teacher is left without any leadership and input in a classroom using drama; a dramatic approach does not mean the classroom is a free-for-all. There are ways the teacher can introduce particular directions of inquiry along with directions the students go with the material. The teacher can help guide students by taking on a role within the drama or side-coaching.

"Teacher in role" is a technique used frequently with drama in the classroom. A teacher functioning in a role can impact the depth of inquiry, set a tone for the drama, and model appropriate behavior. If the students are stuck at one level of thinking and exploration, the teacher in role can push students further, forcing them to think about ideas they are avoiding or disregarding. Some drama proponents encourage teachers to take on roles in a drama that resemble the teacher's typical role, such as leading a meeting or asking questions as a reporter or detective (Rogers, O'Neill, Jasinski 43). In the role, the teacher can support the work the students are doing and push students in new directions. The teacher still has some control in the midst of an effective, group-centered dramatic activity.

Others in educational drama think it can be beneficial to have the teacher take on the role of someone who needs help or information. In this situation the power base shifts to the students (Tarlington and Verriour 10). Students often thrive in a position of what Dorothy Heathcote refers to as “the mantle of the expert.” When students feel that they are “in the know,” they flourish. With confidence, they take over, helping the teacher in the role. Often, students find out that they know and understand more than they thought they did. Some teachers, of course, are concerned about their own acting ability, but effective teachers with drama in the classroom are not those who missed their calling on Broadway. Rather, effective teachers with drama are those who do what they ask their students to do—step into someone else’s frame of reference. Neither students nor teacher are expected to be great actors. The purpose of the classroom drama activities is not polished performance for an outside audience. The purpose continues to be a process that allows collaborative exploration and learning. If students can put themselves in a role and creatively work from there, the drama will be successful.

Another effective technique which teachers can employ to guide the work in meaningful directions is side-coaching. This technique can function in ways similar to teacher in role. It is helpful to set up the framework that the drama can be interrupted at any time. In the midst of a drama activity, the teacher or other students observing can yell, “stop.” The action freezes for a moment while the teacher or other students ask questions of each other and the students who are enacting the drama. This allows the teacher, especially, to push the drama in more challenging directions or to clarify points. After responding to the questions, the drama resumes. Side-coaching also re-affirms the philosophy that the activity is not a dramatic performance; rather it is a learning process.

Stopping in the middle does not “wreck” on-their-feet work; it enriches it. Halting dramatic activity midway can also be done with teacher in role. The British drama-in-education system with Heathcote as leader strongly encourages stopping dramas, momentarily, whenever it can be advantageous to the learning process. The American creative drama school of thought tends to do more with letting the drama play itself out, then questioning and reflecting afterwards. The activities presented in later chapters of this dissertation use both methods. Classroom teachers are in the best position to monitor what works well with a particular activity and their specific students.

Whether the teacher is in role or side-coaching, asking questions can focus the dramatic activity in specific directions. Morgan and Saxton in *Teaching Drama* discuss questions either in role or out of role that function on a plot level, at a meaning level, or at a feeling level (150). Plot level questions, although not as deep as other types of questions, allow for clarification. The teacher understands students' comprehension. Questions at a feeling and meaning level facilitate students' reflection. What some call “teacher-questions” are not helpful questions. Teacher-questions are those that the teacher asks, already knowing the right answer, and testing which students know it too (Tarlington and Verriour 11). They do not inspire a curiosity for understanding. Instead, they squelch creative thinking as students merely try to mind-read what the teacher wants for an answer. The most helpful questions are those designed to encourage students in seeking knowledge. Through drama, students and teachers work together at responding to questions posed by both teacher and students alike. For teachers, instead of feeling like drama in the classroom does not allow enough input on their part into students'

learning, teachers can concentrate on forming effective questions that guide and prod students within their work with drama.

Working at making a classroom more student-centered than teacher-centered still means there is much for the teacher to do; the role just shifts from the teacher being the purveyor of knowledge to being the facilitator of learning. Purves, Rogers, and Soter point out the need for teachers to work at encouraging students to flesh out their responses to the text, not letting students settle into accepting superficial initial thoughts. Teachers also need to challenge students to understand their responses and be able to explain their interpretive response. It is critical that teachers provide an atmosphere where different opinions are valued, and students can listen to others' views and still be able to justify their own responses to a text (56). The shift in the teacher's role challenges the teacher to seek more information from the students and to guide with insights instead of forcing the teacher's own knowledge on the students (O'Neill and Lambert 20). With a dramatic approach, the teacher continues to have much leadership in the classroom; the role just changes to facilitating, intentionally and concretely, the students' own learning. As O'Neill and Lambert state in *Drama Structures*, "Teachers who use drama must accept that in this kind of approach knowledge is not given but made" (20).

Time Frames

Another concern some teachers might have in using drama in the classroom is the amount of time drama takes. High school English teachers face heavy curriculum demands. Unfortunately, many teachers feel they do not have the time to delve into a particular text at the level drama operates. The need to "cover" the amount of material

seems to take precedence. It is important to keep in mind, however, that quantity does not mean quality learning. Just because all the items on a list of things-to-study-in-*Hamlet* have been “covered” does not mean that students have engaged with the text.

The affective component of educational drama is important. If students are allowed time to interact with a text, they will be motivated and more learning will take place.

Tarlinton and Verriour stress the importance of allowing students time for reflection if they are “to think deeply” (11). Facilitating inquiry and asking questions followed by waiting for thought-through responses take time, but students are then allowed to be active critical thinkers. Classrooms where the teacher lectures, providing students with answers, may be the most efficient method of relaying information. However, that is different from conceiving of learning as a process. Process learning takes time, but in the current tide of educational objectives, it is more successful than rote memorization of acquired facts.

Classroom Management

A concern teachers might also voice is a question about classroom management. Desks in straight rows give an impression of orderliness that typically has been perceived as synonymous with studious learning. Pushing back the desks changes the classroom atmosphere and opens up possibilities for exploration. The comfort of the desks in rows does not need to be replaced by nervous tension on the teacher’s part. Students will not lose all sense of decorum just because the rows are gone. Drama-in-education is an approach that works within the realm of trusting one another, respecting others’ ideas, and supporting one another. In this kind of atmosphere, discipline is not usually a problem. When students feel that their thoughts matter, there is motivation to stay on

task. Students actively involved in the process of learning are not trying to create classroom havoc. While the classroom may be noisier than when the desks are in rows, it is not due to a lack of classroom management. Rather, the noise is the sound of students actively engaged in learning. In the midst of the activity, the teacher can help management by keeping expectations of the students' dramatic abilities at a realistic level. Ruth Heinig emphasizes the importance of choosing activities appropriate for the level the students are working at. Pantomime, directed activity, and using desk space are easier dramatic techniques than verbal activities, group work, and using larger spaces (*Improvisation 2-3*). The teacher can build toward more challenging expectations of students in dramatic work. The more drama students take part in, the more at ease they become, and the more risks they are able to take.

Methodology

High school English teachers are busy people. With typically large classes and several teaching preparations, along with an enormous paper-grading load, English teachers often feel overwhelmed. Many teachers are willing to try new approaches in their classrooms, but do not have the time or energy to prepare and implement them; so with an already stressed schedule, often the new approach gets put on the back burner. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, English educators have lauded drama in the classroom for the past several decades, but the results are not making their way into classrooms. Teachers are the ground-level people to work with in promoting drama as an effective learning mode. Until teachers are convinced of its efficacy and are even aided in getting started with the dramatic approach in their classrooms, they will not use drama.

The purpose of the following chapters of this dissertation is to provide high school English teachers with concrete ways of using drama in their classrooms. Instead of simply presenting general drama structures that teachers can follow as they create their own activities, this study provides concrete drama activities that work with specific literary texts, applicable to the high school English classroom. By providing specific drama activities for classroom study of texts which have been taught in English classrooms for years, it is my hope that teachers will begin to incorporate a drama approach into their current lesson plans. Other texts in the following chapters have been selected because they are not standard canon-fare but work well with high school students. Several of the authors of these infrequently taught texts are women and multi-cultural writers. Many high school English teachers are interested in incorporating more diverse texts into their classrooms, but they do not have the time to explore which texts and then develop the plans for studying them. The texts dealt with in the following chapters offer practical dramatic activities that English teachers can implement in their own classrooms. With drama activities in place, the teachers may be more willing to venture into texts outside of the regular high school canon.

The practical activities involving drama in the classroom range from large group to small group and partner work. Various leaders in the area of drama in the classroom have suggested types of drama activity teachers can structure. Whether the activities involve exploring textual issues before encountering the text, elaborating on the subtext, exploring facets of the characters, or building a scene merely referred to in the text (Booth, *Story Drama* 62), they are often explained generally without providing a connection to specific texts. The few articles in the field that do mention application to

particular texts barely begin to meet the educational need at the high school level. Since high school teachers are so pressed for time, the purpose of the following chapters is to develop specific ways general dramatic plans can be “played” out in the classroom. Once teachers have put some of these activities up-on-their-feet, as they say in the theatre, they will develop more confidence in their ability to use drama in the classroom. The activities presented here can then become models for the imaginative work of individual teachers in their classrooms.

CHAPTER II

CLASSROOM DRAMA AND DRAMATIC LITERATURE

Typical high school English classrooms might use some drama when studying dramatic literature, but they fail to exhaust the potential of the method. This chapter focuses on the many ways dramatic activities can be a valuable asset when teaching the genre. The chapter examines features integral to the study of dramatic literature, such as articulating subtext and considering the texts' potential as a visual/ aural text as well as a written text-- the movement from page to stage. It then describes specific drama activities for use in the high school English classroom with four texts-- *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Measure for Measure*, *Trifles*, and *Death of a Salesman*. The arrangement of the drama activities developed for each of the texts highlights significant points of study within each text.

Teaching literature in the secondary classroom involves certain objectives: "cognitive learnings" and "aesthetic experience," indications of an appreciation of the literature, creative work on the part of students, and ethical development promoted by studies of humanities (Hoetker 61-62). Although James Hoetker raised his ideas about teaching thirty years ago, they remain applicable today. He comments on "present methods of teaching literature," referring to close reading of a literary text, either by the teacher, by the teacher and students together, or by the students individually in writing (61). This is still the predominant mode of operating in contemporary high school classrooms. He points out weaknesses in the method, though, when thinking about

students as individual learners. The bright students, interested in learning, will learn to some degree, regardless of the classroom method. The students who are capable and can do the work with the literature, but who are really only motivated by the teacher providing incentives for the work, are strongly affected by the classroom method as are the academically-challenged students who fail to deal with abstractions.

With regard to the mix of students in a classroom, using classroom drama with the study of literature is a method that intersects effectively with each type of student. The bright, literary-minded students will be able to experience the playful nature of literature through drama along with the cognitive and aesthetic work they would be doing regardless of the classroom method. The students who are capable but only externally motivated as well as the academically-challenged students become engaged through the physical and aural work with the literature through drama, allowing an avenue for understanding the literature that these students do not reach through a silent reading method (62-65). Drama in the classroom facilitates the above-mentioned objectives of teaching literature in the high school classroom with more far-reaching results for all types of learners than the traditional close-reading methods.

Charles Duke states that "an individual develops a feeling for literature as much through kinesthetic activity and association as through more intellectualized approaches" (59). Drama in the classroom is one such method of connecting students and literature through a kinesthetic approach. Duke contrasts the British educational system with the American educational system by indicating that while the British see classroom drama as a viable method in the secondary classroom, the Americans have thought it to be more suited to the elementary classroom. He stresses that American educators need to

reconceptualize drama because of seeing "drama as performance and as an entertainment medium." Unlike educational drama used at the elementary level, drama at the secondary level becomes more topic-driven. Secondary students are dealing with more complex material and drama facilitates critical-thinking processes for working with the course material (57-58).

As I stated in Chapter I, there has not been much use of classroom drama in American high school classrooms, but the work that is currently being done is with the dramatic literature genre. In the past fifteen years some inroads have been made in using classroom drama with the study of Shakespeare plays, in particular. Peggy O'Brien and others at the Folger Shakespeare Institute have worked at developing and distributing materials for classroom teachers to use in getting students up on their feet as they work with the traditional Shakespeare plays in the high school English curriculum. The Folger Institute materials are practical and reflect the passion some teachers of Shakespeare feel about students really understanding the plays by working experientially with them through drama. The use of drama as a classroom method for learning has not branched out from the Shakespeare arena, though. Even within the genre of dramatic literature, the use of drama to explore dramatic literature texts is infrequent. The common method of the studying dramatic literature in the high school English classroom is the read-out-loud-the-assigned-parts method. I remember, as a high school student, sitting through class periods where peers read their assigned characters' lines. Because we were not always attentive, a silent pause would fill the room when a particular reader forgot to follow along. The dramatic text itself was then interspersed with "Who's Guard #1?" or "Paul, it's your line-- Mercutio talks now!"

The classroom drama explored in this chapter goes beyond simply reading assigned characters' lines. It is not merely "acting out" the scenes either. Classroom drama employed with dramatic literature texts pushes students to consider the unique facets of the genre. As David Hornbrook states, "Teaching young people how to read a play on the page involves helping them see the potential of the multiple texts inherent in the playwright's words as they appear on the pages of script" (96). The possibilities within the text open up when students consider the multiple interpretations possible by physicalizing the text. Hornbrook goes so far as to say that students should think of dramatic literature less like other genres such as the novel or a poem, but more like "instruction manuals" (100-101). Students work at following the cues given and interpreting the blank spaces to explore the directions the text may take. Students' drama work with dramatic literature involves exploring the gaps, reading the many layers of text, and exploring interpretations with specific moments in the play as well as the play as a whole.

One concept in studying dramatic literature that may be new for students is subtext. They may not be familiar with the term, but they readily understand the idea once it is explained. One way to introduce students to the idea of subtext is to get them working with tone and meaning. Various theatre voice exercises for actors have worked well in my classrooms. In one exercise (Jones 38), a phrase such as "Don't go" is spoken

to convey varying intentions. The following list works well:

beg	timid	angry
alarm	mysterious	fearful
warn	sly	disappointed
surprise	sad	frustrated
seduce	grateful	excited
tease	scornful	incredulous
forgive	threaten	

Although each student says the same phrase--"Don't go," the meaning conveyed is clearly different in the various versions. It is not the words that have changed the meaning, but the subtext, demonstrating that what is key is not the words spoken, but the meaning behind the words.

Another exercise (Novelly 66) that allows students to explore subtext involves students speaking words in ways that mirror what the word itself means. The word "cold" is spoken coldly. Other effective words include the following:

warm	angry	grim
breezy	sad	harsh
calm	tense	silky
thunder	depressed	tender
shivering	parched	giggly
laughing	at the end of my rope	

A third activity to use in the explanation of subtext makes use of two lines--"What time is it?" / "It's eleven o'clock." The teacher assigns three sets of pairs. Each student will receive a slip of paper with the following subtext indicated. The *A* student in each pair will ask, "What time is it?" with the subtext given on her slip of paper. The *B*

student will respond, "It's eleven o'clock," with the subtext given on his paper.

- I-- A: How much longer do I have to live?
 I-- B: Exactly one hour, you'll be executed at midnight.
 II-- A: When is this class going to end?
 II-- B: Thank goodness the bell is about to ring.
 III-- A: We've completely lost track of time.
 III-- B: We're already late for class.

Dorothy Heathcote uses a dialogue activity to help students understand the impact of considering subtext and interpreting text. Students in pairs create four lines of dialogue that can be as banal as the following:

- "Coffee?"
 "Yes."
 "Cream?"
 "No, thanks."

Repeating the same dialogue, the students add "layers of meaning." Heathcote first asks them how they feel about what they are saying and to convey that in the dialogue. The second time around, the speakers maintain that feeling but also add how they feel about the other person, too, and convey both in the dialogue. Other layers Heathcote suggests involve questions such as "Are you rushed, or do you have plenty of time?" "What is your social class?" "How old are you?" "Are you at the breakfast table or camping out in the wilderness?" Sustaining each meaning while adding layers is the goal of the activity (Wagner, *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium* 191). It is an excellent activity for impressing on students the layers of meaning embedded in a dramatic literature text. One cannot just read it at face value.

Students' understanding of subtext is critical for their depth of exploration in a dramatic text. Once aware of subtext, students see the possibilities open up in a scene. Dramatic literature is not meant to stay on the page students are reading in English class.

The text is intended to be put on stage as a visual text. Unless students understand subtext, they will read dramatic texts on one level and limit the meaning to the most obvious interpretations without considering more intriguing choices of subtext. Students up on their feet can try out various subtexts, exploring the nuances yielded by the text.

A key to using classroom drama successfully with dramatic literature texts is keeping in mind that students are not performing any kind of polished product. It is easier to lose sight of this with dramatic literature texts than with any other genre. Because the texts are scripts, students up on their feet may feel they need to have lines memorized and be *acting*. That is not the goal with educational drama, as I have already discussed in Chapter I. Students will use scripts with the activities described. If a scene is worked with for awhile, the students may get comfortable enough not to be dependent on the text as a script. The real goal lies in helping students understand the scene and the textual subtleties. Having the script in hand frees students to concentrate on work with the scene rather than simply trying to recall what the next line is. It also diminishes any notion students might have that it is a performance. Scripts in hand signal that students are working within a text, not performing it.

Out of the many dramatic literature texts studied in the high school English classroom, my decision to concentrate on the four texts selected in this chapter is based on several reasons. *Trifles* and *Death of a Salesman* are frequently studied plays in high school but are not usually explored through drama in the classroom. Providing specific drama activities in this chapter may encourage teachers to broaden their methods when dealing with these texts in their classrooms. Shakespeare plays are staples in the high school English classroom, so Shakespearean texts are a logical choice to include here

also. I have not selected the traditionally taught tragedies, however. In an effort to open up the possibilities of other plays in the Shakespeare canon for the classroom, the first two plays in this chapter are not the usual high school tragedy fare-- *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Macbeth*. The first two plays are Shakespearean comedies.

There has been a noticeable lack of attention in the high school paid to these worthwhile texts-- Shakespeare's comedies. Michael J. Collins suggests one effective way, he has found, of exploring Shakespeare's comedies with students. In his own classroom, Collins has introduced comedy by showing the endings of three romantic comedy films, *Love in the Afternoon*, *Sabrina*, and *Pretty Woman*. A stock feature of a romantic comedy is that despite complications, the two characters will fall in love and get together. Although we know what will happen in the end, we are interested in the plot development and the happy ending. Collins asks a good question: "What is there in [comedy] that we value?" (Davis & Salomone, *Teaching Shakespeare Today* 114). In the midst of a society where it can be easy to be cynical, something in comedies catches us. There is a sense of satisfaction when it all works out in the end. Because of this, from Collins' perspective, hope lingers, even for a little while. Although our jaded world seems so far away from a place where miracles can happen, we enjoy a comedy because it allows a glimmer of hope that happy endings, conveying order and unity, might be possible after all (114-115).

Collins' lead in with romantic comedy films is an effective initiation into looking at Shakespeare's comedies. Shakespeare uses the comic form but works within the form to insert little niggling questions and ambiguities. A Shakespearean comedy is not just a fluffy, happy story. Shakespeare often counters the joy with the fleeting, temporal

quality of that happiness. Hope is embedded in his comedies in varying degrees, but he offers ideas to chew on in the midst of the comic form (115).

Study of Shakespeare's comedy can be effective for several reasons in the high school classroom. For one thing, students can actively process ideas and work at their interpretive skills with Shakespeare's comic material. They can examine the beats in a comic passage, explore pauses and silences in a scene, and work collaboratively on making effective choices. That realm is not limited to the more frequently taught form--tragedy.

Another attraction for exploring comedies with high school students is that the form operates around an ensemble instead of around the personality of a principal character as in the tragedies. There is no single character to keep one's eye on; many characters work together. Patrick Swindon makes the point that in Shakespeare's comedies, main plots and subplots do not always have a tight, clear correlation to each other. Various characters occupy the stage, maybe interact somewhat, and then move on (12-13). With the ensemble effect, the focus changes often in comedies. The comic world is occupied by people blundering their way around it, and in the end it somehow works itself out to be emotionally satisfying. If any age bracket can respond to a constant potpourri of interactions and the juggling of various plots, it is a high school audience, comfortable with a great deal of stimulation and tangential ideas. For some students, the loose ensemble of characters in comedy may be more challenging than tragedy because the play is not always action-packed. The challenges of comedy should encourage rather than discourage a teacher to attempt it in the classroom.

High school students are analytical about their peers and how they themselves connect with others. Shakespeare also was intrigued with what makes people do what they do. Patrick Swindon explains that Shakespeare was much more concerned with internal, psychological motives than with the externals. He says that Shakespeare "[was] fascinated with the way characters take in themselves, rather than other people" (19). High school students are prime candidates for such study. There is a sense of comfort, almost, in exploring the blundering of characters in comedy, especially because it all works out in the end.

Another reason comedy can appeal to high school age people is that they have able eyes at seeing beyond simple humor. Swindon presents Shakespeare as often seeing humor on a fine line between laughter and horror (2). High school students can relate to that fine line because as adolescents they have a tendency to see humor and despair within moments of each other. Young people live daily with extremes. As Kenneth Muir puts it, Shakespeare does not simply write farce. He creates humans interacting with human problems in the midst of situations that might even be farcical (4).

While tragedies like *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* hold long-standing positions in high school curricula, Shakespearean tragedy is not the only viable category for the high school English classroom. In order to encourage teachers to work with some of Shakespeare's comedies in class, the two Shakespeare plays included in this chapter are *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Measure for Measure*. *Much Ado about Nothing* is one of Shakespeare's happy comedies, while *Measure for Measure* falls under the heading of "problem comedy." The two comedies have a very different tone and are both effective texts in the high school classroom.

Warm-ups for Shakespearean Texts

Physical or mental warm-ups can be an effective method of getting students to concentrate on the lesson at hand. Warm-ups engage students in ways that lead to further work with classroom drama during that class period. Appendix A describes warm-ups that can be used as precursors to any type of classroom drama; some warm-ups, however, are especially conducive to work with Shakespeare's plays. A few educators have created drama exercises in this area, so high school teachers can choose from several useable warm-ups available. I would like to bring up a few just to highlight the type of exercises teachers can use in their classrooms with Shakespeare study.

Warm-ups dealing directly with the play being studied can serve as a way to ease students into the daily lesson by thinking about an aspect of the play from a unique angle. One such activity, after students have read much of the play, deals with students considering characterization. Students stand in a circle and each chooses a character from the play; there will be overlaps. Each student responds to a statement beginning with "I'm the kind of person who...." To finish the phrase, students consider the character they have chosen and respond with a specific like, dislike, or behavior of the character as they walk in his/her shoes. In a *Much Ado about Nothing* class, a student as Don John could say, "I'm the kind of person who tied tin cans to cat's tails in order to see them freak out when I was a kid." A student as Beatrice would appropriately say, "When I'm on a date, I dislike it when the guy agrees with everything I say. It's tedious." A student as Dogberry might say, "When I was in high school, I wished to be invited to the cool people's parties." In a *Measure for Measure* class, a student who is thinking of Isabella might say, "I'm the kind of person who likes 10:00 curfews." A student working on

Angelo's character might say, "I'm the kind of person who dislikes giving someone an extra chance to hit the ball when at bat."

A variation on the warm-up would be to conclude the phrase "If I were a type of food/ an animal/ or a room in a house, I'd be..." or "One thing I'm not is a" Looking at *Measure for Measure*, a student working on Lucio might say, "One thing I'm not is a prune." Isabella could respond with "If I were an animal I'd be a porcupine." The Duke might say, "If I were a room in a house, I'd be the billiard room" because of the chances he took with his scheme. With *Much Ado about Nothing*, Claudio might say, "If I were a color I'd be green...with envy!" Hero could well say, "If I were an animal I'd be a kitten who is peaceful, agreeable, declawed, and defenseless." An activity such as this curbs students' thinking about the chemistry test they just took during the period before English and gets them considering the text in order to creatively respond to the characterization activity. Students are processing characterization and then going beyond the text by applying that characterization to the activity.

A warm-up from Judith Elstein's materials for teaching Shakespeare facilitates students speaking the language and playing with it as well as becoming accustomed to hearing it. Twelve students gather in a circle (most class sizes would require two circles operating simultaneously). Each student selects from a pile a line from a passage in the play. Each then calls out her/his line when a pillow is tossed across the circle. The lines will not be called out in consecutive order; they will be randomly spoken as the pillow is tossed. After each student has spoken her/his line two or three times in the circle, students can attempt to see how many they remember or at least paraphrase on a sheet of paper (*Shakespeare Set Free* 45). Whether a physical activity or a concentration activity,

warm-ups such as these can be short and facilitate students' active involvement with Shakespeare's text and language.

Some teachers in the English classroom in recent years have used what is known as the Shakespearean insult page created by Jerry Maguire. It contains three columns of words from Shakespeare's plays. Columns A and B are Shakespeare's adjectives with Column C being nouns. Students choose a word from each column to create an Elizabethan insult. Students mingle around tossing the insults to each other. While one flings "Thou saucy, rump-fed clot pole" another returns the volley with "Thou knavish, lily-livered rabbit-sucker." The language becomes fun to play with instead of being intimidating. Maguire has created a comparable compliment page, also, with such bon mots as "Thou posied, May-morn nymph" or "Thou enchanted, sweet-seasoned dewberry" (*Shakespeare* 17). These warm-ups can be applied to study of *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Measure for Measure* or any Shakespearean drama that teachers work with in their classrooms.

Much Ado about Nothing --William Shakespeare

Much Ado about Nothing portrays two loves-- one couple completely smitten with each other and one couple who early on in the drama outwardly abhor each other. As the drama unfolds, the two sparring partners, Beatrice and Benedick, are brought together via a scheme of friends, and the passionate couple gets derailed when Claudio succumbs to a trick and believes Hero has been unfaithful. Don John enjoys manipulating much of the conflict, but as in true comedy, the wedding bells ring in tandem at the end.

Much Ado about Nothing is a Shakespearean comedy that would appeal to high school students for several reasons. The plots of the two pairs of lovers strike chords in

teenagers. Benedick and Beatrice are two quite contemporary characters in that they both hold their own with each other. Their verbal sparring with each other and the other characters displays, for both, their intelligence and wit. One does not carry the other; they are equally matched. When they do connect, students see their future together as a partnership, strong individuals in a joined world.

In the first scene of the play, Beatrice questions the messenger about Benedick. She then proceeds to rail about him, giving the impression she cannot tolerate him. Students will relate to the familiar mode of operating. Showing dislike does not always indicate feeling dislike, and while indifference expends no energy on the person at all, like and dislike require energy. Beatrice's poking at Benedick to the messenger reveals an output of energy and probably an interest in him early in the play, though she would deny it. Students relate to familiar scenes in high school locker bays-- a gal announcing vehemently the imperfections of a particular guy but doing so because deep down, she really is attracted to him.

The Claudio and Hero plot appeals to students because students feel they can relate to the characters' struggles. Claudio's instant jealousy over Don Pedro's supposed winning of Hero's hand for himself and then his immediate leap to judgment during the Don John scheme shed light on a character who is quick to believe the worst. Claudio's smitten "hero-worship" falters when he assumes she has been unfaithful. High school students will have gone through similar situations of their own-- the feeling of betrayal of Claudio and the despair of rejection for the innocent Hero, at the mercy of rumors and a scheme. The emotional roller-coaster of Claudio and Hero's relationship will resonate with students.

The plot of wrong versus right in the play appeals to students as well. The suspense when Don John seems to have the power to manipulate characters' lives holds students' interest as they read on for the resolution and an ending that works out. Shakespeare's comedy creates hope. One knows it is a comedy, not a tragedy, so one can rely on the promised happy ending; following the journey is the attraction. With twists and turns in the suspense, one is inherently promised the happy ending of the comedic form. The wrong which seems to prevail is acceptable in the middle of the drama because of the hope that right will prevail in the end. Current movies play this out, appealing to students in the box office lines. Studying Shakespeare's comedy does the same.

Several classroom drama activities offer a way for students to explore plot, theme, and characterization in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Plot

The plot of the maiden-falsely-slandered is common in literature. How various characters respond to misunderstanding is worth exploring with students. Issues of trust emerge, believing whether or not a person had done something unacceptable. A classroom drama activity that students might do prior to reading Act III involves students improvising contemporary scenes. In small groups of three or four, students create a scene of a person mistakenly wronged. In the scene, each group should set up a probable scenario and then involve realistic responses on the parts of people connected to the wronged individual. An example situation would be a young man accused of stealing a portable CD/stereo system. The improvisation might involve a parent who thinks he may be guilty and is disappointed in him, a teacher who is surprised but would tend to believe

the accusation, and a classmate who knows the friend would not have stolen it and vows to find out who is laying the blame on the innocent young man. There are many realistic reactions various people in the scene could express. After groups have had fifteen minutes to create a scene, they will each improvise it for the class. After watching several specific situations with a myriad of responses portrayed, students are ready to read the responses of characters in the play upon learning of Hero's supposed infidelity.

In *Much Ado about Nothing* when characters find out about the accusation against Hero, there are varying responses. Leonato, Hero's father, preferred Hero were dead rather than shamed. Claudio, who is attracted to Hero's young purity, becomes tyrannical. He does not plan to simply call off the wedding in a private confrontation with Hero. Instead he waits for the public moment of the wedding to make a scene, debasing Hero in public. On the other hand, Beatrice, on hearing the news, refuses to believe the alleged incrimination and is bent on proving Hero's innocence. Students have more of an investment in studying the Shakespearean characters' responses to the slander after creating their own parallel plot situations.

A similar type of drama activity involves the comic ploy of telling both Beatrice and Benedick that the other loves her/him. The technique is a familiar one in contemporary situation comedies and films. Students enjoy developing their own versions of the ploy. In groups of eight, students devise a scenario about two people who will be united via the scheme. The group needs to create a plot outline, such as why the two may not be on speaking terms. Then the group figures out how they will entice each of the two with concocted information about the other's interest in apologizing, so they can mend their differences. Members of the small groups take on the role of the two and

the go-betweens. In some cases, the group can mirror the *Much Ado about Nothing* plot with a couple planting the seed in one of the individuals and a couple others planting the seed in the second individual. Other groups may have the two individuals overhear the same people in two different settings. After creating the outline, the groups improvise their scenarios for the class. It is an entertaining idea for students to explore, and the situations that employ the technique can be varied. When students begin work with Shakespeare's text in Acts II and III, they have already developed an interest in the plot technique and are motivated to see how Shakespeare plays it out.

Characterization

An interesting activity that promotes closer attention paid to the character of Benedick early on in the play deals with II.iii.25-33. In this section Benedick mumbles to himself about what a woman would need to be for him to fall in love with her. He creates a list of attributes in the woman who would be perfect in his eyes. He includes such characteristics as she would be rich, intelligent, virtuous, reasonably good-looking, even-tempered, musical, and a good conversationalist, to name a few. He also brings up what he is willing to be flexible about, such as the color of her hair. After examining Benedick's qualifications for his "dream" woman, the students take on the same task. Writing in the role of one who is not in a relationship, what would be the attributes each student would prioritize in Benedick's place? Some characteristics might mirror one or two of Benedick's, but the list will be the qualities in the "perfect" woman or man for each student. They should write what they are adamant about as well as the characteristics they are willing to be flexible about, just as Benedick did. After writing in the role of one such as Benedick, students may or may not wish to share their list. If

many balk at revealing their entire list, it can be successful to have each student share one or two attributes they value in a partner.

It is worth having students explore the text for any criteria Beatrice has for a partner, also. Although it is not concisely summed up as Benedick's list is, the play does give indications of Beatrice's preferences. She inquires of the messenger if Benedick had handled himself well as a soldier (I.i.40-41) as well as whom he had chosen to be friends with (I.i.67). Both give an inkling of her criteria. Her remarks also imply that he should be handsome for her to be interested (II.i.50-52). Students will be gaining a rounder picture of the character of Benedick and Beatrice as well as putting themselves in their shoes with listing priorities in a partner for themselves.

A classroom activity that re-enforces the comic character of Dogberry can also be helpful when studying *Much Ado about Nothing*. Students tend to get confused during the Dogberry scenes, missing the humor in his speeches. By concentrating on Dogberry's misuse of language, students will be one step closer to appreciating and understanding the clown sections of the play, instead of the typical tendency of students to skip over them as not integral to the main plot of the drama.

The teacher can put the following list on the board-- pairs of words that are malapropisms, a favorite style of Dogberry in his misuse of language. Teachers can certainly add to the list and invite students to add to it also. Doing some examples together as a class may help get them started, such as referring to the death penalty as a

"detergent to crime" or someone "exciting a riot."

anonymous -- unanimous	decaffeinated-- decapitated
invading -- evading	progeny -- prodigy
induce-- reduce	liberally -- literally
prostrate -- prostate	monotonous -- monogamous
anecdote -- antidote	abominable -- abdominal
expect -- suspect	unquestionable -- unquestioned
eminent -- imminent	marital -- martial

Students get in small groups of four or five. They then create a contemporary scene misusing at least four words from the above list or their own. The scene should have a definite beginning and ending. Although the scene itself will be an improvisation, the groups will need to plan the lines they specifically must fit in with the "incorrect" words. Students' experimentation with the comic in their own scenes motivates their interest in the Dogberry and company scenes in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Theme

A theme in *Much Ado about Nothing* involves characters masked. Actual masks are worn by guests at the party in II.i and by Hero and the women in the second wedding ceremony in V.iii. The journey in the play is the search for self-awareness and honesty; often the characters assume masked roles that are defensive as they make this journey. Since fetes where party-goers wore masks were common in times other than the present, students may not relate concretely to the concept. A good way to approach this in the classroom is to have students create their own masks for the party in Act II. Their masks should represent some aspect of their personality. The masks can be fanciful. Colors can be chosen to depict some aspect of their personality. Students might do some research on forms the masks took in Elizabethan times, but the students do not have to follow

Elizabethan form. They need to create a mask that is functional as well as representative of the individual. The class then chooses a day to wear their masks in class. While it will probably not be a mystery who the students are under the masks, students will still get a feel for relating with others while masked. It may tend to free some inhibitions in some students. The masked experience may revolve around a particular activity such as small group discussion of a scene in the play where the discussion is held with everyone in masks. The day may involve a general milling around with social exchanges. Time can be allotted for individual explanation of what each mask represents to the students.

These activities provide some ways for students to explore *Much Ado about Nothing* while up on their feet, actively involved in Shakespeare's text. As with any of the drama-in-the-classroom ideas proposed in this dissertation, teachers should feel free to use other methods combined with the classroom drama for the *Much Ado about Nothing* unit. The drama activities are not intended to be the sole method of studying Shakespeare's text.

Measure For Measure --William Shakespeare

Measure for Measure is an intriguing drama about justice and mercy. Morality has become lax in Vienna. The Duke decides to let his assistant, Angelo, a decisive, play-by-the-rules man, take over while he goes away for awhile. Unknown to Angelo, the Duke in disguise remains in Vienna, watching how Angelo metes out justice. In order to crackdown on maintaining the law, Angelo sentences Claudio to death for sleeping with Juliet, little caring that they planned to be married. Isabella, prior to taking vows as a nun, goes to Angelo to plead for her brother Claudio's life. Angelo becomes smitten with Isabella and proposes an exchange-- a night spent with him for her brother's

life. The self-exploration on the part of Angelo and Isabella as well as a scheme the disguised Duke proposes all bring to light issues involving justice, mercy, and ethics.

Measure for Measure has a different tone than some of Shakespeare's lighter comedies, such as *Much Ado about Nothing*. The main focus in *Measure for Measure*, an "unfestive comedy," is not "the triumph of love, as in the happy comedies, but with moral and social problems" ("Introduction," *Measure for Measure* 464). The world in *Measure for Measure* seems less stable and the ending less carefree, providing yet another textual experience for high school students to explore. Shakespeare continues to be concerned with what makes people do what they do as he creates situations where characters are pushed to the limits of consequences for their actions. As the play confronts issues of justice, mercy, and ethics, students can question the issues. John Simmons, one teacher who has used *Measure for Measure* in the high school classroom, contends that students can relate to several ideas operating in the play--a sexism where men in an attempt for political power use women as pawns, a world of political corruption, a holding to the letter of the law instead of employing fairness and reason, and commitment to a principle (*Teaching Shakespeare Today* 282-283).

Students need to consider whether Isabella's staunch faithfulness to her chastity is redeeming. Consequences of death or life enter into Isabella's decision about whether to sleep with Angelo. Interesting interaction could occur as students consider a life and death consequence in comparison to a monetary consequence such as Demi Moore's weighing of Robert Redford's offer to sleep with him for \$1 million in the film *Indecent Proposal* and the ethics involved. Swindon raises several questions in his critique about Isabella's remaining loyal to a principle instead of a person that high school students can

explore. Can Isabella condone in someone else what she will not condone for herself? Is it right for Isabella to agree to the bed trick or is the buying into deception exactly what she is trying to remain clear of? What is noble attachment to a principle and what is rigid inflexibility? (143). These are a few ways *Measure for Measure* can relate to students' worlds. Temptation, the question of right or wrong, and the weighing of consequences all play a part in high school students' lives. Literature that allows students to find a way into it because of application on some level to their own realities creates a significant learning situation.

Opening Scene

With the opening of the play, students can start exploring subtext. I.i provides scope for students to consider the implications of several readings of the scene. Together, the class reads lines 1-23, clarifying what is occurring. Once students have a basic understanding, the teacher can encourage students to think about the various subtexts that would be possible within the scene and given lines. Three students, who are willing to do some improvisation on the opening moments, are selected to be the Duke, Escalus, and the attendant. The teacher reminds the three that at times the class will call "stop" in order to consider questions in the scene. The class decides on the initial physical placement of the Duke, Escalus, and the attendant. Are they walking side by side for a few moments, then the Duke begins musingly? Does the Duke lead with Escalus a few steps behind and the attendant even further behind Escalus? Do Escalus and the attendant arrive in the room only to have the Duke appear from a different entrance at the same time or only a moment after them? Having the three students try out the various

suggestions allows the class to see the varying interpretations an audience would gather depending on the choice made.

Once an initial staging for the first few moments is decided, the class considers the relationship between the Duke and Escalus and how that is conveyed in the first lines. One relationship might be that of master and subject, albeit advisor. The Duke's "Escalus" (line 1) in a commanding tone might be responded with Escalus' "My Lord" (line 2) in a polite, respectful-of-authority vein. The teacher coaches the three students with this subtext—master and advisor. As the three explore the subtext with the lines, they should also bring out the physical movements appropriate to the subtext. The Duke may be coached to walk with arms clasped behind his back, pacing and thinking out loud. Escalus may bow politely with his "My Lord" (line 2).

Stopping the three students after a few lines to have them experiment with other subtexts is effective. The teacher can coach the Duke and Escalus by giving them a subtext of being buddies, quite close to each other. The students can be directed to enter and deliver lines 1–2 with the friend subtext. The teacher can side-coach them on how two men who are friends might physically greet each other. Would a brisk handshake be a realistic gesture? The class should brainstorm, walking the Duke and Escalus through the class' suggestions.

The teacher might suggest a subtext that Escalus heard, via the palace grapevine, that Angelo was getting the temporary boss position instead of him. He has been there longer; he is the number two man; he was passed over. Escalus is angry. Now as he enters the room and meets up with the Duke, the three students explore how the opening lines would play. The teacher may suggest that the Duke does not realize Escalus is

angry. The class should brainstorm how Escalus stands, carries himself, and responds non-verbally to the Duke's statements. When the Duke asks the attendant to "Bid come before us Angelo" (line 16) how does Escalus respond non-verbally?

When the Duke drops the bombshell that Angelo is the appointed one, the students should consider Escalus' response. If Escalus was in a good mood, unknowing before, how does he physically react? What is the tenor of Escalus' statement in lines 22-24? Students might think of the lines as a straightforward, sincere affirmation of Angelo. Given that subtext, the three students enact lines 17-23. Next, the class could suggest a subtext of anger with Escalus delivering the lines with close-lipped, polite bitterness and biting sarcasm.

The attendant role seems insignificant. Students should experiment with different stage placements of the attendant. Does he listen to what is being said? Does he respond non-verbally or is his face a mask? The students should choose what they see as the strongest motivation for him. Does he respect the Duke? Does he respect Escalus? How does he show this? Does he respect Angelo when Angelo enters? The student's intentional work with the attendant role is a prime example of considering a character on stage who does not speak lines. On the written page the character may be ignored. On stage, visually, it is impossible to forget such a character.

Already in twenty-three lines, students are considering ways of reading the scene and the implications it might have for the rest of the play. If the three students get tired of being the ones directed, they can trade places at any time with other classmates.

Theme

Converting a Shakespeare scene into a contemporary situation with similar ideas (adapted from Michael Flachmann's "Parallel Scenes") provides a way for high school students to examine some of the ethical issues raised in *Measure for Measure* in a context they are more familiar with. The exploration of justice, following the letter of the law, and mercy can be highlighted with students acting out contemporary situations. For instance, what if a sheriff catches four students at a party, students who do not regularly party and just happened to be at this one, while the regular partiers managed to slip away before getting caught? Does the sheriff just give the four a warning or does s/he put them in jail for the night? Does the school administration, knowing they are senior starters on the basketball team, suspend them from the team four days before the state tournament, according to State High School League rules, or waive the sentence and let them play? Another improvisation situation would be a teacher who catches a student cheating on a short quiz. The teacher could demand expulsion. Does the student get kicked out even if it is a first time offense or pardoned because it is a little quiz, not an exam, and the student promises it will never happen again?

Several groups of students would prepare the various scenes and decide which way they will play the justice and mercy angle of their own situation. The activity initiates discussion about the differences and similarities of each group's handling of the issue. Giving a couple of groups the same scenario provides more discussion, especially if the groups decide on different verdicts. After discussing the contemporary scenes, students can consider the *Measure for Measure* scenes dealing with justice and the letter of the law in a more animated way. II.i provides back-to back images of justice and

mercy with the opening scene where Escalus questions Angelo about how far to take the law and Angelo's response is cut and dried followed by the "clown" scene, Escalus' treatment of Pompey.

A question that students of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* must ask in light of the Duke is "Does the end justify the means?" The Duke pushes this point. He claims to be away from Vienna in order to spy, incognito, on the events in his supposed absence. He sets up Angelo with the scheme involving Isabella and Mariana, and he allows Isabella to believe that her brother Claudio is dead. The ethics involved with all of these actions can be legitimately questioned. In order for the issue of "the end justifying the means" to have more concrete relevance to contemporary society, the students can create present-day scenarios that struggle with this theme. In groups of four to five, students should brainstorm a situation, develop a structure for the scene, and then improvise it for the rest of the class. Students are familiar with the Robin Hood saga, stealing from the rich to give to the poor. Some of their scenarios might mirror the Robin Hood mode of operating. Some may grapple with the idea of lying in order to bring about some good. Interesting discussions revolve around the acceptability of a fib or little white lie versus a *real* lie-- is one or the other ethical if it is for a good reason? Bringing the conversation back to the Duke in *Measure for Measure* after working with the contemporary scenes can shed different shades of understanding on the Duke's actions and his character.

Character

Students may explore the varying possibilities within a character and a scene based on staging decisions through several classroom drama activities. Improvisations centered on the spatial placement of set pieces such as chairs can uncover choices about

characters for students to consider. II.i.13-154, where Isabella threatens to publicize Angelo's proposition after she realizes Angelo is serious, is a rich scene for exploration of various readings. Students can decide which interpretations are legitimate according to the text. Two students volunteer to work the scene. With one chair on stage, students consider the impression when Angelo sits confidently while Isabella walks around, nervous and timid, or as Isabella sits powerless while Angelo struts. If the chair is on a platform with Angelo in it and Isabella kneeling in front, students contrast the reading to Isabella's taking over Angelo's elevated chair with Angelo standing off to the side. Power and confidence levels change the scene entirely, depending on the characters' motivations and the physical stances they take.

Another scene meriting exploration of characters through staging choices is Isabella's telling Claudio about Angelo's proposition and her response to him. Setting two chairs in differing configurations facilitates students seeing the various statements made by the placement. Two chairs set side by side for the students playing Isabella and Claudio give a different impression than two chairs facing each other with some distance between. With the earlier placement, the tone and visual message during III.i.85-106 can be intimate, sincere, and filled with chagrin. Students might play the scene with the chairs opposite and at a distance showing defensiveness on Isabella's part as she states her case to her brother. Claudio's "Thanks, dear Isabel" is open to interpretation of his sincerity, and different stagings could color lines such as his. A prompt for Claudio's "O heavens, it cannot be" could suggest a glimmer of hope at a possible out for him, even at the expense of Isabella's virginity, knowing he operates with a more lax sexual license than she. The teacher may prompt students to play it as disbelief that the proper, rigid

Angelo even offered the proposition and horror that his sister had to contemplate the proposition in her guilt over wanting to aid Claudio. The teacher can accentuate different stagings by prompting with a variety of motivations, giving the students who are acting a way to consider the characters in specific situations.

In order to explore characterization in the early part of the play, students can develop campaign speeches for the characters. Even if students have only read Act I and some of Act II, they can do this activity. Students in role develop platforms to represent the choices that the characters would logically make. In groups of two or three, students choose or are assigned a character from *Measure for Measure*. Angelo, the Duke, Isabella, and Lucio are four that provide rich exploration in this activity. Working together in groups, students connect their character with contemporary political and social issues. After working in groups, one student is selected from each group to deliver the political platform; the others in the group serve as political advisors who sit up front also. The rest of the class functions as the press corps or attendees of a rally. As press, the class can ask questions of the candidate and his/her advisors. The groups must be able to support why the platform is a logical one for that character. The following suggest some example platforms the students may set up:

Angelo: Staunch, Conservative Republican

*Favors the death penalty (Sentences Claudio to death for breaking the law)

*Tough on crime (His mission to clear the streets of Vienna of law-breaking)

*Pro-life/ Against abortion—regardless of circumstances, even

rape (Sees the issue as black and white. Doesn't matter if there is some gray area. It is how he handles Claudio—letter of the law.)

*Favors eliminating welfare (Individuals should be responsible for themselves and work hard.)

Isabella: Moderate to Staunch Republican

*Strong, conservative values (Leans toward even more strictness at the convent than the nuns require)

*Family values (Leaves convent to speak for her brother's life)

*Supports welfare for the children's sake (Does not empathize with a mother's predicament, but doesn't want children to suffer.

She is firm on moral behavior, but kind at heart.)

*Supports death penalty if it fits the crime (Follow the law or there are consequences. She knows Claudio broke the law so he should pay, but it seems severe punishment when it has been common practice and he loves Juliet, intending to marry her)

Duke: Democrat

*Supports welfare to work (Has a warm heart for those who are trying—he would want to support mothers and children. Has been concerned about Mariana and aids Juliet's situation)

*Supports education (Sets up a plan that becomes a journey for Isabella to learn about herself; Angelo is set up for a learning experience, too)

*If the end is an admirable goal, i.e., Social Security, he would

even get funds a bit underhandedly (Believes in means to an end—his scheme of disguise and misrepresentation in order for a good outcome at the end)

Lucio: Democrat

*Pro-choice on abortion issue (Would be relieved if abortion were an option for some of his close calls.)

*Supports welfare (Would even try to scam welfare, whether he needed it or not)

*Against capital punishment (Tries to help free Claudio by encouraging Isabella)

*Supports economic growth—gambling and casino development: (Would want to be first to try make some fast money)

Students become creative with it. The teacher can coach them with a few of the above examples to get their own ideas flowing. Whether the activity occurs during reading of the play or after completing it affects the outcome; students will accentuate some different aspects of the characters. One group of students in a class of mine said Isabella supported safe-houses for single mothers, since she is known to be understanding of their predicaments. This is an entirely different point made by the end of the drama than if the students worked with the exercise early in the drama.

Another scene later in the drama works well for exploring subtext with students. When the Duke arrives at the city gate and Angelo, Escalus, and others gather, Isabella makes her plea publicly to the Duke. Students can examine V.i.20-37 in small groups, considering the stances of Isabella, the Duke, and Angelo. In groups of three, students

improvise their interpretation. One group may play the scene with a cocky, self-assured Angelo, a spunky Isabella with a point to prove, and a Duke visibly torn between listening to both. Another group could play the scene with a nervous Angelo who tries a bit too hard to ignore Isabella, an Isabella who does not think she will be believed but must try anyway, and a Duke who appears to have a non-negotiable trust in Angelo. Encouraging the groups to think through the scene, not just automatically accept a first impression as the only way to read the scene, tends to bring out various interpretations of the groups. After each group improvises the scene, each student playing the characters should talk about their motivation. The several valid ways of playing the scene provides much fodder for discussion.

One point to concentrate specifically on as a group is lines 24-25, "Till you have heard me in my true complaint, /And given me justice, justice, justice, justice!" Many high school students may not be aware of the dramatic treatment of repeated words or phrases. An actor typically does not treat each word in the same way. Each word has a subtle (or not so subtle) subtext change, which is why the word or phrase is repeated. With a line such as 25 with "justice" repeated four times in a row, the actor needs to make some decisions. The class can help coach one of the student Isabellas, interrupting and working through the subtext so that saying "justice" four times is necessary. Students might suggest that the first time indicates an appeal for herself and the second time solidifies how important she feels it is. The third could be delivered with a look to Angelo with scorn in her voice for his type of justice and the fourth with an appeal for herself directed to the Duke for true justice. Exploring subtext on this level of specificity takes some time, but students benefit as they wrestle analytically with the text, seeing the

facets of characterization and scene that the text can allow. They have much more appreciation for the play than if they just dealt with the cursory assumptions of a first reading for plot.

Plot

A classroom drama activity involving freeze frames is effective either during work with individual acts or later in the study of the drama as a way of solidifying understanding of the play. If incorporated after reading the entire play, groups of four or five students are assigned an Act. Their task is to develop five or six frames in their presentation. With the text in hand, they choose five to six specific lines from their Act. They are to find significant lines that represent the main events in that Act. Once they have chosen the lines, the group plans how to visually represent each line in a frozen tableau. With each frozen tableau, one member of the group will speak the line. The group will then reassemble for the next frozen tableau, hold their stance, and present the second line. In this way, the Act's main points are identified and depicted by students. The class, meanwhile, closes their eyes until the group calls "open." At that time the frozen tableau is in place, the line is given, the group calls "close," and the class closes their eyes while the group reassembles. It gives a filmstrip feel to the exercise with each frozen tableau a freeze frame in the telling. If used with study at the end of the play, five groups present Acts I through V as a helpful review of overall plot. If groups work on this activity during study of a particular Act, the exercise is marvelous for comparing what each group determines as highlight moments of the Act. It gets students digging into the text to determine their view of what is critical in the Act.

Interspersed with discussion and other classroom methods, these drama activities facilitate active work with theme, characterization, and plot in the study of *Measure for Measure*.

Trifles--Susan Glaspell

Trifles is an often anthologized one-act drama that follows a detective story format. A man has been murdered and his wife is being held as the prime suspect. While the local authorities examine the farm place, attempting to uncover the clues to the crime, the sheriff's wife and a neighbor woman remain in the suspect's kitchen. Together, the women piece together the events leading to the murder. The women are able to read significant clues that are trifling to the men.

Studying a drama like *Trifles* in class does not offer the same challenges as a Shakespearean drama with language and period obstacles, but it has its own hurdles to deal with in the classroom. Students feel that they thoroughly understand it after a first reading and appreciate its short length. The challenge for teachers with *Trifles* is to facilitate in-depth examination of the drama. Reading for basic plot is accomplished on a first reading; further work with the text through drama elicits deeper connection with the play.

Pre-Reading Activity--Plot

A drama activity involving analysis of clues can be an effective way into the play. Since much of the play centers around the women reading subtle clues in the kitchen, having students develop their own narratives with clues piques interest in Glaspell's work once the students begin reading the play.

The teacher divides students into several small working groups of four to five students. Providing groups with a set of clues heightens the creative challenge rather than letting students devise their own set of clues. Lists that consist of incongruous items make the project more interesting than lists containing obvious associations of items. The students pick a slip of paper containing three items. As a group, they construct a scene, incorporating the three items as clues to a mystery. The following triads are sample lists:

- empty picture frame/ half-eaten Snickers candy bar/ garden trowel
- wooden spoon/ letter opener/ burnt wooden match
- pencil with broken lead/ worn shoelace/ suitcase section marked in JC Penney catalog
- unmarked key/ clump of mud/ $\frac{3}{4}$ full, opened can of Mt. Dew soda
- single earring/ toothpaste tube with missing cap/ pink flamingo lawn ornament

The students in groups develop the core structure of their mystery; then, they incorporate their three clues. Students can employ more clues than the required three if they wish. Once the group has created the structure of the scene, each group will play out the scene for the class. Each group will decide if their scene involves a detective who reads the clues as s/he finds them, enacting the scene which sets the clues in the first place, or conjecturing about events as they occur. Groups can be creative as they bring together the seemingly unrelated items and make sense of them in a scene.

After students work with their own clues and the connection to a narrative, students' interest is piqued as they examine the clues laid out by Glaspell. Sparking students' interest is, after all, the goal of pre-reading activities.

Another type of pre-reading drama activity leads students into thoughts about the gendered responses of the characters in the play. Whether students have heard references to contemporary pop psychology books like *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* or whether they have gleaned knowledge of differences in men and women's reactions to life from direct experience, students will have fun playing with the gendered "us and them" mentality. Teachers pose a question to their students: What are several situations where you think responses might vary based on gender? The class can brainstorm likely scenarios on the board, ranging from a lost driver who needs to find a specific address to a friend or significant other who one reviews the day with in the evening. Once a list of situations is created, students get into same gender groups or mixed gender groups. Their task is to improvise a scene. If they are in an all-female or all-male group, what do students see as a typical response to their situation? If they are in mixed groups, the students play out the scene in two different ways as they view the different genders responding. The entire class might even divide into two groups—boys in one, girls in the other. Whether the groups steer into stereotypical responses or not is irrelevant. The students themselves will monitor what is a believable response. A good discussion about differences in gender responses can springboard off the scene-work the groups do. The teacher may pull in Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand*, referring to women's rapport talk versus men's report talk (76-77). The activity facilitates students considering varying acculturated responses based on gender. They

then move into reading the play, and their minds are tuned into the men and women's roles in *Trifles*.

Theme

The play consists basically of a "trial" that the women walk through in the Wright kitchen. Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale have reached their verdict by the end of the drama—justifiable homicide. Since the plot pivots on gathering evidence for the crime, students can enact a trial for Minnie Foster Wright after reading the play. Keeping in mind the time period, early twentieth century, students need to realize women did not have voting rights or full citizen rights in the courtroom. The nineteenth amendment was still a few years in the future. The judge, jury, attorneys, and court personnel would all be male. The class assigns a student to each of these roles. The female students become onlookers at the court proceedings, watching without a voice. The prosecuting attorney interviews various witnesses, such as Mr. Hale, pulling together his cut-and-dried version of the evidence. The prosecuting team will have done a close-reading analysis of what case the men are able to make with the evidence they have gathered. In spite of knowing what transpired in the kitchen with the women, the male students can only use what the men in the drama would know. Any of the kitchen clues are "inadmissible," in courtroom lingo. Because the male student jury has only the facts presented, the jury will have to deliberate on that evidence, solely. The students can come to a courtroom verdict, declaring Minnie guilty or acquitted.

The drama activity can be done a couple of ways. The female and remaining male students as onlookers can interrupt the courtroom session, calling "stop" to help guide, question, or offer alternatives to choices the students up front are making in the

drama. This involves everyone in exploring the alluded-to trial scene following the investigation at the Wright house. The students bring to life what the drama suggests will take place regarding Minnie. Another way to carry out the drama activity is to remain true to Glaspell's time period that the text is written in and not allow the female students to offer their views in the course of the trial. The male perspective encompasses it all. Part of the power of this drama activity lies in the female students' reactions to only being able to listen to the proceedings, not being able to take official roles. Their voices being silenced and their frustration at not being able to speak to various points in the trial is worthy of discussion after the trial.

Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* does not necessarily emphasize a verdict for Minnie Wright, whether she is guilty or not, as much as focus on Minnie's not being able to speak for herself and her life. Karen Alkalay-Gut in "Murder and Marriage: Another Look at *Trifles*" critiques the women's situation in the courtroom; the trial is carried out through the "male gaze." Not only do the men not understand Minnie's world, a woman's world, they do not even realize they are blind to it (Ben-Zvi 78-79). In "Murder, She Wrote: The Genesis of Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*," Linda Ben-Zvi cites Catherine MacKinnon who claims that "when women are powerless," they do not just have a different voice, they have no voice (40). Through the drama activity female students, especially, will be a part of the experience of having no voice.

A modification on this activity would be to put a student role-playing Minnie on the stand. As she tries to make a case for the events leading up to the crime, the male students respond according to the text's tone toward a woman's view. Instead of merely talking about the male attitude toward women's lives, students play it out, forming a

more powerful experience. Students might find the contrast to today meaningful. On the other hand, the students might be dismayed that not much has changed in our society—that what is associated with women carries less weight than what is associated with men. Does giving Minnie a voice on the stand alter students' perceptions of her and the drama? Does it shift a focus? Students might explore how the center of attention becomes Minnie and whether she committed the crime rather than Minnie being representative of women's lives at that time. Students can also discuss, then, if it is more effective having Minnie absent in the drama *Trifles* or whether her presence in the kitchen with the women would have changed the drama. Would the women have reached their same verdict after deciphering clues in the kitchen if Minnie had been there with them?

Characterization

The three women in the drama—Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Peters, and Minnie Wright—are the focal point, which is intriguing when considering the time period. At a time when men commanded center stage in a male-dominated world, Glaspell highlights these three women's lives.

Drama in the classroom can be used to provide a deeper analysis of the women. Their lives are alluded to in the text, as Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters piece together Minnie's life as well as refer to their own. The teacher can have students construct a joint list of what details about the women are given in the text. Based on that information and knowledge gleaned about women's lives prior to the nineteenth amendment, students can fill in some of the gaps with classroom drama. One option involves having three female students take on the character of each of the women. Dividing the rest of the class into three large groups, each group brainstorms three or four frozen positions that depict some

aspect of their character's life. Others in the group can become part of the still-life. If a picture of Mrs. Hale includes a husband, for instance, a student in the group can take on the role. Groups should try to delineate their impression of what would be significant moments for that female character and decide how to visually portray it.

Another option involves three students in the role of the three women spread across the front of the room. With coaching from other students, these three each improvise a typical or even critical moment in that woman's life, including a short verbal monologue. When one is done, she freezes in a representative position, and the focus shifts to the second woman, then on to the third. Not only do the women become more three-dimensional than on paper, but the visual placement of all three up front together, yet not connecting with each other, gives students a visual feel for the isolation in the women's lives in the text. Minnie might voice her frustration at the silence after the bird is dead, sharing her slowly mounting intolerance of the void after the birdsong ends. Mrs. Peters might express her preoccupation with life as the sheriff's wife, how she feels that she is merely an extension of her husband. Mrs. Hale might give voice to feeling sucked in by all the expectations of her children, her husband, and all the farm duties that never end-- laundry piling up with another meal to prepare. Making characters three-dimensional through drama augments the impression of Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters' unified front at the end of the drama.

Death of a Salesman--Arthur Miller

Considered one of the greatest American plays, *Death of a Salesman* has held a consistent spot in the high school English curriculum. The drama centers on Willy Loman, a travelling salesman who fails, despite his struggle to succeed. Weaving images

of past, present, and fantasy, it hones in on the father/eldest son conflict where Willy yearns for Biff's respect, but Biff is disillusioned with his father after discovering Willy's infidelity while on the road. Ultimately, Willy kills himself in a desperate attempt to be a success by providing his family with the life insurance money. Frequently anthologized, *Death of a Salesman* is a challenging play for many high school students to grasp, especially because of its expressionistic elements. Since the drama often stays "on the page" in classroom study, students frequently get confused by the style. Using drama activities in studying *Death of a Salesman* can clarify the text for students.

Pre-Reading Activity--Theme

In order to pique students' interest in themes in *Death of a Salesman*, the teacher can facilitate a drama activity that involves students working with contemporary issues parallel to moral dilemmas brought out in themes in Miller's text. Eva Kafka Barron and David N. Sosland suggest discussion of the following situations in their essay "Moral Dilemmas and *Death of a Salesman*":

*Sixty-year-old Nathan has worked for the Rockleigh Company for thirty-five years. He has two years to go until he can retire. The Rockleigh Company no longer finds Nathan to be a contributing employee. In fact, he is being paid, but he is not helping the company. Should the boss fire Nathan?

*Twenty-year-old Jason goes to the movies. While he leaves to get some popcorn, he spots his father sitting with his arm around a woman who is not Jason's mother. Later Jason's father denies that he even knew the woman. He wanted to see the movie, went in, sat down, felt cramped, and

stretched out his arm. Jason does not believe his father. Should he tell his mother what he saw?

*Sam is fifteen, and his brother Toby is thirteen. Sam, the first-born, is their father's favorite. In fact, Toby feels left out. The father does not see his favoritism, and therefore refuses to do anything about it. What should Toby do?

*All through his school years, Bill's father had told Bill that he should study and get good grades because he had to go to law school and join the family firm. Bill gets accepted to a good law school, but after three months he realizes that this law career is not for him. His father will never forgive him if he does not join the law firm. What should Bill do?

(Phelan, *Literature and Life* 84)

The teacher divides the class into four small groups. Each group is assigned one of the above scenarios. The group discusses the situation, then decides on one way to play the scene. In theatre, even if there are several valid interpretations, an actor must finally choose one motivation for delivering a line or a scene. The same applies in this activity. Small groups must reach a consensus of the interpretation they will portray. Once small groups have worked out their own interpretation, the groups converge and present their version of the best decision possible in that situation. If class sizes are large, two different groups could work independently on the same scenario; they may resolve the scene in opposite ways, making the activity even richer for discussion following the dramatic activity.

Once students confront these issues in the contemporary settings provided by the scenarios, they will be primed for the parallel dilemmas encountered in *Death of a Salesman*. Students are not necessarily motivated to read a drama just because it is a classic. Offering pre-reading activities to generate motivation for studying the text helps the effectiveness of early work with the play. While Barron and Sosland conceived of it as a strictly verbal discussion activity, it can be effectively taken one step further, incorporating drama and raising the active involvement of students one notch higher.

Another pre-reading activity involving drama deals with American myths about success. The teacher begins by having students brainstorm ideas on the board about perceived success in our society. Money, popularity, good-looks, athletic ability, and advantageous connections might be a few the students bring up. Once the brainstorming is completed, the teacher divides the class into small groups of four to six students. Each group's task is to choose a success myth and plan a short two to three minute improvisation either confirming the myth as attainment of success or highlighting the myth as illusory. It is best to spread the topics out among the groups, but if two groups double up on the same issue, it offers multiple perspectives on the ideas.

After ten minutes of planning time, groups present their improvisation for the rest of the class. Discussion might be lively after seeing visual contemporary versions of the American myths. One group may improvise a scene about how being popular one day can be fickle the next. The contemporary scenes are important to play out in order to discover students' degrees of belief in the myths of success. Several students may be convinced the scenes are the definition of success while others might see beyond cultural norms to the illusions. Either way, the improvisation and discussion point students to the

thematic issues that Willy struggles with. Alice Griffin examines Willy's pursuit of the success myth by keying in on the aphorisms that Willy teaches Biff and Happy, such as, "Be liked and you'll never want," "It's not what you say, it's how you say it—because personality always wins the day" (41), and "Athletic ability is more important than learning" (42). She also looks at how Willy interacts with Ben with lines such as, "It's not what you do, Ben. It's who you know and the smile on your face! It's contacts, Ben, contacts" (51)! Once students have examined these same ongoing myths in contemporary society in the pre-reading drama activity and once they have read the entire play, they are in a good position to discuss implications of Willy as representative of Everyman. He is drawn into the myths of success even if they do not seem to be working.

Plot

Knowing students have tuned out on *Death of a Salesman* can be a teacher's nightmare. A typical student response is "I can't figure out what's going on—what's just in Willy's head and who is that woman?" A good activity for clarifying the plot and structure of the drama for students is to have them play reality and dream sequences side by side. The teacher divides students into several groups; numbers vary depending on which scenes each group will work with. Either the teacher can assign each group a scene that s/he knows to be particularly challenging with its present/ past/ fantasy exchanges or the teacher can give that task to the groups themselves. They are to choose a scene they found particularly difficult to follow. In groups, doing close textual analysis, students determine what is the present and what becomes "the inside of his

[Willy's] head" (which was Arthur Miller's original title for the play). Then the group's task is to work out a way of visually presenting the two side by side.

One scene early in the drama includes Biff and Happy talking in their bedroom while hearing Willy mumbling to himself as if in another time. When students visually see Biff and Happy in the bedroom, reacting to Willy's rambling, and then have another set of students play out Willy's memory of car-washing and football with the boys, Linda mending stockings, and the woman laughing—it helps separate time frames. One side portrays the reality of the moment, and the other plays out the memory. With drama, students can work through the scene of the woman and Linda (26-27) visually--Linda mending is a memory, not present time, then the woman is counterplayed as another memory. The student groups decide if each side freezes while the other side is presented or if students in each group keep miming their plot line after the focus shifts to the other side. When one group of students portrays Biff, Happy, and Linda in bedrooms while Willy is in the kitchen, and then next to that another group plays out the memory, and next to that the woman enters with another student as Willy, students visually see the layers of the drama.

Another good scene for students to physicalize is the entrance in Act I of Ben, Willy's brother. Willy and Charley are up late talking in the kitchen, and students often get confused when the conversation between Charley and Willy is interspersed with dialogue between Willy and Ben (31-33). Students choose a starting and ending point for their scene and put the scene on its feet with Charley and Willy representing reality and then another student introduces Ben physically in the scene. Unlike the earlier scene with the boys and then Linda and the woman, which drifts from one character to the next in a

block of lines, this scene with Charley, Willy, and Ben flips back and forth, line by line, in several places.

This is a good drama-in-the-classroom activity for early study of the play. Students will be able to envision the shifts from reality to fantasy and present to past more easily. Students in roles should have their text in hand. There is no need to have students memorize lines of their character. It is not a performance; rather it is a way to see a scene instead of simply reading it on the page. Each group works on how they will physicalize their scene; then, each group portrays their scene for the rest of the class. In classrooms where student groups have chosen their own scenes, there may be duplicates. Two groups motivated to work on a scene is not a problem. The class gets the opportunity to see two interpretations of physicalizing the same scene. Since several students are identifying it as a challenging scene, seeing it portrayed a couple of ways will clarify the difficult scene for the class.

Watching a film version of the drama gives students another visual picture of the scenes they are concentrating on, and after actively physicalizing the scenes themselves, students are more intrigued by seeing choices made by film directors. Having the students make their own visual picture of the text through drama is most effective early in the study of the play. An activity like this involves students in the text as they analyze the stream-of-consciousness flow between past/ present/ and fantasy.

Characterization

Each of the characters in *Death of a Salesman* is tightly woven into the development of the drama. Even minor characters play an intricate role in the drama as a whole. Getting students on their feet to work with characterization is effective in their

grasp of the drama. Jonathan Neelands, a British drama-in-education proponent, devised an exercise he titles "Overheard Conversations" (*Structuring Drama Work* 29). He uses the exercise in an eavesdropping context, but it can be transformed to work well as a drama activity for *Death of a Salesman*.

The teacher divides the class into seven small groups and assigns each of the groups a character-- Willy, Linda, Biff, Happy, Ben, Charley, and Bernard. Together as a small group, students consider their character's relationship to each of the other characters. Their specific task is to find one specific significant line from the text that their character would say to each of the other characters or about each of the other characters. They are then to create their own original significant line that captures a key idea their character would say to each of the other six characters. For example, if Willy Loman were the central character being discussed, the small groups working with each of the other characters might state the following: (The first remark in each pair is a direct quote from the text; the second is an original line appropriate to that character.)

Linda: a. "Willy, I made the last payment on the house today" (101).

b. "He tried his hardest."

Biff: a. "He had the wrong dreams. All, all wrong" (100).

b. "Why can't you just let me be."

Happy: a. "I'm not licked that easily. I'm staying right in this city and

I'm gonna beat this racket" (101).

b. "Pop, wanna see what I can do?"

Charley: a. "Nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream

boy; it comes with the territory" (101).

b. "Just wanted to check to see that everything was all right."

Bernard: a. "I've often thought of how strange it was that I knew right then that he'd given up his life.... What happened in Boston, Willy"(68)?

b. "You can't just talk about it; you have to do it."

Ben: a. "William, when I walked into the jungle, I was seventeen.

When I walked out I was twenty-one...and by God, I was Rich"(37)!

b. "You gotta have adventures, William. You gotta be tough."

Once each group representing a character has a quote and original comment for each of the other characters, one student from each group sits up front in seven chairs arranged in a horseshoe shape around a central character. The character sitting in the center chair becomes the focus for the first part of the drama activity. The student playing Willy would sit in the center chair in the above sequence. Randomly, each student in the outer six chairs in role delivers his/her comments about Willy or to Willy. Once every one of the characters has completed their responses to Willy, the central character shifts, and it begins again. Students from the small groups can replace the representative student up front at any time someone wants a change.

The activity comes across as a reader's theatre presentation with students in character speaking their lines. The analytical character work in small groups in preparation for the round-table line readings allows students time to think in-depth about what is essential to their character and his/her relationship to the other characters. Finding direct quotes which are significant to that character involves analysis and

decision-making while close-reading the text. The original comments encourage deductive reasoning skills in students as they think holistically about their character. Students are active and involved in preparation for the line-reading. Finally, the dramatic reading in front of the class makes the communication between characters come to life, emphasizing the different connections the various characters have with the central character in each stage of the activity.

Another way to explore characterization in the text through drama is to have students writing in role. Writing in role is a variation of classroom drama; even though students are not up on their feet, they are taking on the role of a character and entering into the character's world. Noel Price argues for the validity of the experience for student learning. A student must be familiar with the text in order to write in role. The student also needs to have a strong handle on the character, what makes him/her tick, as well as be able to interpret the text, since the text may not blatantly explain the character's feelings (Tchudi 161).

The students' task is to write an obituary for Willy Loman. If the student takes on the role of Linda Loman writing the obituary, it will be different than if Happy or Biff wrote it. Students pick a character and writing from that perspective take into account what that character would say about Willy in an obituary. It is best if the teacher makes certain a variety of roles are adopted, not all students writing as Biff, for example. Besides being a character from the drama, each student also takes on the role of a reporter for the local newspaper and writes a general obituary. After each student composes the two obituaries, a few may read them out loud, but then they can be posted on the wall, grouped by character. An obvious difference between the characters' writings and the

newspaper reporters' writings will probably be length of the articles. Students will use pertinent information offered in the text but are encouraged to create logical information they want to include in the obituary that is not supplied in the text. Students can take a freer license of expression with the obituary written by their character than a typical newspaper might. Students deduce what that character would want said about Willy Loman.

An example obituary written by Biff:

William (Willy) Loman died on August 9, 1948. He was a travelling salesman for the Wagner Company, covering the New England district for 34 years. He was born in Boston, MA on February 18, 1896, son of a travelling flute player. He married Linda Swartz in 1913. Although he was a salesman by trade, he was happiest when working at home, fixing it up, and spending time with his family. He is survived by his wife, Linda, and sons, Biff and Happy. The committal will be at St. Benedick's Cemetery at 8 P.M. on August 12. May he now find peace in who he is.

An example obituary written by a local reporter:

William Loman died on August 9, 1948. The committal will be at St. Benedick's Cemetery. Loman is survived by his wife, Linda, and sons, Biff and Happy.

The terse brevity in the reporter's version highlights that Willy did not achieve the fame, fortune, or success that would make him an interesting article in the paper by typical contemporary media standards. Writing in character encourages students to think through various characters' perceptions of Willy as well as aspects of Willy himself.

The drama is essentially about a character, Willy Loman. A classroom drama activity that teachers can use to emphasize more in-depth exploration of Willy involves the use of freeze frames. Students in groups of five to eight choose a moment from the text that depicts how Willy perceives a situation, however far from the actual reality it may be. The group figures out two tableaux—one for the idealistic/ illusory statement, the other for reality. For instance, half the group takes a stance in a frozen tableau. A narrator for the group delivers Willy's line, "I'm very well-liked in Hartford" (25). The frozen picture might present several people in a back-slap/ big smiles/ wave mode. Next to it, the other half forms a tableau depicting the reality—"Willy who?" with that half of the group looking puzzled, unimpressed, or disinterested about Willy.

Another group might choose a moment to portray tableaux relating to Willy's confidence about his funeral: "They'll come from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire...all the old-timers with the strange license plates—that boy will be thunderstruck, Ben, because he never realized—*I am known*" (92)! That group may decide to have the idealistic tableau consist of several sitting in rows mourning, or they might have a queue lined up waiting with hats in hands. The reality half could depict the family in a solitary stance.

The activity is one that does not take much time. It is a method of having students dig directly in the text, decoding what is Willy's reality and his dream. It then gets students on their feet, visualizing a creative way to physicalize the difference between Willy's reality and dream. Alice Griffin cites Arthur Miller himself commenting on Willy's parallel worlds: "...When the voice of the past is no longer distant but quite as loud as the voice of the present.... The past and the present are...openly and vocally

intertwined in his mind” (35). The side by side physicalized work the students do with several of these drama in the classroom activities parallels the structure of the play and visually helps bring the play to life for students.

Theme

Barron and Sosland in their article about teaching *Death of a Salesman* offer a suggestion for connecting the drama with the theme of the American Dream. They offer several poems which focus on dreams and goals and the frustrations when all does not turn out as desired. Their suggestions include Langston Hughes’s “Harlem (A Dream Deferred),” and “Hold Fast to Dreams,” John Updike’s “Ex-Basketball Player,” and Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s “Lies.” Barron and Sosland set up the work in a discussion format—reading the poems and discussing correlations with the Loman family’s dreams (Phelan 84). I would opt for moving beyond reflection through discussion. Students will be more engaged in the poems and in the correlation to *Death of a Salesman* if they are more actively working with both the poetry and the drama.

One method of doing this is for the teacher to organize students in small groups. Several groups could work on the same poem to really focus on it or each group could work with a different poem. In a reader’s theatre format, each group interweaves the poem with connections to *Death of a Salesman*. Students decide what lines from the drama augment or correlate with ideas in the poem. Students working with “A Dream Deferred” by Langston Hughes might dig in *Death of a Salesman* for dreams deferred in the drama’s characters. The following is an example of how the interweaving of the texts of Hughes (in italics) and Miller (in bold) might be accomplished:

“Harlem (A Dream Deferred)” and Death of a Salesman

Are you content? (15)

What happens to a dream deferred? (562-563)

Does it dry up/ like a raisin in the sun?

So attention must be paid (40).

Some people...some people accomplish something (9).

What happens to a dream deferred?

Or fester like a sore-- / And then run?

I'm looking for a little good news to tell your mother, because the

woman has waited and the woman has suffered (78).

What happens to a dream deferred?

You wait, kid, before it's all over we're gonna get a little place out in

the country, and I'll raise some vegetables, a couple of

chickens... (52).

Does it stink like rotten meat?

You and your two boys are going to have dinner (53).

Remember, Frank's Chophouse (54).

What happens to a dream deferred?

Or crust and sugar over--/ like a syrupy sweet?

I opened the windshield and just let the warm air bathe over me...

...five minutes later I'm dreamin' again (8).

What happens to a dream deferred?

**And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the
feeling...I'm not getting' anywhere! (15)**

**I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come
back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life (15).**

What happens to a dream deferred?

Maybe it just sags/ like a heavy load.

**I'm tired to death. I couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it, Linda
(7).**

A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man (41).

I think he's very lost (10).

What happens to a dream deferred?

Or does it explode?

Willy, you coming up!!!! Willy? No!!! (99)

As in reader's theatre, liberties can be taken with the poem, repeating certain lines for effect. In the above example, I've used "What happens to a dream deferred?" as an ongoing chorus. Students will be doing close textual work as they make choices about what helps convey the overall idea.

Once students have arranged their text, including poem and drama, they read it for the class. They make decisions whether one student always reads an ongoing chorus, such as "What happens to a dream deferred?" or if several chime in on it. One person might always read the Willy Loman lines or the group might decide to spread the lines around, two or three per person in the group. The students also consider their physical use of the space, deciding how they are arranging themselves. Throughout the process,

students are collaborating on themes in the text and how to convey them in a creative way. As with other activities involving drama in the classroom, these lines are not memorized. Reading their lines as part of the reader's theatre is just as effective and allows the primary focus to be on the ideas, not on the performance.

These drama-in-the-classroom activities are meant to augment lesson plans many teachers already use in teaching *Death of a Salesman*. When students are feeling comfortable working with a text through drama activities such as these, they are more actively involved in other types of study of the play. The discussion of Willy Loman as a tragic figure and the drama as a modern tragedy is more worthwhile when students have had their hands actively in the text and worked with it physically.

Because dramatic literature is already in script form, the use of drama in the classroom activities can seem easier than drama use with other genres. In another way, though, it is important not to limit the use of drama to the most obvious format indicated by script, the enacting of scenes from the drama. As this chapter has demonstrated, the use of drama within the genre of dramatic literature can be widespread with activities facilitating classroom work with characterization, theme, and plot. The drama activities enable students to find a way to identify with the dramatic literature.

CHAPTER III

CLASSROOM DRAMA AND FICTION

While drama in the classroom, as a pedagogical method, seems to be a natural fit with the genre of dramatic literature, it is applicable to other genres as well. Paul Heller's response to the question about when to use drama as a pedagogical method is when teachers want students to "predict outcomes, make hypotheses, synthesize knowledge, account for ambiguity, and engage in a range of higher level critical thinking" (8). This certainly applies to study of other genres, including fiction. The following chapter presents drama activities specifically designed for seven short stories-- "A Rose for Emily," "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," "I Stand Here Ironing," "Roman Fever," "The Lesson," "The Enormous Radio," and "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg." The use of drama with study of the novel is exhibited with concrete drama activities for *The Great Gatsby*. The various texts allow for a diverse exploration of drama with fiction.

John Hodgson makes an interesting observation about drama's relation to literature. The cultural heritage view of literature is that which is "tried, tested, permanent, fixed, written, reflected." The impression of improvisation in theatre is that which is "spontaneous, responsive, impermanent, momentary." Hodgson sees the two seemingly opposite constructs as beneficial for each other in several ways: improvisation opening up the receptivity of students in preparing to read literature, and improvisation working as a way of "re-examining" and "re-vitalizing" the fixed and permanent nature of literature as something read in the present, the now ("Improvisation and Literature" 19).

The method is productive, then, whether students are reading a literary text for the first time or encountering the text for a second or third time. (However, the frequency of my students having multiple readings of texts over the years has been minimal, to say the least.) Because the predominant view of students is that one time through a novel or short story is enough, it is crucial to encourage the idea that a reader gets something more out of literature each time s/he reads it. Since drama offers a method of continually making new various aspects of a text, students see the teacher discovering ideas in the text after multiple readings. That becomes a powerful modeling of lifelong learning.

Because drama activities create a sense of immediacy with the text and concreteness versus abstraction, they are invaluable ways to enhance students' experience with literature. Gavin Bolton stresses drama's "potential for meaning [which] lies in symbolisation" (85). By exploring literary texts through drama, the various levels of meaning, which elude students on paper, become concrete and realized.

Moreover, not only do students have a richer experience with the literature as they delve into their work with the text through drama and then in reflection afterwards, their overall comprehension of the literature is increased. Sandra Bidwell, in her article "Using Drama to Increase Motivation, Comprehension, and Fluency," cites teachers at various grade levels who vouch for improved comprehension of the text, especially characterization, because students have become involved with the characters through drama. Bidwell states, "Inferring and evaluative skills in reading comprehension are enhanced" through work with drama in the classroom (39). Catherine O'Shea and Margaret Egan cite several studies that compare the literature comprehension of high school students learning through drama in the classroom and that of other students

learning through a discussion method. The retention of the students in the drama classroom demonstrated on a standardized comprehension test immediately following the unit, three weeks later, and six weeks later all showed strong comprehension (Brizendine and Thomas 20-21). Though testing is not a foolproof or often even viable measurement for assessing performance, several of the studies in the article showed positive outcomes in the comprehension and retention of literature with a dramatic methodology.

In his article, "Bringing Drama into the Teaching of Non-Dramatic Literature," Andrew P. Barker writes about his own high school English classroom experiment with role-playing and the effect on comprehension of the literature. He quotes Atticus Finch, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, saying to Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." In Barker's words, this defines the "essence of role-play theory" (31). As he sees it, "Characters in fiction are representations of people, so recreating the dynamics between those people in a live setting might help students better understand the complexities of those dynamics" (31).

Upon discovering the dearth of evidence of role-playing in the high school literature classroom, Barker decided to conduct an experiment with his sophomores while reading *Never Cry Wolf*. Breaking the sophomores into groups, Barker used different methods with each section. One group enacted a role-play situation requiring inferential thinking as they took on characters' roles. Based on a quiz following the experiment, the results in Barker's classroom showed augmented student comprehension with the role-playing group. He sees strong potential for role-playing in the teaching of literature (31-36). Since high school teachers are the ones who ultimately make the decisions about

which classroom methodologies they use, Barker's endorsement as a fellow teacher is especially valuable. He is not dealing with the theory; he is concerned with the practical effectiveness of drama in the classroom.

In order to look at specific drama-in-the-classroom activities for fiction, the following drama activities are designed for several short stories and a novel. The decision-making behind which short stories chosen for analysis echoes the rationale stated in Chapter I. Several of the short stories, such as "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" and "A Rose for Emily," are frequently anthologized and have held a long-term place in the classroom canon. Others, such as "I Stand Here Ironing" and "The Lesson," are not standards in the canon but work well with high school students. The mix of "regulars" and "newcomers" is intentional. With specific drama activities for the short stories posed in this chapter, teachers can augment their current lesson plans and introduce new short stories. The choice of the novel, *The Great Gatsby*, for this chapter lies in its still dominant place in high school classrooms. Some of the drama activities in the chapter are quite clearly story-specific while other activities could be interchanged and used with a variety of texts, whether short story or novel.

"A Rose For Emily"--William Faulkner

William Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily" is a macabre favorite of high school students. Miss Emily lived under the iron rule of her father, and when he died she continued to be alone because he had chased all suitors away. Then Homer Barron appeared in town and seemed to sweep Miss Emily off her feet. He mysteriously disappeared, though, only to be found dead in an upper room of the Grierson home many years later. It is interesting to watch students' faces as the ending dawns on them, the

meaning of the iron-gray hair on the pillow in the tomb-like room. After the initial impact of the plot, though, some students tend to lose interest in the story overall. They have experienced the visceral reaction to the plot and when the surprise factor wanes, they are ready to be done with the story.

Plot/ Characterization-- Courtroom Drama

Much is left as subtext in “A Rose for Emily.” Drama is a way to motivate students to uncover the subtext of the short story. The text invites exploration through the format of a courtroom drama. Students all participate, taking on roles of prosecution and defense, witnesses, and court personnel. Involving the entire class in a group project stresses collaborative learning both in small groups (as their particular roles require) and in a large group to coordinate the information in the activity. Because of the breadth of the courtroom drama activity for this short story, it can take several class periods with students' energies put into developing this one drama activity. With other short stories in the chapter, I give several shorter drama activities which teachers could use in their work with a story.

The drama begins with an inquest initiated by Homer Barron's family. The case had never been followed up on, and younger members of the Barron family decided it was necessary to get at the facts surrounding Homer's death and demand justice, since no one had paid any dues for the murder. The time frame can be many years later but with Miss Emily still alive. A couple of students can represent the Griersons, feeling that Miss Emily would not speak for herself. The two factions would conflict with their divergent modes of thinking.

Several students take on the role of the prosecution. Together they build a case against Miss Emily Grierson for the murder of Homer Barron. They pull together their view of what happened—murder with arsenic poisoning. They could claim that Miss Emily had made no attempt to cover her tracks, buying the poison locally, and not even creating an alibi for the purchase. They might point out that Homer had made it publicly clear that he was not the marrying kind, yet he was found in a room decorated as a bridal suite. They could claim coercion. When setting up their case, the prosecution might outline the last days of Homer's life-- Miss Emily waiting until the two cousins had left town three days prior and then contacting the absent Homer, inviting or pleading with him to come to her one more time, that they might have one last evening together. They could emphasize her pre-meditation of the killing, since poison was purchased followed by the arrival of Homer. The evening itself would be pure speculation but the students as prosecution would present a logical scenario. He arrived, adamant that this was their last meeting and he would be leaving town for good with the sidewalk project completed. Miss Emily coaxed him up to the bedroom and somehow got him to drink the arsenic in a goodbye drink. Dying shortly after with his arms around her, he pictured a final moment of intimacy in his mind, which in reality was a final moment of life. She pictured a long-lasting moment, knowing the arsenic would do its job and she would have Homer by her side forever.

The prosecution has options in their development of the subtext. The students might speculate in another direction: Homer had been lying low until Miss Emily could get the over-bearing cousins out of the way. When the coast was clear, he had come back, thinking they could go on indefinitely as they had been—having fun together but

with no marriage commitment. When Emily pressed him about marriage that fateful night, and he outright refused (as she had suspected he might), she enticed him to take the arsenic in tea. Homer little realized he was dying as they lay together. Later Emily created the bridal suite in her fantasy world for the two of them. Students can fill in the blanks many ways while still remaining true to the written text.

The students who take on the role of the defense team would also build a case, pushing for empathy for this woman, Miss Emily Grierson. The students could paint a picture of a lonely woman, craving companionship and love, yet denied it all of her life. They could describe the iron-hold Emily's father had on her, chasing away any young men who came to call. When her father died, people speculated, "We knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will" (143). The defense could further press the loneliness issue by stressing the proper, high-class relatives who lacked warmth and held themselves aloof because of a conflict over great aunt Wyatt's estate. Without the loving care of relatives, only the watchdog eyes of cousins who did not wish to allow her to embarrass their name of Grierson by being improper, she had no one to turn to.

The fact of the murder was without much contention, but the defense would probably push for the insanity plea, that Miss Emily had lost touch with reality. The defense could pull together various proofs of this insanity by bringing up her insistent belief that she was exempt from paying taxes forever, the denial of her father's death, her illusory marriage to Homer acted out in the bridal chambers which she created in detail, and her continued act of lying in the bed next to Homer, signified by the iron-gray hair.

The defense would work at creating sympathy for Miss Emily, so she could be let off on an insanity plea.

Other students in the classroom would have their own textual digging and subtext creating to do as they prepare for their roles as witnesses. The prosecution and defense would decide whom they wanted to call; the students would then prepare a subtextual response for the witness stand. The prosecution could call the druggist to make a statement about his exchange with Miss Emily when she purchased the poison. He might expand on her unwillingness to answer his question, that he was only doing his job and following the law by needing to know why she was buying poison. He might be very pointed about her refusal to acknowledge rats as the intended victim. A woman from town might be called to the stand, a woman who had gone to the Grierson place to offer condolences to Emily at the time of her father's death, only to be turned away. The woman could still be miffed about it, thinking it a rude response to her kindness. A student might play the same woman, justifiably, as a witness for the defense, accentuating Miss Emily's insanity—a lack of outright grieving for her own father and refusing the ministers and doctors. Why her house was completely dusty, too. From this woman's point of view, of course Emily's mind had gone.

Other witnesses might be called by the defense, such as the wife of Colonel Sartoris (since he is dead) who spoke on his behalf, defending Miss Emily and the excusing of the taxes. It is just what one did in those days to be tactful to those of a certain station when they were no longer able to maintain their place. Another witness for either defense or prosecution could be a former china-painting student, creating a subtext of her either empathizing with her former teacher or catty in her venting about

this weird woman and the lessons she was forced to take by her own mother, an acquaintance of Miss Emily. The cousins could be witnesses who might seem to be witnesses for the defense but could well be called on by the prosecution as they leveled their cousin, Emily, for bringing disgrace to them when they had tried everything to help her. The black servant, Tobe, would be a challenging witness for a student to recreate, since loyalty is the main descriptor given of him in the story itself. He would have a story to tell over the years, on Homer's final day, and the goings-on in the house in the ensuing years.

Students on both sides of the witness stand would need to be diligent about close textual reading to devise questions and adequate, viable responses in the initial questions and cross-examinations.

Other students could take on roles of judge and jury. The judge would facilitate the flow of the classroom court drama. The student jury would need to gather all the information and conference on a decision—whether Miss Emily would be sentenced for manslaughter or granted acquittal with an insanity defense.

The process would involve students creating the courtroom drama by digging in and actively thinking about possible subtexts. The various avenues they might explore would spark textual interest in students on the other side, in the jury, and in witnesses. Students would actively study Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" through the drama activity.

"The Jilting of Granny Weatherall"--Katherine Anne Porter

Katherine Anne Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" has been anthologized for decades. The story is a poignant and unsettling account of a bedridden, elderly woman's last day as her mind floats between the past and the present. The

complexity of the story and style make it a challenge for many high school students. It is also a challenging task for the teacher to foster some interest in this bedside narrative. Drama provides a way for students to dig directly into the text, increasing their motivation to understand it.

Pre-Reading Activity--Style

Porter's style, employing stream-of-consciousness, has a tendency to confuse students initially. They do not understand why the writer cannot be clear. A pre-reading activity involving stream-of-conscious thinking would familiarize students with the technique before they even begin to read. In this way, they do not create negative first impressions on reading. For the pre-reading exercise, the teacher instructs students to get into pairs, deciding who is *A* and *B*. They can both be sitting for this activity; it does not require movement. *Student A* will be the first person to talk. *Student A* should pick the first idea that comes to mind and start talking. *A* should be open to anything in the room that might trigger a shift in her thinking and then continue talking, following in the direction each new trigger leads her. *Student B* might do something that also acts as a trigger for *A* to switch lines of thinking. *Student A's* diatribe about the busy-ness of Homecoming week activities might shift when the teacher coughs, leading *Student A* to follow the verbal direction of the number of colds and flu going around and the hope that she does not get anything. When *Student B* fingers the noon school lunch roster, *Student A* may switch into her dislike of the hot lunch program this week, since, in her opinion, they are not serving anything good. *Student A* follows as many mental shifts as she can in three minutes; then, it is *Student B's* turn to deliver a stream-of-consciousness

monologue. The monologues may not always have the smoothest transitions, but students will begin to get a feel for the technique of stream-of-consciousness.

Another activity students may do instead of the preceding one also tunes students into Porter's stream-of-consciousness style. The teacher takes on the role of a radio show host, sitting in a chair up front with an empty chair positioned on both sides of him/her. The radio host starts by welcoming listeners to today's show. The host begins with a topic such as large vegetables grown in this year's garden: "If any listener has a large vegetable that they have harvested, please share with our radio audience." Any student can slip up into one of the two empty chairs on either side of the host/teacher. The student begins talking about the huge zucchini he'd grown this year—three feet long although it curled a bit. As the student talks about how he grew it, and fertilized it, and discusses various types of **squash**, describing this zucchini as a particularly delicious kind, another student slips up into the other empty chair.

At a nod from the new student, the host interrupts the student's diatribe about zucchini to say, "Oh, it looks like we have another caller on our show. Yes...?"

The new student begins with whatever word was his trigger—**squash**. "Speaking of **squash**, I was playing a competitive game of squash the other day on our court when my opponent and I got into a little squabble. I hit the ball into his court which he said wasn't **fair** after the whistle had been blown..."

Host: "Thank you, we have a caller."

Student C filling empty chair: "You talk of fair...I was at the state **fair** a few weeks ago and we went to two grandstand shows—One was Olivia Newton John and the other was **Madonna**. They were two totally different concerts..."

Host: "Thank you, a caller on line 2."

Student D: "The **Madonna** sculpture in our church sanctuary is absolutely a **work of art**. It is fashioned after Michelangelo's Pieta in the Vatican. The look of sorrow on her face as she looks at her son in her arms..."

Host: "All right, Caller on line 1."

Student E: "I'll tell you who is a real **work of art**, the guy who sits behind me in Civics class. He wears "outfits" you wouldn't believe. Right out of the groovy sixties. I know retro is cool, but this is beyond retro. The puca **shell** necklace goes with every ensemble..."

Host: "Thank you, we have a new caller..."

Student F: A good place to pick up attractive **shells** is the Atlantic coast up in Maine. They have a blue coloring to them, each a little different.

Once students pick up on the idea, they enjoy listening for anything in the current monologue that might function as a trigger for their own topic. Students actually vie for the empty seats up front. With a student's tap on the arm, the host/teacher knows s/he is ready and cuts off the previous speaker. As many students as would like to can take a caller seat and be involved. All the while, they get a sense of how stream-of-consciousness in an alternative form works. Beginning to read "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" becomes intriguing for students as they pay attention to what triggers Granny's shifts in thought.

Point of View

Even though the point of view in the short story is a third person narrator, the reader sees the story from Granny's perspective. An interesting exercise can be to turn

the story around with students looking at the text from Cornelia's perspective. Cornelia has obviously contacted her siblings to come to their mother's bedside when she responds to Granny, "They're coming, darling; they'll all be here soon" (180). As discussed in the previous chapter, writing in role does not involve students up on their feet, but it employs the drama-in-the-classroom trait of students taking on the perspective of someone other than him/herself. Students in the role of Cornelia write to Lydia and Jimmy, describing Granny's confused ramblings, her deteriorating condition, and the short time frame because Dr. Harry expects death to be imminent. Students should do a close reading of the text, shifting the point of view to what Cornelia sees and hears Granny doing, and what Cornelia thinks of it. The letter can include observations and musings about what Granny's stream-of-conscious talk seems to address. Students can also bring in Cornelia's feelings—does she feel scolded continuously by her mother? Does Cornelia take it in stride or is it stressful? The letter should be Cornelia's thoughts as well as her request for Lydia and Jimmy to come. Through the writing activity, students switch the point of view and consider a different angle on Porter's text.

Characterization

Elisabeth Piedmont-Marton describes the crux of the story as a "woman who 'weathered all,' for whom life has been a 'tough pull,' struggles first to suppress and then to address the worst moment of her life. This moment occurred on the day when George jilted her at the altar" (*Short Stories for Students* 115). Analyzing the characterization of Granny Weatherall invites a deeper look at her interaction with the other characters alluded to in the plot. Granny's reaction to her memory of George or John and to raising her children as a single parent all shed light on the various facets of Ellen Weatherall.

A drama activity patterned loosely after the old television program “This Is Your Life” is a way to get students to dig into the text to decipher the memory plot woven through the narration. The characters mentioned by Granny appear in the show format. A student or the teacher can take on the role of MC, who welcomes Ellen Weatherall to “This Is Your Life.” Granny sits in a cushioned chair, the seat of honor. Then, the MC begins to bring in and introduce people who have been a part of Granny’s life. A student in the role of John, her husband, appears and creates subtext melded with textual information, such as John remembering when they bought their house together and how Ellen always lit lots of candles and lanterns because she did not like the darkness.

Ellen’s adult children, Lydia, Jimmy, and Cornelia would each take a turn relaying a story about Granny. Lydia might reminisce about coming over for Ellen’s practical advice about colicky babies or canning pickles. Jimmy’s memory might include his mother’s business sense, how she had a head for figures, and her work ethic, how she could match him post for post in the field. He might remember one night in particular when their mare was sick, and she stayed up all night in the barn, keeping watch over the horse. The student in the role of Cornelia might recall her mother riding out on horseback to help neighbor women deliver their babies or to bring jars of soup to families of the sick. Cornelia might also reflect on what it meant to be the youngest daughter and the one who had spent the most time with Granny recently.

Besides the immediate family, the other characters could be brought into the “This Is Your Life” program. George and Hapsy would each make an appearance. George might apologize for standing Ellen up at the altar, and the students could create a reason why George had failed to join her at the church. Hapsy is a vague character in

Granny's thoughts, but her appearance in the program would necessitate students clarifying the role. Students might speculate about Hapsy being a baby of Ellen and George. Critics Daniel and Madeline Barnes, in their essay, "The Secret Sin of Granny Weatherall," theorize that Granny's sin, addressed ambiguously in the story, is her "premarital transgression" with George, resulting in being pregnant with Hapsy while at the altar alone. Barnes and Barnes substantiate this theory by interpreting the pattern in Granny's stream-of-consciousness thinking ("The Jilting" 119).

Father Connolly's appearance in the show could give a sense of Granny's involvement with the church and the priest's perception of Granny as someone who seems to struggle with a deep inner hurt. On the other hand, the student might create a viable subtext through the priest that Ellen had done her best, and it would all be left up to God.

Throughout the activity, the students are bringing to life these characters that are vaguely touched on in Granny's thinking. The subtle plot woven within her memories gets a close reading by students in this activity. By the end, the story is not simply the confused rambling of an old woman. Rather, Granny is three-dimensional, connected to the other characters in more concrete ways in students' eyes.

Compare/ Contrast Characters Between Stories

If students have read both "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" and "A Rose for Emily," an interesting improvisation can be set up with two students willing to take on the roles of Emily and Ellen. How would these two women get along? They are both elderly; what is their view of life as they look back on it? How would they both respond to being "jilted" – Ellen's more obvious, Emily's subtler—or would they both take a

fantasy view of their experiences? The rest of the class functions as coaches for the two students playing the parts. At any time, a coach can shout, “stop.” The dialogue halts as the classroom of coaches decides on a direction for questions and answers. The teacher can also help push the improvisation with leading questions for the two to consider. By having the student coaches halt the dialogue frequently, the improvisation functions less as a performance and more as a work in progress as the students wrestle with ideas from both short stories and believable ways that the two women, Emily and Ellen, could interact with each other.

“I Stand Here Ironing”--Tillie Olsen

The narrator’s voice, that of a mother, relays an interior monologue as she stands ironing. In response to a query about offering her daughter help, the mother remembers, regrets, wonders, and processes her nineteen years of life with Emily. This story is primarily a character study. The mother’s guilt and frustration echo through her memories. Looking back, there is so much she now sees about raising Emily that she would like to change; the after-thought is filled with regret, though, because she acknowledges that it is too late. She cannot undo much of what she has done. Her blue-collar life as a single mother was toughest on her eldest daughter. The mother feels trapped, like the dress lying on the ironing board, helpless “before the iron” (21). Because the story is a running internal monologue, the character of Emily is filtered through her mother’s memories, perceptions, and impressions. The story gives a picture of the little girl whose world was so serious because her single mother’s life was serious, devoid of laughter. A neighbor’s comment about the mother needing to smile more at Emily reinforces the image of a life with a lack of warmth that even a smile would help.

The affirmation Emily receives from doing stand-up comedy is two-fold-- she gets attention as well as a lighter perspective through the humor.

Characterization

In her essay, "I Stand Here Ironing: Motherhood as Experience and Metaphor," Joanne S. Frye interprets the narrator's interior monologue as processing the tension between parental responsibility, external cultural and socio-economic pressure, and personal needs ("I Stand" 105-106). The narrator attempts to "assess her own responsibility, her own failure, and finally her need to reaffirm her own autonomy as a separate human being who cannot be defined solely through her parental role" (106). The opening paragraphs of the story establish her concern and responsibility for her daughter along with maintaining a separation between mother and daughter. The characterization of the mother through the narrative style is complex.

Several drama activities provide students with opportunities to explore the characterization in depth. A question posed to Emily's mother initiates the monologue in the story. The questioner is never identified other than by the second person "you." Students can conjecture about who this person might be – someone from school; i.e., a teacher, a school counselor or someone from work; i.e., a boss at an after school job, a coach who is familiar with Emily's ability in the area of comedy. The teacher invites students to get into pairs. As a pair, they decide which role each student takes. *Student A* is the questioner who wants to help. *Student A* must choose a specific role reflecting the relationship s/he has with Emily. The partner, *Student B*, assumes the role of Emily or the mother. In character roles, the partners improvise with each other. *Student A*, who wants to help Emily, can explore how well s/he knows Emily and why s/he senses

Emily's need for help. If *Student B* plays Emily, she can respond with as much openness or reticence as fits the improvisation. If *Student B* is Emily's mother, the concerned one and the mother can flesh out the conversation that initiates the story. *Student B* in the role of Emily's mother experiments with her reactions during the conversation, making choices—she might be defensive, caught off guard, angry at the invasiveness, or touched at first by the concern. Then *Student B* needs to consider what transition has occurred in the mother by the opening of the story.

These improvisations allow students ways to explore the characters of Emily and the mother. What leads the mother into the helplessness she feels in the first four paragraphs of the story? Having students get in touch with the mother during that initial conversation, before the written story begins, facilitates students' looking more closely at the delayed response as the mother irons at the top of the story. The story comes to life with the three-dimensional characters. The drama activity in partners is relatively non-threatening because all partners improvise at the same time. No single pair is up in front with an audience.

Another way to flesh out characterization is to work with the role of Emily. One interesting scene to play would be getting Emily's reaction to growing up as she did. Students, again in partners, become Emily and her school counselor. From Emily's perspective, what does she think and feel about her mother and her position as eldest sibling? The student improvising Emily can explore character details such as Emily's happiest memory. Responding in light of the text, a student as Emily may remember a particular visit of her mother while at the convalescent home in the country and a stolen hug in the midst of a sterile environment. Emily may recount the first time she

performed—the applause all for her, after hungering for affirmation and warmth for so long. Another effective way to explore the same ideas is to have students write in role as Emily, creating specific memories that emerge logically from the text.

Characterization can also be explored through a drama activity that involves several students taking on the roles of newspaper reporters interviewing a now-famous Emily about her childhood, growing up poor. A student in the role of Emily responds to the questions in light of what we know of her through the narrative. How does she see her childhood impacting the kind of performing she does? How does she view certain past events differently from her mother? We don't meet the character of Emily directly in the short story, but her character fills the story.

Exploring characterization can be interesting in light of a quote from the story. Toward the end of the narrative, the mother says, “She is a child of her age, of depression, of war, of fear” (20). The teacher can invite students to consider the line through drama. In a scene, what would impact a nineteen-year-old of today, making her a child of *her age*? In pairs students take the roles of a mother and of a counselor or a good friend. What are the events in the last nineteen years that might have impacted youth of the last two decades? Students in the improvisation should bring up specifics—a parent in the Gulf War, a mother who worked at three jobs so she wasn't around much, a latch-key afternoon routine, to name a few. Through the activity, students make a concrete connection to the mother's lament about her daughter Emily and the text becomes just as relevant today as forty years ago.

Setting

Besides characterization, the element of setting in the story merits attention. The first-person narrator stands ironing. Through drama the students can work with the significance of the task of ironing. The teacher divides students into partners who improvise several familiar household tasks; i.e., sweeping, dusting, vacuuming, and washing dishes. While doing a household task, the students recall a situation where they felt frustrated and locked into a certain response. Students then reflect on how dusting furniture or washing dishes interacts with recounting the memory? The task of ironing carries its own unique connection to the story, and students physically discover this in playing it out. The back and forth repetitive motion lends a different feel to the narrative than the whisking motion of dusting. An iron is a weight that presses material flat. The mother's life has been *hard-pressed*, and she wishes a different life for Emily. The importance of the action is highlighted not only by the immediate setting but also by the title and the reference made by Emily in the story: "Aren't you ever going to finish the ironing, Mother? Whistler painted his mother in a rocker, I'd have to paint mine standing over an ironing board" (19). The repetitious chore physically accentuates the frustrations of the mother, feeling helplessly caught in the struggle against the forces of her life and hoping her daughter will not to be "helpless before the iron" (21). When students are on their feet, doing the task, the symbolic meaning comes through more powerfully.

Because the story is a first-person internal monologue, the point of view changes with some of the previous drama activities. Adding the voices of Emily or the person who wants to help Emily in dialogue develops other perspectives through which to see

the narrative. It allows students to then go back and look at the mother's account from a perspective that is not held in isolation.

"Roman Fever"--Edith Wharton

"Roman Fever" is one of my favorite short stories. In my opinion, it holds a place in the best-last-line-of-a-short-story hall of fame. Mrs. Ansley and Mrs. Slade are two women who have lived near each other most of their lives but have never been intimate enough to disclose how they felt about each other. At a rooftop restaurant in Rome as they sit passing time, they reveal aspects of their interwoven past, including a triangular relationship with Mr. Slade. When "Roman Fever" has been introduced to high school students, they read it and are able to discuss the elements of the short story, but at times have failed to become engaged with the story. It remains for many high school students a tale about two elderly women which has a surprise ending. They do not feel any of the passion for the story which it deserves.

Plot

Drama motivates students' interest in the story. The plot, consisting of two friends who have known each other much of their lives but misread each other, is one that high school students can relate to in a contemporary sense. The teacher puts students in pairs, who in turn set up a scene where each knows a fictitious secret about the other. Unaware of what the partner has devised, students begin an improvised scene following the instruction that by the end of the scene, they will have revealed the long-hidden secret. Some partners may pull the secret out of the other. Some may be a little apprehensive about knowing the secret so might almost rather not find out. In some of the students' scenes, the secret might get dropped in the partner's lap with the other

needing to respond. Students should be encouraged to choose secrets that make a difference which “raises the stakes” in theatre terms. Once students have done the scene-work, they can again examine Ansley and Slade’s responses in “Roman Fever.” This drama activity can also be used as a pre-reading activity. Comparing their own scenes and Wharton's offers students a contemporary perspective on the story.

Another way of considering the plot more carefully involves a closer look at the two men. As homework, students develop a biography of Horace Ansley or Delphin Slade based on information given in the story and filling in the subtext. In class the next day, two male students volunteer to play Delphin and Horace. The classroom is set for a press conference. The class becomes reporters at the press conference, asking well-formed questions of the two men. Student questions directed at Horace might include the following: Did you know Grace had loved another man? Was Grace in love with the other man when you and she became engaged? How did you know Grace prior to marrying her? Wasn't your engagement rather short; why did you and Grace decide to be married quickly? Did you know she was pregnant at the time? Did you know the baby that came along soon after your marriage was not your own?

The student playing Horace could answer the questions in several ways that remain true to the text. One student as Horace might decide to have been a friend of Grace’s family, who had loved her for awhile, and with full knowledge of her situation—pregnant and in love with an engaged man—offered to marry her, hoping she would learn to love him in time as he loved her. Another decision the student as Horace might make is that Horace didn't know the full story about the pregnancy and his wife's love for

Delphin until later, but Horace and Grace had worked through it, and Horace had loved Barbara as his own.

Questions asked of the student playing Delphin might consist of the following: Did Grace ever tell you she was pregnant with your baby? Were you aware all those years that Barbara, across the street, was your daughter? If so, how did you respond to her—did you pay attention to her playing in the yard as you did Jenny? Did you attend Barbara's concerts, seemingly just to be neighborly? Did you ever have any one-on-one encounter with Barbara when you were tempted to tell her who you were? Why didn't you ever tell Alida the truth? What were your feelings for Grace? Was the letter Grace received one you actually might have wanted to write? If you did care for her, did the feelings last through the years? If she hadn't married Horace so quickly, would you have broken off your engagement to Alida in order to be with Grace? In your opinion, what does the meeting in the Coliseum that night say about you, a man engaged to be married to another woman?

The student playing Delphin might respond, justifiably, that he never knew about Grace's pregnancy or that Barbara was his daughter. He did feel a certain connection with Barbara, though, in retrospect. The student might play him as one who had known later on about Barbara, after Grace and Horace had moved into the vicinity. Since they'd be living in close proximity, Grace and he had talked. Delphin might be played as one who loved Grace, but wanted to honor his promise to Alida, so he didn't give into temptation after that one night with Grace.

The press conference could go on, substituting in other students who had made other possible choices with the roles of Horace and Delphin. Putting students in the roles

of asking questions and responding with answers facilitates students digging into the text, doing close-reading and examining the circumstances, filling in blanks for these two characters we never meet in the story.

The reader has almost a visceral response with the last line of the short story: "'I had Barbara', she said, and began to move ahead of Mrs. Slade toward the stairway" (20). The calm statement of the revealed secret ends the story abruptly with no denouement. A drama activity can get students on their feet, improvising possible epilogues for the story. What happens next on the terrace or in the stairwell? Students can be grouped in pairs to play out plausible actions and reactions that could happen after Edith Wharton's last written line. In playing out an ensuing scene, students might make choices of anger or embarrassment on Alida's part and smugness or compassion on Grace's part. Whatever arises in the students' exploration of their epilogues, the class can discuss the power of the abrupt, published ending versus the epilogue versions. The activity provides students with a way of analyzing one aspect of the plot structure more fully.

Because "Roman Fever" is more of a challenge for high school students than many other short stories, drama in the classroom becomes a way of making concrete some of the abstractions. The dramatic nature of the plot is highlighted when drama in the classroom makes the story accessible.

"The Lesson"--Toni Cade Bambara

"The Lesson" recounts a field trip to a toy store in uptown New York with a group of lower income ethnic children. Most of them have not thought about economic disparity before, but the price tags of the luxury items make them realize there are definitely *haves* and *have nots*. This pointed tale from a young girl's outlook is being

anthologized more frequently and merits its place as a viable secondary classroom text. Drama is useful in addressing three elements of Bambara's short story "The Lesson"—theme, style, and character.

Pre-Reading Activity--Theme

The neighborhood group's trip to Fifth Avenue instills in the narrator the idea that all in life is not equal. The theme can be played out in a couple of classroom activities. The teacher divides the class in half. One half goes out in the hall while the other half sets up the room. The group selects a place that is not a part of their usual turf and assigns appropriate roles operating within that space. Afternoon high tea at the Plaza Hotel might be one such place. The students in the room establish their own codes of conduct. Once the room is ready for the improvisation and students have donned roles such as maitre 'd, servers, other diners, and hotel concierge, the other half of the students enter the room. At the door they are informed it is high tea time at the Plaza, and they are to use their best manners. At the hallway group's entrance, the students who know what is going on react to the hallway group—whispering about their apparel, noting their table manners, and being condescending. The maitre 'd might hover anxiously to keep an eye on them. Because the Plaza students have established some inside rules, they can be obviously dismayed at the lack of knowledge on the part of the hallway group. At the completion of the activity, the class discusses the implications of being in either group. The Plaza group judged the others on their own rules, not universal rules. The sense of superiority the Plaza group felt and conveyed also merits discussion. The hallway group should comment on their comfort level in the space and reflections they have about their position in an unfamiliar space. Discussion of the children's trip to Fifth Avenue in the

story would segue smoothly from this activity. Through the drama, students experience the theme of all things not being equal.

A similar activity that would engage students with the theme of inequality would be an exercise where students divide into eye color groups-- green tones and blue tones. Brown eyes can go with the smallest group. The teacher decides which group will be the *haves* and the *have nots*. The *haves* are treated with perks throughout the hour—a video, some snacks, they are allowed to line up at the door before the bell rings instead of waiting in their seats. The *have nots* would need to sort drama costumes or do some type of repetitive task to help out the classroom; they would not receive a snack, and they would need to wait in their desks prior to the bell. The next class period would be prime ground for disgruntled *have nots* to discuss the theme of the story. That some students receive a class period of treats and others do not reinforces the theme even more than reading about people who have money for \$1000 sailboats.

Theme

Once students have read the short story, they might explore theme via drama by changing the perspective of the story. Instead of viewing the afternoon through the young eyes of Sylvia, students could examine the day from Miss Moore's viewpoint. The students can work in pairs, configured as girl/boy or girl/girl. Either way, one student takes the role of Miss Moore. The other student becomes either Miss Moore's sister or brother. Students improvise the scene of Miss Moore's return to her apartment at the end of the afternoon. With the sibling prompting with questions about the field trip and about individual students, Miss Moore recounts the excursion through her eyes. What did she see in the expressions of the young people's faces? What was their cab ride

like? What was her interpretation of the students' entry into the upscale store? How successful was the day in her view? Did it accomplish what she wanted it to? Does she think she got through to Sylvia at all? Besides considering the theme from another angle, the drama activity allows a different view of the character of Miss Moore. In this way she is not viewed through the frame of Sylvia's eyes; rather the students can build her character with the clues given in the text.

Style

Bambara's unique style can be explored through drama that focuses on the language. Bambara captures a Black language style with vividness—the word choice and the rhythm are expressive. For some students, it may help to find a way into the language of the story by getting them up on their feet. In small groups of four or five, students develop a glossary of teenage, contemporary slang—some of their choices might be regional and local, others universal. Once each group has a working list, each group creates a scene using as much of the contemporary slang as possible. The groups improvise their scenes. The student audience notes which words are common to the whole group and which are specific to particular settings. The whole group should consider which words adults would be familiar with. Students can check their list with parents, finding out which words are recognizable. The teacher can also provide feedback, reminding students that they form their own community based on age. Just as adults may have to glean meaning of certain teenage slang words through context and tone, readers besides African Americans need to work a bit harder to access some of the Black language in “The Lesson.” What do the slang words do to the *truth* of the scene? What impact would standardized English have on the scene? How many of us as

teachers have heard the whine, “Why can’t they just write it in regular English?” An activity that gets students thinking about differences in language can emphasize the setting of a black neighborhood in New York City. By changing the context, students make more of a connection with the style of the story.

Characterization

The narrator, Sylvia, is a spunky character. In order to explore her characterization, students can pair up in the same way that they did for the theme improvisation, as Miss Moore and her sibling. Improvising a scene, one student playing Miss Moore can verbalize her impression of Sylvia—what she sees as Sylvia’s strengths, how the other kids relate to Sylvia and how Sylvia relates to them, how she views the kind of leader Sylvia is, and whether she may be drawn to Sylvia, seeing her as a tough egg and wanting to get through to her. Another pair of students in the classroom might play Miss Moore as thoroughly frustrated with Sylvia’s smart aleck comments and her ability to thwart the group as a negative leader. In improvisation Miss Moore might vent to her sibling, trying to strategize plans about how to relate to Sylvia.

Another avenue in developing Sylvia as a round character can involve seven students taking on the roles of the other kids--QT, Mercedes, Rosie, Junebug, Sugar, Flyboy, and Fat Butt. The group sets up a scene. One possibility takes place the day after the field trip to Fifth Avenue. A stranger to the neighborhood shows up in a cab and a nice coat asking about the field trip group. As the young people gather, Sylvia isn’t there. The stranger had been in the store the day before and was curious. Sylvia had caught her/his eye and s/he was interested in talking to her about a workshop for ethnic youth held at the museum downtown. The young people describe Sylvia to the stranger.

Another scenario might be played as if it is ten years later. Sylvia has done well for herself in college and is making a name uptown. A reporter is interested in a biography on Sylvia, including people who have known her for a long time. Either way, the students playing the seven friends should give their character's view of Sylvia, taking what they know from the text and filling in the cracks in a believable way. As the students examine Sylvia from the others' perspectives, the character of Sylvia becomes more round. The drama activities exploring characterization as well as theme and style bring Bambara's story to life for students.

“The Enormous Radio”--John Cheever

In "The Enormous Radio" Irene and Jim Westcott receive a new radio, but besides transmitting music, it also conveys conversations from the entire apartment building. Listening to the radio becomes the central focus of Irene's life. John Cheever's short story offers students a chance to explore several key themes such as the contrast between illusion and reality as well as the issue of possessions, especially technological ones, taking over our lives. Drama activities can augment class discussion of the story.

Pre-Reading Activity--Theme

Before students read the short story by Cheever, they might consider contemporary situations exhibiting the motif of life being idyllic on the surface, but harboring a darker under-layer. While students get in small groups, the teacher either has them choose one of the given skeleton situations out of a hat or create their own skeleton situation. Some options the teacher can suggest are the following:

- *A varsity starter for the as-of-yet undefeated basketball team who has an alcoholic parent
- *A senior, newly-voted Homecoming Queen whose family gets evicted from their apartment
- *A class clown (who even the teachers think is funny) whose sister or brother is dying of leukemia
- *A popular kid— part of the “in” crowd, whose parents are going through a painful divorce

With the skeleton situation in hand, students create a scene. They can decide if the darker secret comes out in the open in the scene or if it is something that stays hidden but obviously challenges the character. Students start the scenes with the assumption that most people are oblivious of the character's struggle. Others in the small group may take on the role of one who only sees what is enviable in that character. Each group has ten to fifteen minutes to plan their scene, then present it for the class.

Discussion following each scene or after the collection of scenes can lead into the theme of how often people assume other people's lives are to be envied. How much of the sordidness of life remains hidden behind closed doors with so many people coping with painful experiences in life? In the Westcotts' case, they worked at maintaining their upper-middle class status, assuming their neighbors' lives were successful and happy. Serene as it seemed, though, the apartment was not Eden for its inhabitants. Patrick Meanor describes it as the Westcotts' fall from innocence. At first they were transfixed by the power of knowing about the private lives around them. Then they began to feel guilty about their voyeurism. Finally, they began questioning the authenticity of their

own happiness. The fall from innocence came with the self-knowledge of everyone's fallen condition, including their own (52-53).

Theme

After reading the short story, another theme worth examining is the relation of the characters to the radio. Irene and Jim Westcott initially listen to classical music on the radio as a way to relax later in the afternoon or in the evening. They participate in family activities, such as going to the park or playing with the children in the nursery, then listen to music later. As the story progresses, Irene, especially, becomes obsessed with the radio, beginning to make schedule decisions around the radio or dropping activities altogether, so she can listen to the private conversations of her neighbors. The radio consumes the rest of Irene Westcott's life.

In order for students to relate to the theme of technology ruling our lives, rather than we ruling the technology, a teacher might use the following drama activity. Students are put in small groups of four or five. They pick a current technology, such as the personal computer, television, or video games, to name a few. Each group devises a scene portraying the range of control the technology has in our lives. One student group may create a scene depicting healthy use of the computer although they might define two to three hours a day on the world wide web as suitable and healthy. Another group may create a scene of addiction to television.

After watching the scenes, class discussion can address issues regarding healthy time frames of interacting with technology. Class discussion can consider what falls by the wayside in our lives in order to allow large blocks of time for technology. The drama activity can lead to a worthwhile discussion about the pervasiveness of technology,

whether referring to the Westcott's increased desire to listen in on their neighbors or contemporary society's questions about invaded privacy. From computer-generated data bases to caller identification, the ethics of an individual's privacy is under siege. Students can then relate more easily to Irene Westcott's obsession with the radio. Radio might not necessarily have the same contemporary motivation that it had several decades ago, but students can substitute other technologies to enhance their understanding of Cheever's theme.

Style/ Tone

Cheever's short story is written in a post-modern style with an increasingly darker tone as the story progresses. A method of examining the style and the changes in tone involves an activity similar to a choral reading. Beverly Whitaker Long and colleagues describe successful performances of prose fiction in their text designed for oral interpretation classes, *Group Performance of Literature*. Style is one of the elements they suggest paying attention to in adapting fiction to oral interpretation (51-53). While their work does not involve the Cheever narrative, facets of the short story fit in well with a choral reading mode (51-53).

In order to begin this activity, students need to do a close textual reading of the story, finding the places where the Westcotts listen to specific snippets from the radio. They might find it helpful to chart the phrases from the early, middle, and latter parts of the story. Students delegate responsibility for individual audio portions from the radio. Physically, students place themselves in a broad formation in front of the room in a variety of positions-- on chairs, on stools, on the floor, some standing. From this position, students speak their line. For those topics stated but not given in direct dialogue

or quotation such as “a monologue on salmon fishing in Canada” (42), the student can create an appropriate line or two that fits the topic. The lines in the choral reading should be delivered right after each other. Students can decide if the physical order of the choral reading moves from one side to the other or if it jumps around sporadically. After one reading of the montage of snippets from “The Enormous Radio,” students might decide to place themselves in other positions to create a variety of visual effects as well as the aural effect. For instance, they might elevate the first students with the early snippets, so the reading progresses visually downward, matching the darkening tone.

A variant activity would involve students translating the sound bites into their own contemporary reality. Once they have plotted the style of the overheard radio segments with the darkening pattern of the tone, students can create comparable snippets for today. Instead of the nursery reading, “...in the middle of the woods lived the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo” (41), students might substitute a Dr. Seuss phrase or a Richard Scarry line. Students might make a “fortnight at Sea Island” (42) into two weeks camping and canoing in the Boundary Waters. They can match the ebb and flow of the tone-- a lyrical nursery rhyme interwoven with the melancholy of an ailing elderly couple who needs to move into assisted-living, but is not sure if health insurance will cover it all. The horror of the wife abuse in the story might translate into child abuse in the students' version. The impersonal disasters in the final moments of the story can mirror contemporary, senseless disasters—a passenger plane that explodes a few miles from a Nova Scotia airport killing all on board or a shooting at a junior high school, killing eight students and three teachers while injuring fourteen others.

Since the Cheever story begins with radio interference of a potpourri of electrical and technological noises, from electric razors and doorbells to telephones and vacuum cleaners, the students' montage can involve contemporary noises, also. Some of the sounds may be similar to those in the story, such as the vacuum cleaner, while different sounds may include fax machine bells or beeper noises. Sound effects compact discs contain many of these familiar sounds or students could bring the real items to class.

Students should practice the series they have created, so they understand the flow of the style and the tone, forming a post-modern montage of their own. By the end of the work on their own choral reading, students will have a more grounded feel for the style and tone of Cheever's story. Likewise, all of these drama activities facilitate secondary students' ability to relate to Cheever's story.

"The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg"--Mark Twain

"The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg" outlines a stranger's devious plan to thwart the thoroughly self-righteous inhabitants of the community. By "leading them into temptation," the stranger exposes the hollowness of their reputation for incorruptibility. The scheme tempts the leading citizens of Hadleyburg into lying for a sack of money. Twain pokes at the human weakness of greed. When studying Twain's short story, students can work with drama to explore several elements of the short story.

Pre-reading activity--Theme

The stranger's plan for revenge works without a glitch. Without realizing the full implications, the Hadleyburgians are asked to make decisions between the abstract and the concrete. On one hand, they have an impeccable reputation for being honest and upright and on the other, a fortune in a sack with a strange note. Students can relate to

this tension-- the concrete and often immediate results and the abstract, long-term results. Involving students right away with this tension in the story by relating it to some probable real-life experiences of their own gives the story relevance.

Students are put into small groups of four or five. They then draw a contemporary scenario out of a container. Possible options can include the following:

- * A student faced with cheating on a midterm exam and getting a guaranteed A or maintaining an honest reputation but probably getting a C on the midterm
- * A boy faced with sneaking out of his bedroom for a fun night with his buddies or maintaining parents' trust for being responsible
- * A high school student faced with doing a job in a mediocre way and in a hurry so s/he can join friends for a trip to a Bismarck Shania Twain concert or maintaining a reputation for being a responsible hard worker
- * A person faced with keeping the \$20 extra change that the cashier inadvertently handed her/him or maintaining a reputation for being honest and not greedy

In each of these cases, the tension lies between the concrete and the abstract. Each small group works with the scenario they picked, developing a scene once they have chosen the outcome. Groups will vary in their choices of the immediate, pleasurable option or the long-term responsible option. Each group presents their scene to the others. When all groups are done, some discussion may follow with students bringing up specific choices they have been faced with in their own lives and the dilemma of the choice. They may

even reveal the decision they made and the consequences. By involving students with the thematic tension of Twain's story from the beginning, they are already intrigued with following the choices made as the story unfolds.

Plot

Because the story is longer than the typical short story and there are several twists in the plot, a freeze frame drama exercise can be useful in work on "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg." The class is divided into four groups, and each is assigned one of the four sections of the story. Optimum numbers in the group are four to five. (If the class is quite large, each half of the class will divide into four sections, so two plot lines will emerge.)

Each group will skim their section of the story, familiarizing themselves with it in order to create freeze frames. As explained in Chapter II with *Measure for Measure*, setting up a freeze frame means that students select five or six of the most important ideas in that section. The group will figure out effective visual tableaux stances for each idea. Observed in sequence, these five or six tableaux should recall the plot of that section. While each tableau may not need all members of the group, teachers should encourage students to use as many of their members each time as possible (maybe in abstract ways). The tableaux are presented non-verbally; a narrator need not explain each moment. With each group presenting a portion of the story, the exercise becomes a visual portrayal of significant moments in the plot.

As with the freeze frame activity previously described, the class can close their eyes while the group gets into position for each tableau. Someone in the group calls out "open." The class audience opens their eyes and sees the tableau set. Someone in the

group then calls out "close." The audience closes their eyes, and the group gets in position for the next tableau. In this way, the impact of the tableau is often stronger without having the class audience watch the scurrying between frozen tableaux.

Plot/ Characterization

Another activity focusing on plot and characterization of the disgruntled stranger asks students to consider what the offense toward the stranger passing through Hadleyburg was. The text simply says, "Hadleyburg had the ill luck to offend a passing stranger." It is referred to as an "injury" towards this stranger who was "bitter" and "revengeful" (534). Students are told that if they deduce a probable offense that the stranger endured, they are to write it on a slip of paper, sign it, and give the slip to the teacher by a certain day. On that day at the beginning of the class period, the teacher will read aloud the names on the slips received. A prize in a sack will go to the student whose idea is textually legitimate, seems to address what is known of the stranger's character, and is creative.

To raise the stakes a bit, the teacher can clue in a neighboring teacher about the plan and plant an "offense" with her/him. The other teacher may subtly let slip to several students the best answer, in the English teacher's eyes, to the exercise. Students, knowing the two teachers are friends and talk frequently, may fall for it. The two teachers might stage a conversation in the hall, seemingly unaware that a student is within earshot, and discuss the teacher's preferred response to the activity based on the text. The student thinks s/he is hearing confidential information, although it is actually meant *for* him/her. Obviously on the appointed day, it would be interesting to note how many had heard the

rumor and used it, instead of their own creative ideas. One of the original ideas should win the prize. It can be a meaningful way to enter into the spirit of Twain's plot.

Point of View

The third-person omniscient narrator in the third section of the story gives an overall view of the much-awaited day in the town hall. In order for students to examine the third section, and characterizations throughout the story, they can assume a drama role and develop a different point of view. Students take on the role of the press at the town-hall that day, press who have come from all over the country to get the scoop on this tantalizing story. Each student as one of the reporters in the room needs to write an article for the newspaper they represent-- *The Boston Globe*, *The Pioneer Press*-- depicting the events that occurred on that thirtieth day of the mysterious message.

As reporters, students should write up interviews they would have had that day as reporters. Interviews with Jack Halliday, the sarcastic bystander, and Billson, the man whose name is first drawn, would introduce effective quotes in students' articles. (If the classroom is really adept at drama, some students could don these specific character roles and others-- Pinkerton, Reverend Burgess, etc. Reporters could mingle around the class getting sound bites for their articles.) Even without some students taking on character roles of interviewees, all the students as reporters write up interview information for their articles that fits an appropriate response for those characters. They should even think about impressions they would get from interviewing some of the non-Nineteeners and visitors from envious neighboring towns. Creative headlines for the articles are a must. Thinking of the story from a minor character's point of view, a reporter at the town-hall, helps students see different facets of the story.

Studying the short stories, whether "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg" or others, with drama in the classroom allows students a more hands-on relationship with the texts. Students become actively involved in their work with the short stories. The above activities can be modified in any way a teacher sees them working more effectively for her/him. The activities presented here can become a springboard for further work with drama in the classroom on these stories and others.

The Great Gatsby--F. Scott Fitzgerald

Drama in the classroom adds another dimension to students' study of a novel. Inherent in the novel form is an opportunity for the writer to develop depth in characterization and intricacies of plot and theme. Drama becomes another method the teacher can use to help students explore complexities by interacting actively with the text. A frequently taught novel in 11th and 12th grade high school English classes is F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Narrated through the eyes of Nick, the observing neighbor, the novel explores Gatsby's struggle for the American Dream and his love, ultimately failing to capture his desire. The novel has its challenges when it comes to getting sixteen and seventeen-year olds involved with it because it is largely focused on tone and description. These features do not seem to lend themselves to the dramatic method when studying the novel. Since *The Great Gatsby* is a more challenging text than some for inclusion in this chapter, the following drama activities demonstrate the rich possibilities for incorporating drama into work with the novel.

Pre-Reading Activity--Theme

Before students begin reading the novel, drama can provide a way of introducing some of the ideas and themes in *The Great Gatsby*. The teacher puts several adages on

the board, such as "You can't judge a book by its cover," "Clothes make the man," "Money can't buy happiness," and "It is not possible to step twice into the same river" -- Heraclitus. The class is divided into small groups of four to five with each group choosing an adage. The small groups have fifteen to twenty minutes to plan a scene that conveys the idea of their saying, and then they present the improvisation to the class. A group may present a scene of a group of upperclassmen preparing for an Academic Olympiad competition. A sophomore named Amanda, who is strikingly beautiful and a B squad cheerleader, approaches the Olympiad team captain about joining the group. The team discusses it, doubting her ability to be any asset to the team intellectually, but the captain persuades them to give her a chance. At her first practice with the group, Amanda astounds them with her rapid responses to the first four questions. At the end of the improvisation, one in the group addresses the class and states their adage "You can't judge a book by its cover."

Through the drama, students are putting the ideas in a context which they relate to. Part of their discussion during small groups and as a whole class can be to consider the truth of the adage from individual students' views to American society's view. After confronting the concepts through this pre-reading drama activity, students are intrigued with seeing how the ideas play out in Fitzgerald's text. The drama activity leads to key themes in the novel, and students tune in more readily than if they read the novel cold without the pre-reading drama work.

Characterization

In order to have students think more about the characters in the novel, a drama activity can be introduced halfway through the novel or after students have finished

reading it. Getting students to consider more fully the central characters and their traits can be achieved by putting the characters in an entirely different context. The characters' actions and attitudes remain consistent in the new context as in Fitzgerald's novel. The activity can be played out with the entire class side-coaching, while specific students volunteer for roles of main characters and others needed in the scene. However, several small groups working on different contexts and then presenting them to the entire group can generate even more thinking about the characters.

One new context might involve the novel's characters at a carnival. The students' task in that small group is to create a scene with characters from *The Great Gatsby* set at a carnival. The student playing the role of Tom might flirt incessantly with carnival women. The student as Gatsby might try to impress Daisy with winning a big stuffed bear for her at a ring toss booth or buying everyone in the Luteran food stand pieces of pie on his tab. The student in role as Jordan might try to cheat at balloon darts and get called on it but deny it vehemently. The student as Nick could walk around with Jordan, primarily watching everything with a faint distaste for the whole experience. The student in the role of Daisy might alternate her attitude between whining about nothing to do and hanging on Gatsby's arm, waiting to be enthralled by him and appreciating his worship of her. The small group plans the scene together and presents the improvisation for the rest of the class.

Contexts for other small groups to work within could be a high school football game, an African safari, a camp out, a space station, and a Renaissance festival--complete with jousting. In the midst of the new context, students actively consider characterization and critically explore logical roles for the character in that context.

Because the different contexts are so removed from Fitzgerald's setting, students feel a freedom to creatively transplant the characters. Instead of being concerned about the so-called right answers as they respond to the text, students can explore character traits in the new context.

Another characterization activity involves students writing in role. Since Nick Carraway narrates the story in *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's statements and actions are mediated through Nick. The interior story of Jay Gatsby, or rather James Gatz, is left to interpretation and inference on the part of astute readers. Students who take on the persona of Gatsby and write in role make their reading inferences concrete as they explore them on paper. Each student can choose a moment or scene from the novel that s/he will re-interpret from Gatsby's perspective and record as if s/he were Gatsby writing in his journal. Gatsby was self-reflective as a younger man, making a rigorous, rounded schedule for his day like Ben Franklin, so one could justify that his character would also record his thoughts in a journal. A student may choose to write a journal entry as Gatsby after one of his big open-house parties, reflecting on the people who arrived, wondering why Daisy had not appeared, and anticipating making Nick's acquaintance because he is a relative of Daisy. A student may decide to journal in role as Gatsby the night after the accident. At 4:00 A.M. Daisy turns out the light in her bedroom, and Gatsby leaves his vigil. The early-morning journal could include his view of the confrontation in the hotel suite, the accident, and his ever-present wonderment about Daisy and the choice he believes she will make.

Theresa Rogers and Cecily O'Neill advocate writing in role as a way of "extend[ing] and illuminat[ing]" students' understanding of literature ("Creating Multiple

Worlds" 85). The activity of students taking on the role of Gatsby requires students to interpret the events from his perspective and to be grounded in knowledge of the character.

Plot

Drama can be used to push students' thinking further about plot. *The Great Gatsby* has its classroom challenges in that the plot moves very slowly in some students' eyes. The novel is not an action adventure by any stretch of the imagination. Passages that veer off on tangents about the past sidetrack the plot, making it difficult for some students to stay focused. In other places, Fitzgerald makes narrative leaps. Ronald Berman describes some of these scenes in the text as having a cinematic quality, as if a lens zeroes in on the moment and silently captures it, forgoing the dialogue (101). Some students have trouble filling in the subtext during their own silent reading.

Ken Byron endorses the use of drama with situations only briefly addressed in books (*Drama in English Classroom* 81). This method of fleshing out these sections works well with *The Great Gatsby* and involves having students analytically consider the plot and then logically and creatively fill in the details between the lines. Through drama, students physically fill in the narrative gaps. The activity calls for close textual reading and insight into the characters. Several possible scenes for students to flesh out are the following:

*A conversation between Gatsby and Daisy the first afternoon of their reunion when Nick leaves them alone for half an hour (89-90).

*A conversation between Gatsby and Daisy on the steps of Nick's place during one of Gatsby's parties (107).

*A conversation between Daisy and Tom at their kitchen table over cold fried chicken on the evening of their eventful trip into the city (146).

*A conversation between Wilson and garage owners or Tom while Wilson hysterically combs West and East Egg the day after Myrtle's death, looking for the cream-colored car (161).

The students' version of the scenes needs to fit into the context of the plot in the novel. For example, in the scene depicting the conversation between Daisy and Gatsby at their reunion, the students' fleshed out scene needs to address the cause of Daisy's tears in the following passage: "Daisy's face was smeared with tears, and when I came in she jumped up and began wiping at it with her handkerchief before a mirror" (90).

With an activity such as this, students are freed from feeling like they are reaching for a prescribed right answer. Students' suggestions for supplying subtext can be just as correct as a teacher's answer. The requirement is that it is rooted in the text; i.e., acknowledging events prior to the scene and following it.

Symbol / Style

Inevitably when teaching symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*, a teacher faces groans and discouragement. I have been confronted by students who exclaim, "What do you mean--the clock is a symbol? Maybe it's just a clock? A broken clock!" This frustration stems from students' feelings that the teacher and probably everyone else, for that matter, have some inside knowledge about the text. They feel that the teacher somehow knows the right answers-- the clock and green light are symbols, but the swimming pool and mint juleps are not. Teachers need to help students understand that there are analytical

reasons certain ideas are seen as symbols and that students have the tools to read the symbols just as the teacher does.

Facilitating students' ability to see the interplay of language and ideas is a continual challenge. Students' grasp of symbolism is one such challenge. One method of getting away from a strictly intellectual approach to the symbolic in the novel is to push students to experiment with the images. Switching genres on students captures their attention. Instead of the expected prose response to noting symbols in the novel's narrative, the teacher can open the door to responding through poetry and drama.

Penelope Bryant Turk in her essay, "Writing Poetry in Response to Literature," explains the diamante as a form of poetry that works well for exploring opposites. The pattern consists of seven lines. The first and last are a noun and antonym noun respectively. Lines two and six each consist of two adjectives describing the initial and ending nouns. Lines three and five contain three action verbs in an *-ing* form, modifying the beginning and ending nouns, and the middle line four is broken in half-- two words capturing the initial noun and two words capturing the ending antonym (Phelan 158-159).

Because the pattern is concrete, students are not intimidated by the form, and most importantly, students explore language and ideas in the novel. Since the symbolic for students often seems one-dimensional and contrived when announced to them, a method of allowing students to experiment with the ideas enlivens the symbol. They grasp it more readily. In *The Great Gatsby* a poem following the diamante structure invites students to actively think about the symbol, working with several aspects of it.

The following is an example of a poem that I wrote about the *green light* in the novel:

Green light
Distant, hopeful
Dreaming, searching, yearning
Possibility, Daisy -- Daisy, Past
Wavering, slipping, receding
Unattainable, intangible
Illusion

Referring to the image of the *valley of ashes* and its symbolism, I created this poem:

Valley of ashes
Grey, stagnant
Crumbling, stultifying, preying
Dr. T. J. Eckleberg, George -- Myrtle, vision
Readying, wondering, promising
Heightened sensitivity, effervescent
Gatsby

Once students have imaginatively experimented with form and symbolic ideas on paper, they can decide on a dramatic form of presenting the poem for their classmates. In small groups, students each share their poem with the group, choosing a couple of poems to present to the class. Up in front students in the small group deliver the poem dramatically. The group may choose to have a different student recite each line while they sit on stools scattered in a random formation. They may have individuals read the inner lines and the entire small group recites the initial line and final line. The presentation format is up to the students.

Because Fitzgerald's style is challenging for teachers to impress upon students, they should not even try. In other words, teachers can facilitate students' own exploration of Fitzgerald's language. Students find the meaning then, rather than being handed the teacher's interpretation of the language. Penelope Bryant Turk refers to a form of poetry called "Found Poetry" which consists of a poem created out of already existing lines

found in literature (Phelan 158). I suggest that this is an interesting way to facilitate students examining Fitzgerald's style, certain "turns of phrases" that convey significant images in the world of the novel. Using lines from the novel, I created the following example of a Found Poem:

Only Gatsby
 An extraordinary gift for hope
 a romantic readiness such as I have
 never found in any other person
 Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can.
 Simultaneously enchanted and repelled
 By the inexhaustible variety of life
 It happened, and that's all I know.
 No more riotous excursions
 with privileged glimpses into the human heart.
 So we beat on, boats against the current,
 Borne back ceaselessly into the past.

Once students have spent time close-reading the text, deliberating over lines and the effect of the language, style is no longer just English teacher terminology; it is something students grasp. With poems in hand, students in small groups decide on a method for delivering the poems to the class. Choosing a physical stance and deciding who reads lines either individually or together, students plan a verbal presentation of their found poems. The class listens to Fitzgerald's language culled by their classmates, paying attention to the images and ideas conveyed by peer's selections.

Unit Review

Besides incorporating drama into the lesson plans for individual texts, it can be used at the end of a unit as an overview. One activity which can be adapted effectively for the high school English classroom is charades. After selecting slips of paper, students act out the symbol, character, or setting identified on the slip. They can portray the entire

word or phrase in the context of the short story or novel, or they can break it down into syllables and convey individual concepts for their team to pull together and identify.

Either way students are recalling facets of the literary texts. It is an energizing review for students at the end of a short story unit or a lengthy novel. Students realize they know more than they thought about the texts when an exercise, such as literature charades, requires them to physicalize and verbalize their responses.

Another drama activity, which works well as an end of a unit overview, is the literary dinner party. Chella Courington Livingston, an undergraduate instructor, developed the role-playing activity for her students to take on the personae of various authors. The students researched their author's personal background, work, and culture. On the appointed day in class, a dinner party was held with each student attending as a guest in the role of their author (Phelan 67-70).

The same idea can be adapted for the high school classroom with characters from a short story unit or a novel. The teacher can have students either choose or be assigned the role of a character. They then create a biography for that character, supplying subtext where needed. Students also prepare by considering their character's response to other characters at the dinner party. In the case of a short story unit, the characters will be from several stories. Students need to use their inference skills to guide them in relating to the other characters. At the dinner party, students mingle, remaining in role. The activity requires students to demonstrate not only their interpretation of a character but also their understanding of other characters in relation to their own.

While fiction may not at first glance appear to be a viable genre for drama in the classroom, the activities in this chapter demonstrate a range of possibilities for effectively

incorporating drama into study of fiction. Students form a deeper connection with the literature through their work with drama.

CHAPTER IV

CLASSROOM DRAMA AND POETRY

Archibald Macleish states in his *Ars Poetica*, "A poem should not mean/ But be" (*Adventures in American Lit.* 790). Most high school students, unfortunately, do not feel encouraged to view poetry in this way. All too often, high school English students feel intimidated by the genre of poetry, bemoaning that they "don't get it" and operating under an assumption that the poem *means* something which they are not comprehending. Students struggle to guess the teacher's meaning without tapping into the playfulness of words and images. They perceive poems to be boring riddles that they do not have the key to unlock or the will to try. More students might approach poetry with less trepidation and boredom if they were invited to experience poetry in their own way, without prescribed reactions and meanings. This chapter presents ways drama can enliven poetry for students. It moves from poetry presentation techniques to specific drama activities, ranging from thematic groupings to specific poems.

John Ciardi, poet and critic, blames the school system for young people's diminishing interest in poetry. He sees enthusiasm erode as students make their way through grade school and high school. In his eyes "poetry, in the high schools, is almost always badly taught" (Somers 15). The condemnation deserves consideration. The typical method for teaching poetry in grades 8-12, according to Albert Somers, is a concentration on the genre and poetic devices, particular historical high points, and the classical masters. The key usually is the *study* of poetry (15). Though a high school

teacher may valiantly try to teach a poem, the most common methods-- usually shaped by a teacher's own academic background and current curriculum models-- are problematic. The poem chosen is often not appropriate for contemporary American students; it does not allow for much discussion and involvement with the ideas on the part of students. Often the emphasis is on information about the poet and the place of the poem in history rather than on the poem itself. Students lose sight of the poem itself because of the focus on form and poetic devices. Without imagination in the method of delivery, students do not respond to a poem (Somers 19).

While these are problematic concerns within current educational methods of teaching poetry, the solution is not to throw all current methods out the window. The classroom teacher needs courage to branch out from the time-tested methods; they are not working anymore even if they once did. A concentration on famous poets in the canon cannot be the automatic approach to poem selection. If the poem does not resonate or even register with students, it will not be a positive poetry experience for students, and it will mar their attitude toward the genre as a whole. Teachers should find ways for students to connect with the poem; an angle that allows students to relate on some level is necessary. Therefore, teachers should not throw out all the old masters and only teach contemporary poets. The poem itself is the determining factor as teachers find a way for a poem to have some contextual contact and significance for students. The canon of William Cullen Bryant or William Blake can still be taught if the teacher picks poems which students can identify with on some level.

Teachers should be encouraged to also seek out contemporary poets, moving beyond the classroom textbook and searching for intriguing poems that will resonate with

students. The selection of poems studied in the unit does not need to be decided solely by the teacher. Facilitating students' browsing through books of poems and selecting poems that appeal to them can be even more educational than reading poems of the teacher's choice. Students might choose light poetry, but they might also select serious poetry if it relates to their lives on some level. For those who turn down their noses at lighter poetry, it is important to remember that one develops as a poetry reader. Just as we all began reading prose with simplistic works and moved into more complex literature, the same process can apply to poetry. Developing an appreciation for word play and levels of meaning takes time and the reading of much poetry. Students forced to deal solely with serious poetry too early can lose their interest in the genre before they have a chance to develop their poetry-reading skills.

A concentration on poetic devices is not the way to entice students into reading more poetry. Unfortunately, the common practice of studying terminology and technique and then being able to pick out a simile, metaphor, and iambic pentameter rhyme scheme for a unit test often take precedence over students' appreciation and understanding of the poem itself. It is easy to see why this occurs. Knowledge or lack thereof of poetic devices is concrete, so assessment is easier. I am not advocating eliminating all attention paid to poetic devices, format, or technique. These elements just need to be kept in perspective. Students' connection with the poem as a whole is most critical. Beyond that, attention may be paid to the intricacies of the devices used by the poet. Once students are already involved in the poem, the more technical aspects seem more relevant.

Arthur Applebee's *Literature in the Secondary School* cites research indicating that only 14% of classroom time set aside for literature is spent on poetry, while 51% is spent on novels and plays and 23% is spent on short stories (41). Between minimal amounts of time spent on poetry in the classroom and ineffective methods of engaging students, it is no wonder poetry fails to make much of an impact in students' lives, either curricularly or overall.

Molly Travers, in an article about teaching poetry, cited by Albert Somers, describes what makes a good teacher of poetry:

[Good poetry teachers] like poetry and take it seriously and expect pupils to work at it; are enthusiastic; emphasize the pleasure of poetry; are flexible, experimental, and like novel teaching situations; provide more amusing and varied activities; consult pupils on choice of poems; allow conversational and informal discussion; interact with pupils in consultation and discussion; seek out pupils' views, listen to their interpretations, and treat them with respect and seriousness; do not make pupils afraid of saying the wrong thing, offering sympathy and encouragement when ideas are voiced; encourage exploration of pupils' personal experiences in relation to poems; [and] support the feeling that the emotional experience of poetry is real. (Somers 13)

One of these experimental and "novel-teaching situations" can be using drama in the poetry classroom. Bill Moyers pointed out in the introduction to his book, *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets*, that it was not until he *heard* poetry that it came to life for

him. Reading the words on the page and memorizing did not connect with any emotions for him. Hearing the poems aloud is what brought the "music" and "Word" to him. He quotes Maya Angelou saying, "Poetry is music written for the human voice." Poetry that Moyers hears rather than just reads on the printed page, registers more deeply for him (xi). Using drama in the classroom is a creative way of letting students hear poetry aloud, highlighting the word-play and images by removing it from the printed page.

Dramatic Techniques with Poetry

There are many ways a small group of students might choose to present a poem dramatically. Rather than having students predetermine a presentation format and forcing a particular poem into it, the poem itself should indicate how it would most effectively be presented. The teacher and the entire class together can walk through the process students will go through on their own in small groups. "Cat of Cats," by William Brighty Rands, is a good short example to use as a model:

I am the Cat of Cats. I am
 The everlasting cat!
 Cunning, and old, and sleek as jam,
 The everlasting cat!
 I hunt vermin in the night--
 The everlasting cat!
 For I see best without the light--
 The everlasting cat! (Cole 100)

Together the class notes the repeated refrain. The repetition informs how a group might present the poem. An individual speaks the first line with a character tone and physical posture that fits the line. The group responds with the refrain, "The everlasting cat!" Other individuals take on each subsequent line with the group always chiming in with the refrain. As individuals vary the tone and physicality for each line, the group can also

vary the tone and pace of the group refrain. Students' creativity is sparked when they start to see the possibilities available.

The teacher can lead students to see that there is no single way to present a poem. A different way to approach the "Cat of Cats" might be to think of individual and group movement. The repeated refrain can inform the group's movement. While all move around in a cat-like posture, the individual stops to give the line and then all stop in place, pivot their heads toward the class to chant "The everlasting cat" and then continue moving. The second individual stops to voice her/his line as the rest move, only to have everyone halt for the next refrain. The frenetic visual picture pauses when lines are relayed in tone and character. Whether presented the first or second way, the poem itself informs what the group decides about presenting the poem orally.

Another short example the teacher can use to model options of oral presentations of poems is Galway Kinnell's poem, "In a Parlor Containing a Table."

In a parlor containing a table
 And three chairs, three men confided
 Their inmost thought to one another.
 I, said the first, am miserable.
 I am miserable, the second said.
 I think that for me the correct word
 Is miserable, asserted the third.
 Well, they said at last, it's quarter to two.
 Good night. Cheer up. Sleep well.
 You too. You too. You too. (Cole 117)

The poem can be treated as a dialogue with four students in a group. One student functions as the narrator, while the other three take on roles of the three men. (The gender of students does not need to be male.) The stage is set with a table and three chairs; the narrator stands elsewhere, surveying the group at the table. The narrator takes

lines 1-3 and then indicates stage directions, throughout the poem. Each of the three students at the table supplies his or her individual bemoaning lines until line 8 when they together sigh the line. Ahead of time the three at the table need to have broken up line 9 and assigned each a phrase-- 1: "Good night," 2: "Cheer up," and 3: "Sleep well." They then do the same with line 10. The group should feel free to pay attention to what the poem seems to indicate, whether it is by characters, as in this example, or by individual and group, as in the previous examples.

During the presentation students may interact closely, as with the Galway Kinnell poem, or they may function as separate entities, as with the following Pablo Neruda poem:

What is it that upsets the volcanoes
That spit fire, cold and rage?

Why wasn't Christopher Columbus
Able to discover Spain?

How many questions does a cat have?

Do tears not yet spilled
Wait in small lakes?

Or are they invisible rivers
That run toward sadness? (*This Same Sky*, Nye 129)

Five students in a small group position themselves in various stances, either sitting, lying, or standing. Each can be looking in a different direction, focused on their question as they concentrate on a focal point. A student lying on her back looking up with knees bent and leg crossed over another, may utter the first question. The second student sitting cross-legged with her chin in one hand and looking out left asks the second question.

Each of the five seems to be in his/her own world. For a poem that asks questions, this format of presentation works effectively.

By using some short examples such as these and together as a whole class talking through the process of discovering a way to dramatically present a poem most effectively, students gain understanding and confidence in following their own instincts as they begin work in their small groups with poems.

Poets' Canons

One way to explore a particular poet is to open up the poet's canon to the class; the teacher encourages students to read and choose the poems that catch their attention in some way. Students can be put in small groups of three to five. They have access to the poems by that poet in their textbook, but the teacher can also urge students to investigate further, looking through other anthologies in the classroom and searching the library. The small groups decide on a poem that they like and together discuss their understanding of it. They consider why it strikes them more than others they have read by that poet. With this work behind them, students in their small group decide how to orally present the poem in order to convey what strikes them about the poem.

When the small groups present each of their poems to the rest of the class, several things occur. The small group presenting the poem has internalized the poem to the point of sharing it in an active way-- conveying what they see in it. The students listening see living, vibrant poetry that has meaning for some of their peers. The class hears five to seven poems by a single poet, allowing the teacher to facilitate discussion about threads students see woven through the poetry. Together, students can draw conclusions about the style and tone within that poet's canon presented in class. Two groups may happen to

choose the same poem. There can be benefits to this occurrence as the two small groups will create their unique ways of presenting the poem to the group. The varying presentations can emphasize different aspects of the poem, which fosters class discussion about interpretation.

Emily Dickinson is a good poet to use for this drama activity. Students have much to choose from in the Dickinson *oeuvre*. Poems such as "A narrow fellow in the Grass," "Success is counted sweetest," "Much Madness is Divinest Sense," and "Because I could not stop for Death " are frequently anthologized, but students may choose some of the less familiar poems from the Dickinson collection since they are not as concerned about classic status as teachers often are. After the groups have worked with their poems, the teacher can always throw her suggestion into the pot for discussion, too.

Another way of getting students actively involved with poetry that is suggested by the curriculum but still gives students some independent voice is to have each small group choose a poet. The groups explore their poet's range of writing by reading as much of his/her poetry as possible. After students have a sense of the scope of that poet's work, each group chooses three or four poems that convey the poet's range. The project continues as students figure out ways that they will dramatically present the three to four poems to rest of the class.

The groups can link the poems by their poet in the way they decide is most effective, either with narrating ideas they have gathered in their work with the poet's canon or letting silence mark the space between the presentation of poems. Allowing a question and answer time after each group's presentation encourages students in the group to share insights they have had in working with their poet. The groups listening

get a visual experience of several poems by significant poets, mediated through their peers-- a powerful motivating force for paying attention. If teachers have certain poets they regard as important for the curriculum, they can determine which poets the small groups explore. One suggestion, for instance, is Robert Frost; he provides a substantial body of work for students to examine.

A Thematic Approach

Besides studying a variety of poets, small groups of students can examine themes relevant to teenagers. The teacher gathers several poems that together address a single theme and assigns each group a different poem. The small groups study their poem, analyzing and interpreting it; then they decide how they want to present it to the class. One theme that provides food for thought is contemplating the issue of "Fully Living." What does getting the most out of life actually mean? (See Appendix B for texts.)

An appropriate poem for this theme is "Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock," by Wallace Stevens (*Adventures in American Lit.* 761). The status quo lives of the people in the poem's houses create dreams without much color or pizzazz. By dividing up lines, students can highlight the contrast in tone with their reading. The lines referring to reality might be spoken in a ho-hum, bored tone while the dream lines might be conveyed as bright with possibility.

Two other appropriate poems for the theme of "Fully Living" are e.e.cummings' "anyone lived in a pretty how town" (*Adventures in American Lit.* 793) and E. A. Robinson's "Richard Cory" (*Adventures in American Lit.* 497). Exploring the difference in the lives of anyone, noone, and the lives of the townspeople allows students another angle on the "Fully Living" theme. Cummings' poem might effectively be portrayed with

students reading anyone and noone lines as characters with a group of townspeople reading other lines. The neutral lines could then be read by a narrator. Physical stage separation in a reader's theatre format with anyone and noone in close proximity to each other and the rest on the other side of the narrator would be one visual way to present a reading, emphasizing decisions anyone and noone make about their lives in contrast to the rest. The group may even decide to do more movement, effectively mirroring certain lines in the poem. "Richard Cory" works well at getting students to consider what seems to promise happiness and fully living yet does not. Wealth, esteem, and envy of others fail to provide true happiness although society often falsely assumes that they will. While a narrator reads the poem, a group of students might cluster in a fawning huddle while another student in the role of Richard Cory walks by. He might tip his hat cordially, provoking a wave of giddiness in the cluster because he acknowledged them. By stanza four, the group might mime positions of hard work and toil while Richard Cory exits the front. With the cluster of students freezing by line 14, the narrator in stillness reads the last two lines of the poem-- "And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,/ Went home and put a bullet through his head" (497).

Students' close-textual work with the poems and decision-making about an effective presentation mode get students actively thinking about the thematic issues the poems bring up. Following class presentations of all three poems, students are ready to discuss in depth the implications of the theme in light of ideas from the three presentations and students' own observations and experience.

Poetry Dive

As Albert Somers recommends in *Teaching Poetry in High School*, the more students can be encouraged to do their own browsing through poetry, the less intimidated they are by the genre and the more they see the possibilities of poetry connecting with their own lives (14-15). A new generation of poetry readers will only burgeon if young people are invited to sample a broad spectrum of poetry, not only the dead, white males but contemporary poets as well.

A good method for facilitating this exploration is assigning what I refer to as poetry dive. The teacher gives a period of time (one week is long enough to accomplish the task but not long enough to invite procrastination) for each student to find five poems that s/he really likes. They do not have to be famous classics, but the poems need to speak to the individual student in some way. Each student makes four copies to bring to class.

Students are then put in small groups of four or five. The groups' task is to hear and read the poems gathered by the individuals in the group. As a group, then, students select three poems to work with via drama. Allowing the poems themselves to inform ways of conveying the significance of the poetry, the group creates their vision of presentation of the three poems. This process lets students pick the texts rather than the teacher. Because the poems are peer-chosen, classmates are interested in the poetry-- as it strikes the small group, so it often strikes the class. Classmates are interested in how their peers decide to portray the poetry since they themselves are in the same thinking

process about how to communicate the poems most effectively.

Specific Poems-- (See Appendix B for Texts)

"Dedication"--Adrienne Rich

During a poetry unit, the teacher will select specific poems for the entire class to study as part of the prescribed curriculum. Although the poem, "Dedications," by Adrienne Rich is not typically anthologized, it provides a wonderful early foray into a poetry unit. The repetitious mantra, "I know you are reading this poem..." introduces the many readers in the poem, identifying them as readers of the poem along with giving a glimpse into other facets of their lives beyond the poetry. Each line provides a meaty snapshot of a person, whether referring to the line, "I know you are reading this poem in a waiting-room/ of eyes met and unmeeting, of identity with strangers" (line 20-21) or "I know you are reading this poem by fluorescent light/ in the boredom and fatigue of the young who are counted out,/ count themselves out, at too early an age (line 22-24).

The teacher encourages students to think about the residents in the poem, marking age spans and varying walks of life. Along with the story of each person is also the idea that they all are reading poetry, dismissing any thoughts students may harbor that poetry is only read by English majors and by students forced to read it under duress. After examining the people referred to in the poem, students write their own conclusion to the line, "I know you are reading this poem...." Taking on an intentional physical stance or posture, students as a class perform a reading of the poem, starting with Adrienne Rich's lines of the poem, then adding the class's own lines to them. Students' physical stances add another dimension to their line in the poem. Students can be scattered around the

room; they need not be confined to the front of the room. It is important to designate students' order prior to beginning the reading, so the flow is not interrupted.

The reading accompanied by an intentional physical stance actively involves the students in Rich's poem. Students hear her language and imitate her structure with their own line additions. The drama activity also places the students concretely in the role of readers of poetry; the students enter the world Rich sets up in her poem.

"To a Waterfowl"--William Cullen Bryant

Frequently anthologized in American literature textbooks and the bane of teachers hoping to incite a margin of enthusiasm in lackadaisical students are poems like "To a Waterfowl," by William Cullen Bryant. As many high school teachers know, a poem that begins with the words "Whither" and "midst falling dew" has the power to make students' eyes glaze over. Bryant's status as a well-known nineteenth century poet does nothing to ignite students' interest in exploring his text. Teachers realize they somehow need to connect students with the poetry if they want the classroom experience to be something besides torture.

One way of connecting students to the poem "To a Waterfowl" is to involve students in a pre-reading drama activity. Before approaching the poem with students, the teacher asks them to think of an image that is reassuring and comforting for them. This can be given as a homework assignment the night before. The teacher puts students in small groups of three or four, where students then share with each other their image of comfort. Each group selects one of the ideas and brainstorms a way to portray this visual image through drama. In creating a tableau of the comforting image, students can use dialogue, a single line, or a completely visual, silent stance to portray the image. One

example might be a group offering the portrait of a small boy or girl sitting on the floor, holding a hurting foot and crying, while a parent crouches over the child with comforting arms and a sibling approaches with a Band-Aid. No words are necessary; the tableau conveys the image. Another group may present a tableau of a teen looking miserable as a policeman writes down information while examining a wrecked car (indicated by a student holding a "wrecked car" placard) and a parent entering and saying one line, "I forgive you."

As students view the various groups' tableaux, and the teacher pushes students in discussion to think about the similarities and differences in the scenes, students are primed to begin looking at Bryant's poem. Because of the pre-reading drama activity, students' interest is piqued; they are interested in seeing what kind of comforting image this nineteenth century poet creates. Bryant draws a sense of comfort from the illustration in nature that if an individual bird is guided by God or a higher power through a difficult and sometimes dangerous passage, then he feels God must also be guiding him: "In the long way that I must tread alone,/ Will lead my steps aright" (*Adventures in American Lit.* 151). In a public school, teachers need to be careful about how God is dealt with in the classroom, but the focus can be on the tone and obvious assurance the poet feels. The students can then examine their own images of comfort and assurance, comparing the tone with Bryant's poem and seeing similarities and differences in their images and Bryant's nature image.

"The Chambered Nautilus"--Oliver Wendell Holmes

Another nineteenth century American poem frequently a part of high school English curriculums is Oliver Wendell Holmes' "The Chambered Nautilus." As with

Bryant's poem, Holmes' poem does not automatically engage students, either. A poem about a snail-like creature does not resonate with most teenagers' reality. The poem can be effective, though, in the classroom when pre-reading work with analogies and drama is involved. By the time students have reached high school, they have probably had the terminology of "simile" and "metaphor" drilled into them. The concept of "analogy" is less frequently paid attention to. Some examples of analogies given by the teacher can be helpful. One analogy might relate the concept of stress to a rubber band. Just as a rubber band can be stretched and stretched, getting tighter and tighter, until the moment it has reached its maximum amount of give and snaps so does stress operate in people's lives. Expectations of teachers, parents, friends, boy/ girlfriend, employer of after-school job, and coaches all place demands on a person, who feels like s/he keeps stretching to meet everyone's expectations until finally it gets to the point when s/he cannot stretch anymore. The stress reaches the level where something just snaps.

Using several examples of analogies like the one just described gets students in a frame of mind that makes them more receptive to the analogy Holmes sets up in his poem, "The Chambered Nautilus." Reading through the poem together, students examine the analogy between the new, larger sections of the shell the nautilus moves into and the human soul steadily developing: "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,/ As the swift seasons roll!/ Leave thy low-vaulted past! (*Adventures in American Lit.* 313). It is interesting, then, to challenge students to come up with their own analogy, comparing a characteristic or attribute of something in nature to something in human life. The assignment works best as homework.

In the next class period students are put into groups of three to five, where they share the analogies they each created. Each group chooses one they are most interested in developing through drama. Students have a lot of freedom in deciding how they want to convey the analogy. One group might develop an analogy between a lake and humans. A lake's surface sometimes is calm and placid; sometimes it is choppy and dotted with whitecaps. Sometimes the surface is sparkling blue; other times it is steely gray. The lake is not only defined by its surface appearance, though. Underneath the surface lies so much more, and sometimes there is buried treasure. The group's analogy to humans might relate how a person can have varying moods and temperaments on the surface as well as having inner. By looking into a person, one can even find buried treasure s/he did not realize was there.

In order for the group to dramatically portray this analogy, they might use some cloth with two students holding each end. Moving their ends up and down, the two create ripples and then larger waves as they move their arms faster. When they stop moving, they let the cloth lay smoothly. Underneath the cloth two or three other students mime their roles as sea-flora swaying in the current. One student even mimes a diver opening a buried treasure chest. A narrator might orally explain the tableau played out before them.

With the use of drama linked with poetry in this way, students not only read a poet's version of interpreting human connections with nature but also are called on to create their own link.

"I Hear America Singing"--Walt Whitman

Another way of working with the concept of analogy is incorporating Walt Whitman's "I Hear America Singing" into a poetry unit. Students usually grasp the idea

that differing voices and music combined together make more interesting music than a solo voice. The analogy can be made that together many people with differing abilities make America a more interesting place. A helpful drama activity with the study of "I Hear America Singing" is to invite students to add various sounds to the different parts of the poem. The teacher can divide the class into twelve sections with two to three students on a specific part in the poem. Students decide on the ways they want to add music to the line. They can literally find music that corresponds in some way to the job referred to in the line of the poem, or they might use sounds that relate to that job. It works best to give students the assigned part as homework for at least one night, so they can have time to brainstorm and bring any props or music necessary for their line.

The class presentation becomes an involved one as the teacher recites the introductory line, "I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear." Each pair or trio of students should be ready, then, to say their assigned line, accompanied by the music they have gathered for the job in the line. An effective format is to build on the sounds. As each group brings in their job and music, they keep it sounding as the poem continues. By the time the teacher reads the final lines of the poem: "Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,/ The day what belongs to the day-- at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,/ Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs" (*Adventures in American Lit.* 354), there is quite a compilation of sounds, which are much more interesting together than when they are by themselves. Through drama, students create the essence of the poem right there in the classroom instead of having it remain on a printed page, dated from a prior century.

"Mending Wall"--Robert Frost

Drama can be incorporated into the study of poetry when working with a class on Robert Frost's "Mending Wall." Instead of having students remain in their desks to read the poem, the desks can be put to the side. Students line up, creating a dividing wall down the center of the room. The teacher selects about nine students at various points along the length of the student wall to be stones that fall away. The teacher can cue them with numbers or by lines of poetry. A student is designated as the neighbor, so s/he does not join the lined up students portraying the wall. The poem's speaker can either be the teacher or a student who reads expressively.

With everyone in position, the poem is read. The wall of students is interrupted periodically as the students chosen as stones roll away from the wall. Depending on the class, the student "stones" can choose when to roll away or the teacher can cue them. Based on the text, logical places for the stones to fall away are these: one at the end of line 3, a couple at line 4, a couple at line 7 who are side by side so a big gap is created, 1 at line 11, and 1 at line 35. The two students in the roles of neighbor and speaker of the poem walk each side of the wall, as referred to in line 13 and on. The speaker and neighbor can bring back a few fallen stones in line 18 only to have them fall away again in line 19. Lines 20 and 39 are also effective places to have the neighbor bringing back a few stones. The neighbor should also say his/her own response in lines 27 and 45: "Good fences make good neighbors" (*Adventures in Reading* 329-331).

This physical way of reading the poem gets students out of a passive position in their desks. It also visually emphasizes the essence of Frost's poem. The concept of a wall is more concrete when students see the divided room. The removal and retrieval of

stones is not necessary to the reading of the poem, but it tends to highlight the idea that the wall keeps breaking down, helping students visually identify with the lines "Something there is that doesn't love a wall" (lines 1, 35). The teacher can facilitate discussion after the reading of the poem about the effects of walls and walls that are evident in contemporary society. As with any of these drama activities, discussion can spring from the drama and augment the classroom study of the poem.

"The Seven Ages of Man"--William Shakespeare

From a world literature perspective, Jaques dramatic monologue from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is often included in the high school poetry curriculum (*Adventures in Reading* 391-392). "The Seven Ages of Man" becomes more interesting for students when they work with Jaques' satiric descriptions. The class can read through the poem together, thinking about the stages Jaques marks for humans. Students identify more with some of the stages-- "whining schoolboy" (line 7) or "the lover,/ sighing like a furnace" (line 9-10)-- than others like the justice or the Pantaloon. After discussion of Jaques description of key stages in a person's life, the class is invited to come up with their own contemporary list. Students might identify eight stages rather than be limited by the Shakespearean seven stages. Some of the students' categories might parallel Shakespeare's, like the infant and the elderly person, but some might be different, like a twenty-something or a CEO. The class brainstorms the stages they want to highlight for contemporary humans.

The teacher then divides students into groups with an age assigned to each group. Their task is to come up with a tableau or visual representation of that age. Ten minutes later the class gathers. The teacher narrates the opening lines, 1-5, with the class all

taking a group bow after line 2-- "All the world's a stage,/ And all the men and women merely players" (line 1-2). The teacher continues, "They have their exits and their entrances,/ And one man in his time plays many parts,/ His acts being seven ages" (lines 3-5). If the class has re-interpreted the number of ages, the line can be amended. Each group narrates their tableau with a line describing that age.

Exploring Shakespeare's monologue, dramatically, forces students to pay attention to Shakespeare's vision and to actively think about the same idea-- What are the passages in our human lives? Students as a class can decide if they want to incorporate a satiric tone like Jaques' version. Either way, students are dealing with the poem's content as well as its tone and language choice.

Mirroring Poetry

Another way of encouraging students to browse through poetry, finding poems that appeal to them, is to assign drama that mirrors poetry. After scanning through poetry collections that the teacher provides or they unearth, students select poems they want to present to the class. In small groups of three or four, students choose one poem out of their group's collection. The group's task is to discuss what they see as the essence of the poem. What do the students think is significant about the poem? Is it the tone? Is it an idea? Is it a striking image? Once they have designated the emphasis they choose to highlight in the poem, the students create a non-verbal physical stance, tableau, or action that mirrors that emphasis. Each group presents the physical portion for the class, and then they freeze while one student in the group reads the poem out loud. The visual representation followed by the poetry accentuates the poet's words.

Some examples of the visual drama mirroring a poem are the following:

- Two of the students in the group, a boy and a girl, clasp each other's hands looking into each other's faces, an arm's length apart. They freeze in that position. The third student in the group starts with the title, *Valentine*, by Donald Hall, and then reads the poem.

Chipmunks jump, and
Greensnakes slither.
Rather burst than not be with her.

Bluebirds fight, but
Bears are stranger.
We've got fifty
Years or longer.

Hoptoads hop, but
Hogs are fatter.
Nothing else but
Us can matter. (Janeczko, *Postcard Poems* 64)

- Another group, having chosen "Blue Alert," starts with a group of four students doing various things-- sitting reading, working at a desk, standing in a thinking pose. Simultaneously all four rush to the left and stand in a line looking up. They freeze in this stance, while the fifth student reads aloud "Blue Alert," by Eve Merriam:

Quick!

Empty the offices
rush all the lecture halls
abandon the copy machines
burst out

EMERGEN--

see the sky
unboxed

lid off
shaking loose

What number do we call to
bring it down
box it
back in? (*Postcard Poems 29*)

- A group chooses one student to represent the visual image-- a student lying on his back with arms crossed behind his head, looking up. He freezes as another student reads:

Last night
after you hung up
I wrote you a poem
hoping it might
change your heart.

This morning
I tell myself:
Get serious, man.
Someone once compared
writing a poem
and hoping it will
change the world
to dropping rose petals
down a deep well

waiting for the splash. (*I am Wings 33*)

The reader ends with the title, "Waiting for the Splash" by Ralph Fletcher. The group does not decide to mirror the action; the group, instead, chooses to visually mirror the mood.

This activity of mirroring the visual with the poetry helps make the poetic concrete. Students not only delve into work with poetry they have chosen because it

resonates with them but also make use of higher level thinking skills as they process what aspect of the poem to emphasize through drama.

Improvisation and Poetry

One drama-in-the-classroom activity involving poetry that can be an enjoyable addition to a poetry unit is improvisation. Some teachers might use it as an optional assignment or include it in the regular curriculum. Students in a small group find a poem that they connect with and then brainstorm a scene that relates to the poem. The group improvises a scene where the poem would be a logical part of the scene. It might be a scene with dialogue and the poem fits into the conversation, or the scene might not contain much dialogue, but the poem is logically included. It might obviously be a poem in the scene or it might blend into the dialogue.

- One scene consists of several people talking about hunting. It is fall and the hunters are salivating at the chance to get out there and bag a few ducks. The group is mixed in its opinions about hunting-- some wax poetic about communing with nature or the challenge of the human-against-nature conflict; others are bemused that someone would want to sit in a boggy swamp in a damp hole in the very early morning cold air and call it fun. Another then says, "I think Ogden Nash has a good point in his poem, "The Hunter:"

The hunter crouches in his blind
 'Neath camouflage of every kind,
 And conjures up a quacking noise
 To lend allure to his decoys.
 This grown-up man, with pluck and luck,
 Is hoping to outwit a duck. (*Pocket Poems* 46)

- Another scene may involve a conversation between a couple of teens discussing how they hate it when someone hums a certain song, and it gets stuck in their head, playing the same few lines over and over. The students in the group mention certain lyrics or melodies, humming a few bars while others hold their hands over their ears, saying, "Don't get me started." Another student says, "If you are talking about things that are "catchy," you know what else is?" Then she starts this poem:

The black-haired girl
 with the big
 brown
 eyes
 on the Queen's train coming
 in to work, so
 opens her mouth so beautifully
 wide
 in a ya-aawn, that
 two stops after she has left the train
 I have only to think of her and I
 o-oh-aaaww-hm
 wow! (Larrick 56)

The improvisation ends with everyone in the group yawning, while seemingly trying not to. Afterward, the group acknowledges the title and poet, "The Yawn," by Paul Blackburn.

The improvisations are a way to encourage students' creative thinking-- not just interpreting poetry, but consciously considering a context for that poetry.

Because poetry is the most difficult genre to hook students' interest in high school English classrooms, different approaches need to be considered in the classroom. Only then can teachers hope to foster any short term or life-long interest in students toward

poetry. Drama helps make poetry more accessible, in part, because the visual component adds another level of explication and students are encouraged through drama to feel that they have keys to the poem. It is not a well-guarded secret, open only to the teacher's interpretation.

CHAPTER V
CLASSROOM DRAMA AND WRITING

Drama's effectiveness in the high school English classroom is not limited to physicalized responses to literature. Drama in the classroom can be a valuable asset in the writing arena as well. The value of using drama with writing programs lies in idea-generation. This chapter focuses on specific ways drama in the classroom can help students generate ideas with two types of writing-- creative and expository.

I am intrigued by the true story shared by Richard M. Jones, a psychologist interested in the specialization of the brain hemispheres. In a sixth grade classroom, a teacher was trying to review the previous math lesson by asking Billy to define "infinity." After a few uncomfortable moments and prodding by the teacher, Billy responded to the concept of infinity by saying, "Well, infinity is kinda like a box of Cream of Wheat." Exasperated, the teacher denounced the response and moved on to the eager Johnny, who answered, "Infinity is immeasurable, unbounded space, time, or quantity." The teacher beamed at receiving the hoped-for response. Later on Billy explained his image to another, who was willing to listen, that the picture on a box of Cream of Wheat included a man holding a box of Cream of Wheat which shows a picture of a man holding a box of Cream of Wheat. The image goes on forever, even if the eye cannot see it anymore. The boy had captured the essence of infinity. The responses of the two boys point out the differentiation between the left and right hemispheres of the brain and their workings.

Johnny's response tapped into the left-brain, functioning literally and sequentially. Billy's response shows evidence of right-brain activity, conceptualizing infinity (Rico 63-64).

In school, left-brain skills are rewarded while right-brain skills are increasingly de-prioritized as students move through grade levels into high school. "Parts-specific learning" is stressed in the curriculum, elevating left-brain activity. Right-brain thinking receives diminishing returns in curricula as spontaneity and playfulness are lost along with an "aesthetic sense" (Rico 74). In many secondary schools today, Rico acknowledges, "The much neglected right side of our brain, with its aesthetic predilection for wholeness, images, metaphors, its ability to reconcile logical opposites, and its receptivity to creative play and wonders, has lost its primacy" (75).

Writing experiences that involve right-brain activity as well as left-brain activity are the most effective. Instructional methods that encourage collaboration between both sides of the brain allow for developed perception. In the case of writing, Rico would refer to it as natural writing. Since the right brain is geared for information that does not have a set sequence and the left brain relies on patterned, "previously accumulated" information, the right brain does best with initial work on a task, with no set format (71). I suggest that drama can be a vital tool in calling on right-brain functions. Once the "design mind" (Rico's terminology for the right-brain functions) has had an opportunity to explore ideas, the left brain can kick into gear, organizing and structuring the ideas into the writing. Rico refers to clustering as a writing tool facilitating such an initial task. I propose that drama also taps into those right-brain capacities.

The idea-generation capabilities of drama fit well with James Moffett's view of writing development in students. Moffett explains a progression that students make in

their writing. Some aspects of the progression suggest students move from speech, whether uttered or unuttered, to writing, whether private or public. They move from dialogues and monologues to letters and diaries. From there they progress to narratives, whether first person or third person, then to exposition and argumentation. The progression switches from considering an intimate audience to a remote audience. Stylistically, the progression changes from "vernacular improvisation" to "literary composition" (*Active Voice* 10). Students shift from thinking and writing in the present to the past and then to the potential. As Moffett points out, the progression does not imply that the end result of the progression is better writing. Students work toward developing a range of writing proficiency. While writing the abstract and formal may be attained later than narrative, it does not mean students should be tied to writing the higher levels of the progression once they have reached them. Moffett stresses that the goal is to give students a repertory to choose from in their range of writing (10-11). Strong high school writing programs give students opportunities to progress in their writing and move back and forth within the progression. Whether writing a creative dialogue or writing claims for exposition, drama can be a useful tool in high school classrooms for generating initial ideas and building on concepts.

Drama is also beneficial in the writing classroom for helping students visualize their audience and develop interpretations. A criticism of writing instruction in the high school English classroom is the limited audience and function expected with writing assignments. According to Arthur Applebee, the teacher in the role of evaluator is the most common audience (*Contexts for Learning* 35). Students' writing does not branch out to take in a variety of audiences. The function of the writing assignments is limited to

recording information rather than interpreting information. Applebee cites a case study indicating 89% of school writing was informational writing. Imaginative writing was a small percentage (*Contexts for Learning* 41).

Encouraging various types of writing as well as different audiences broadens the scope of writing for students. Writing becomes more relevant to life when students are encouraged to think about appropriate audiences for many types of writing. The visual component is inherent in drama activities; the teacher can no longer be considered the sole audience. This shift can facilitate a change in students' thinking about the writing emerging from the drama activity.

The NAEP 1992 Writing Report Card indicates findings that students in grades 4, 8, and 12 have some proficiency in narrative and informative writing, but proficiency in persuasive writing falls behind the others. The length and development of writing varies but indicates overall that students have difficulty writing elaborated responses (3-4). The findings suggest a need for classroom techniques that help students build on their ideas. Drama is one such tool. The NAEP writing assessment pointed out that teachers' instructional approaches had progressively prioritized extended writing with a process-oriented method. The emphasis included planning and pre-writing activities as well as extensive revision and peer/ teacher feedback (13-14). With the instructional approaches emphasizing writing as a process, tools that are beneficial to the planning and pre-writing stages of writing are necessary. Drama in the classroom fulfills such a role as a viable classroom tool.

A challenge for high school English teachers when teaching writing is to get students writing in the first place. A frequent wail heard in classrooms is "I don't have

anything to write about!" Getting started is often the hardest part for students, so the teacher becomes a facilitator, providing ways to foster ideas. Drama in the classroom can be a tool for helping students generate ideas for writing by engaging them in an idea up on their feet and then motivating them to develop the ideas on paper.

Generating Ideas-- Creative Writing

Paintings

One idea that works well for getting ideas flowing involves offering students pictures, an assortment of famous or not-so-famous paintings. The picture becomes the basis for a drama activity where students in small groups take on the roles of each of the people in the picture. Placing themselves in the exact positions of people in the original painting, students enact their version of the scene, including the moment captured in the painting as a freeze frame. With a few minutes of preparation, each student studies his/her corresponding figure and creates a sketchy background of that character, including what the person's role in the scene is. It is then most helpful to do an improvisation where characters step out of the moment of the painting and carry on conversations, interacting with each other. Students need to be aware of dress and setting as well as stance when they are preparing for the scene, so it retains its credibility in relation to the painting. Claude Monet's "Women in the Garden," for example, can involve four characters with quite different motivations for arriving at that moment in the scene. All four characters are set in the particular world of the painting.

The improvisation generates dialogue and facilitates the development of several lines of thought as students in character interact with each other. It should not be treated as a performance where one character talks at a time; rather it should be approached as a

group improvisation where students interact and dialogue simultaneously as the scene of the painting indicates. Once they are in the picture, students are actively involved. The writing that they embark on following the improvisation may carry the scene beyond where the improvisation left off. Students' writing may take a tangent, continuing to follow their character and one of the through-lines developed in the improvisation. What a relief for the teacher not to hear, "I have nothing to write about!" The writing might develop into commentary on a particular topic with various pictorial characters espousing differing views, or the writing might become an intriguing piece of narrative, developing a single character. The picture functions as an idea starter, and the drama helps flesh it out.

Music

Music can be an effective stimulus for generating ideas. Ruth Byers refers to any such stimulus as Ideation Exercises (*Creating Theatre* 14). A boom box playing Aaron Copeland's "Rodeo" or Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" taps into the right side of students' brains. The teacher announces that students should physically spread out, allowing them room to move. Students are to listen to the music and let their bodies respond with physical movement matching the music. As they move around the room, they should be attentive to tempo and mood changes in the music. If a narrative starts to develop in their minds as they listen, they may respond by being part of the narrative in some way. Students can either remain completely in their own individual world with the music and their ideas, or they may interact with others in the vicinity if it happens to correlate with their ideas. Once the music is completed, students sit down and write. The assignment is most effective if the parameters on the type of writing remain loose. Some

students will relate a sequence of events that developed as they listened and moved. Others will be struck more by the mood or tone in the music, and their writing will emerge as descriptive or abstract without being tied to a plot.

While it is possible to shift directly from sitting and listening to the music to writing, the drama component adds a dimension that pushes the depth of the writing. By physicalizing how they listen, students more fully focus on the music, and their actions often lead them where their minds alone may not have taken them.

Multiple Angles

Over my many years of teaching, I have worked with students who struggle with seeing beyond their first idea. Somehow that idea roots itself, and students find it difficult to see varying perspectives, structures, or stages beyond the initial idea. It is as if they feel that first idea was a bolt of lightning, divinely inspired, so therefore it must be the best idea in its original form. This fidelity to initial ideas limits students ability to push themselves to explore the ideas further and even fosters resistance to revision. Drama in the classroom provides ways they can explore other angles within an idea, opening up students' minds to consider the best avenue for their writing, not just the first path they create.

Several different drama activities can encourage developing various ways to consider an idea. A theatre improvisation for actors such as "One Situation--Three Attitudes" can be adapted as a classroom drama activity. As the title suggests, students in trios brainstorm a situation or activity that all three would be facing. The main point is that each of the three has a different attitude toward the situation. At times during the scene, two students freeze, giving the other student a chance to express his/her attitude

(Novelly 128). An example would be a day in physical education class at the start of the softball unit. The three would be the batting line-up. One student at the plate, pantomiming swinging the bat at pitches, could be cringing and thinking, "I'm never going to hit this. I couldn't hit the side of a barn with this skinny little stick. I hate phy-ed; all they ever do is laugh at how non-athletic I am." The next student approaching the plate could be swinging with confidence oozing out of every pore, thinking, "All right, just give me anything close to the plate, and I'll smack that ball right over the fence. Everyone in the outfield moves back when I step up to the plate. I love it that everyone wants me on their team." A third student could swing at the plate, thinking, "Please let me not even accidentally hit the ball; I'd rather strike out than have to run the bases. They all would die of hysterics watching me trying to get around the bases. I can't help it that I weigh a lot. It's genetic. Please let me strike out."

The scene only takes a few minutes when it is performed, and the planning is invaluable. Students work on ideas beyond the immediate one that pops into mind first. As the class watches the groups do their short scenes, they see several perspectives on a single situation. This drama exercise becomes a good springboard for students in a writing assignment. The teacher can emphasize the need for students to come up with several perspectives on their written topic. The assignment may involve the development of several perspectives, or it may involve choosing the perspective that interests the writer most after having developed several. Either way, the drama facilitates students' skills at developing multiple perspectives in their approach to writing.

Another acting exercise that can be transformed into a classroom drama activity that challenges students into thinking beyond their initial idea is "Six Scenes." Students

in pairs establish a basic scene and ten lines of dialogue for that scene. The pairs then work at changing an aspect of the scene while remaining relatively true to the initial dialogue. Six versions of the scene are played out as students change the who, where, why, when, and what (Atkins 75). An example could be a husband and wife wondering what to eat for supper after just getting home from work. The students create a short ten-line dialogue. In changing the “who” in the scene they might be two people on a first date wondering where to go eat. Changing the “where” might involve a married couple on vacation deciding the kind of food they feel like eating and which restaurant of forty to choose. The change in the “when” might entail needing to eat quickly because they have a symphony concert to attend. The “why” alteration might be the couple trying to diet, but knowing they cannot simply skip a meal, deciding what they are going to eat for supper. Altering the “what is going on” might involve the two as homeless people who have not eaten in two days trying to figure out what they could eat for supper. While some aspects of the short dialogue can change to fit the new scene, teachers can challenge students to keep it as centered in the original dialogue as possible.

In the classroom it is time-prohibitive to have each pair present all six scenes for the rest of the group. It works best to have all of the pairs working simultaneously with the teacher moving around the room. The exercise is significant for pushing students to see a range of possibilities within a single idea, and that is fostered in the partnership as they develop ideas for the scene. The teacher can use the drama activity generally as a way to build students’ skills in developing various options, or the activity can be a springboard for a particular writing assignment. Each student can develop the version s/he was most intrigued with.

A drama-in-the-classroom activity that gives students an opportunity to practice letting go of their initial ideas involves work with the acting exercise "Beginning/Middle/End." Six students are grouped together. Two people set up the beginning of the scene, typically establishing information about the who, what, and where of the scene. After the beginning of the scene is established, two others exchange places with the initial two and carry on the scene, developing the conflict in the middle of the scene. The remaining two enter to resolve the conflict and end the scene. All six students play the same two characters in the various parts of the scene (Atkins 82).

I am especially interested in this drama activity as a way for students to see a scene played out differently than they may have initially planned. While the first two students might have a vision for the direction the scene would go following their beginning, the next two might take it in an altogether different, albeit just as logical, direction. The initial pair of students might think their proposed plot is obvious, only to be surprised at the direction the next pair takes it. Through the exercise, students consider multiple ways of playing the scene and reflect on the one they find most effective after considering several options.

An interesting variation of the improvisation suggested by Atkins is to switch the order of the structure. A student pair starts with the end then goes back to the beginning or starts in the middle and moves forward or backward. The format of "Past/Present/Future" could be rearranged with this same technique. The exercise starts with characters in a scene in the present and then plays them in the past in some way and then the future (83). The element that this introduces to students concretely is that linear order is not the only option when they are writing. Linear, consecutive order is the most

obvious choice, so it is helpful for students to experiment with alternative sequences while on their feet. It is a skill development tool for them to employ in their writing. The teacher may have students develop a writing assignment emerging from the improvisation or apply the non-linear structure to a different writing assignment.

Developing Characterization

When students write fiction, drama can be a helpful tool for addressing aspects of fiction that are often minimized by student writers. Plot tends to be students' focal point as they frequently concentrate on an action-packed plot. Many teachers repeatedly tell students that the effectiveness of their writing will be enhanced if they develop more than the intricacies of a plot. Characterization is often flat and one-dimensional in student writing because they never move beyond stock characters. Depth can be added to their writing if students apply theatre approaches to character development.

Constantin Stanislavsky, a Russian director, is known as the father of Method Acting. He was convinced that a role must be developed in order to be emotionally believable. With his method, actors create character roles, complete with backgrounds, personalities, and emotions. If an actor performs a role, having figured out what makes that character tick, the character will be realistic (Abbott 116-117).

The same idea can be practiced in the English classroom with writing. Teachers can help students develop characters before they even begin to get caught up in plot construction. One way of getting students to think about round, three-dimensional characters is to have them construct a characterization questionnaire; actors often do this at the beginning of work on a role. Leslie Abbott has created an extensive set of

questions for actors to flesh out in role development. These same questions can be transferred to the writing classroom.

Characterization Questionnaire:

1. How old is your character?
2. What nationality/ race is your character? Does this affect traits your character might have?
3. What is your character's family background? Are his/her parents living? Is your character closer to one parent than the other? What siblings does your character have? How close-knit is the family? Is your character married? Does your character have children?
4. What is your character's educational background? How has it impacted him/her?
5. What does your character do for a living? Is it agreeable to him/her? Would s/he change it if possible? Is your character comfortable with his/her social status and financial situation?
6. What are your character's prejudices?
7. What sort of temperament does your character have? Structured or easy-going? Flexible or rigid? View life from a positive or negative frame of reference? Does your character have moral standards that are embedded in his/her background or a reaction against his/her background? What personality quirks does your character have? Generous or selfish? Compulsive? Overconfident or humble?
8. What experiences has your character had that have impacted his/her life

deeply?

9. What strong beliefs, values, or attitudes does your character hold about life?
10. In what way is your character similar to you, the actor/ [or in the classroom--writer]? (Abbott 123-124)

Although students have developed a character profile, they do not need to include all the information in their writing. Some of the information may never surface in the fiction, but the process of thinking through a character's profile adds depth to the narrative. The background information or the character's personality traits might determine directions the writing may not have gone with a more one-dimensional character.

Another way to develop a character's background and traits in a group setting is to set up a drama activity, "This Is Your Life." Collaboratively, students create a round character by having various people in the character's life interact with her/him. The teacher can either be quite directive or separate, depending on the abilities of the group. The acting exercise proposed by Greg Atkins consists of a central character sitting up front. This character is a blank page without pre-established characterization. One by one other people enter the stage space and initiate an interaction with the main character, which indicates something about that character's life-- an event at a particular time and the relationship this person has with the character. Each new person on stage adds another facet to the character's life, but it does not need to be presented chronologically in the character's life. If a person comes back on stage a second time, s/he still plays the role established earlier, but it can be at a different point in the main character's life and thus have altered in some ways. A wife might be a girlfriend or an ex-wife in a later

encounter on stage (Atkins 79-80). As the activity progresses, more of the character's life is developed.

The activity is a helpful, collaborative way for students to see a character develop into a round character. One of the encounters between the main character and another character might grab some students' attention and be the basis for their fiction writing. Other students might use the overall character composite as a springboard for their own writing. The non-linear format of this drama exercise is another helpful reminder to students that their writing does not need to be chronological. Shifting time frames can provide a more interesting structure, and students should be encouraged to experiment. The drama exercise pushes students' vision of a characterization as well as challenges the structure.

Once students have developed a rounded character, through the questionnaire, for instance, a drama exercise can also be a way for them to flesh out the character even more, solidifying certain aspects of the character-- mannerisms, pet opinions, or idiosyncrasies. Milton Polsky suggests an exercise where actors, or in this case, students, would imagine themselves as their character at a party. Milling around, the students would converse with each other's roles (307). Name-tags are helpful with this exercise, helping others remember who students' characters are. In order to stretch the students' interactions with each other, the teacher can require that five different pieces of information about each student's character be relayed to another in the midst of conversation. This promotes a variety of conversations rather than mere repetition between several different characters. With students taking on the role of the character, they can experiment with prevailing traits of that character which they can then weave

into their writing. Physicalizing the role gives a third dimension that might transfer onto paper. Some of the interactions themselves might even provide fodder for students' writing.

Another way to use drama in developing characterization in student writing is to experiment with alter egos. Students readily grasp the concept of thinking one thing while saying another. "You got your hair cut," spoken in an up-beat tone, can actually mean "You look so dumb now" in unspoken thoughts. James Moffet and Betty Jane Wagner suggest alter egos as a way to develop interior monologues. Students dialogue in groups of four. One person speaks; the second then voices the unspoken version of the comment. Student three converses with student one while student four responds to student three's unspoken comments. Students two and four are invisible to students one and three, who hold the primary conversation (*Student-Centered Language Arts* 291). The improvisation facilitates students thinking of their character on several levels. Some intriguing writing emerges from interior monologues. It encourages students to think about tone in their writing.

Moffett and Wagner also suggest two-person improvised dialogues as a way of verbalizing an interior monologue. Two students play two contradictory aspects of a single character. They might portray the cynical self-debating with the hopeful self. The students' goal is to aim for realism in their dialogue (291). The more students focus on developing characterization in their writing, the less their attention is centered strictly on plot. While the action in the writing is important, much more depth can be developed in the writing by spending time on other elements of fiction as well.

Specifics and Generalities

Convincing students that using specifics in their writing is more effective than using generalities is one aspect of teaching writing that continually bears repeating. Typically, student writers state the general idea and then move on, leaving the reader with no specifics to envision. Some students have a difficult time differentiating between general and specific, thinking that "types of cars" is a specific phrase instead of describing the "cherry red Corolla and the silver Malibu." Drama can visually emphasize the differences between generalities and specifics.

A pantomime activity suggested for beginning actors by Maria Novelly (15-17) works well in the context of the high school English classroom for writing instruction. The teacher divides the class into small groups of six or seven. As a group, students brainstorm a general activity and specific activities that fall under the umbrella of the general one. Novelly in her work suggests examples such as housework, camping, time at the beach, or circus acts (16-17) for some general activities. If a group chooses housework as their general activity, each individual pantomimes a specific activity to fulfill the general heading such as vacuuming, sweeping, feather-dusting, washing windows, scrubbing the floor, and drying dishes. The planning should only take five minutes, and then students are ready to pantomime for the class, remembering that pantomime means no speaking; only physical action is allowed. The teacher can ask the class for the general heading and then have students itemize the specifics, or vice versa. Each group presents their activity. In this format, using drama, students visually see how the specific activity zeros in on a concrete action in relation to the general heading.

When students consider their writing, specifics give the reader concrete images to visualize.

Another drama-in-the-classroom activity that can be used to convey the idea of generalities versus specifics involves students creating a scene that can only consist of specifics. An exercise for actors, suggested by Atkins, involves developing a short dialogue-- in pairs each student creates one line of dialogue (87-88). The teacher in the writing classroom can keep it at the one line and comment on the intrigue of the specifics, or she can allow it to continue into several lines of a scene. Modeling examples for the class can be helpful.

Student A: "What a nice dessert."

Student B: "You're so kind."

The above exchange is an example of demonstrating what not to do since the dialogue is general. Modeling an example like the following shows the contrast created with the specifics:

Student A: "Is this a new recipe for caramel-coated double-chocolate chunk brownies?"

Student B: "It is -- I just discovered it in the Pillsbury Bake Off contest national winners book, only to find out my boss is allergic to chocolate when I brought her a large piece."

The teacher puts students in pairs, giving them three minutes to come up with a specific exchange. Going around the room, each pair then dialogues.

The teacher can side-coach if some of the exchanges are not as specific as they could be. The teacher can help push students into thinking as concretely as possible. As

the students hear many concrete exchanges of dialogue, they perceive their effectiveness over the general comments. The teacher can invite students to offer a general substitution for a few of the dialogues in order to reinforce the differences between specific and general.

After doing one or both of these general-to-specific drama activities, the teacher can assign a written paragraph, so students have an immediate opportunity to practice using specifics in their own writing.

Generating Ideas-- Expository Writing

While drama in the classroom seems aptly suited as a teaching technique for what frequently is called creative writing in the high school English classroom, it can also be an effective tool when dealing with expository or researched writing. Writing about issues and ideas, rather than fictional narrative, is often considered boring by students. They seem to revert to the fourth grade, recalling how they wrote reports. The writing loses a sense of the author's voice and usually lacks energy because the writer feels no personal connection to the topic. Unless students find a way to be concerned about the topic, the writing is distanced and report-like. Drama offers students an avenue for engaging with the topic by placing them in roles that create personal connection with the writing. Theresa Rogers and Cecily O'Neill encourage a drama approach in the classroom because of the effects on students' writing. They see students apply the same level of interest, commitment, and "sense of style" to their writing that they showed in the drama activities ("Creating Multiple Worlds" 85).

Personal Experiences with "Otherness"

The theme of the "other" can be used to give examples of drama as a helpful tool for expository, issue-oriented essay writing. Initial work with the theme consists of students recalling a time when they were treated as "other." Students remember a situation where they did not feel a part of the group; they were different. How did they know they were "other?" The memory might be from back in third grade, seventh grade, or more recent. Would they react differently now than they did then if the situation occurred today? Students record the experience in a free-write. Students then think about a time that they have treated someone else as "other." Who did they decide was "other"? Why were they "other"? What behaviors did the student do to treat them as "other"? Looking back, would the student act differently if put in that situation today? Students free-write about this experience.

The free-writing personalizes the theme of "otherness"-- everyone has felt on the outside at some time or another, and we have all put someone in the position of "other," either intentionally or unintentionally. Once students realize they all have a connection to the theme, they are ready for the next activity. The teacher puts students in small groups of five to seven. Each group decides on a scenario based on one of the individual's experiences in the group or a logical incident that could realistically have occurred, related to several of their experiences. This second option allows some privacy if students feel uncomfortable announcing their own experience to the class. The group plans their improvisation for ten minutes then presents it to the class. In this way the theme of "otherness" is visually highlighted with everyone acknowledging a connection to the theme. Following the improvisations, the teacher can lead discussion about

feelings generated on the part of a student being treated as "other" and on the parts of those treating someone as "other." Discussion can also examine what determines being categorized as "other?" What similarities are seen in the improvisations?

At this point students have a tie with the theme before the class moves into seeing "otherness" in a broader context. Together, the class brainstorms while the teacher keeps notes of the list on the board-- who is treated as "other" in our society? The list in my classes has been extensive and detailed including specific categories such as the unattractive, homeless, obese, uneducated, and addicted. While there are some variations in the list in different classes, several categories consistently appear in all of the lists: non-Caucasians, women, gays/lesbians, elderly, and teenagers. Inevitably, these groups are identified by students as people that society treats as "other."

Racial Issues

Drama in the classroom can be used to make the relationship between society and these groups of "other" more realistic for high school students. Instead of thinking of the treatment of whole groups, students consider the ramifications of "otherness" for individual people in specific situations. The drama moves the discussion from theoretical talk to realistic scenarios. In order for students to look more closely at how race is branded by our society, a panel discussion about college entrance requirements can be set up. Some students take on the roles of the Board of Regents, some become students whose applications were accepted, and some are students whose applications were rejected. In a close vote during the prior year, the Board of Regents of a California college voted to discontinue its admissions' policy of using quotas as a procedure for college acceptance.

Since the Board of Regents has policy decision-making power, the meeting is held to revisit the issue of quotas. Students playing roles of students of race should divide up-- some Asian, African-American, and Hispanic. Depending on the high school, there may not be an ethnic diversity component to the classroom. A North Dakota high school classroom typically is all white with one or two students of a different ethnic background. Even if some classrooms do have a blend of ethnic backgrounds, it can be interesting to switch roles, anyway. A white student might play the role of a Hispanic, an African-American might play the role of an Asian, and an Asian might play the role of a white student. In this format, students view the situation from a different perspective than they usually would. The more research they have done in preparation for the dramatic activity the greater the depth of the drama in dealing with the issues. Information about typical quota policies, race profiles of admission applicants and graduates, and arguments for and against quota programs are all beneficial for a role-play based on contemporary issues.

As students denied admission work on their arguments, students accepted also work on their arguments. It can not be automatically assumed that students of ethnic backgrounds take a positive position on quotas. Some might argue that quotas make it difficult later on to prove one has a position based on capability rather than on race. Some might bring up a contention that African-Americans and Hispanics might need quota advantages, but Asian students do not need the educational quotas. As the students participate in the drama, they argue their points and listen differently than if it were strictly a class discussion. Students in role are more connected to the issue, as they view the situation from a different perspective than their own.

Orientation Issues

"Otherness" can be explored through drama with other groups identified by the class. Sexual orientation continues to be a controversial subject, which can be examined in light of "otherness" through a drama activity. A panel discussion of an open school board meeting provides a good dramatic forum. The situation outlined for the students is that a teacher, who has been in the school district for several years, recently has come out of the closet. The teacher has been wonderful in the classroom with much student and parental praise of him over the past several years. Parents have actively sought to get their students into his classes, and his peers have been vocal about the asset he is to the school district. Now with the news that he is gay, the school board meets to discuss whether to tender his resignation.

Students in the drama take on the roles of school board members, parents, and present and former students of the gay teacher. The teacher facilitating the drama assigns various roles to students that cover a range of approaches and attitudes toward the situation. Students are assigned roles as school board members with varying attitudes about the resignation, parents wanting the teacher to remain, parents demanding he leave, and students who have differing opinions. The drama will bring out more angles of the issue if a variety of views about the scenario are represented. During the course of the drama, students are confronted with the issues society currently wrestles with concerning homosexuality. The ways "otherness" plays itself out in the drama heightens the immediacy of the issue for students.

Gender Issues

Gender issues are also effectively explored through drama in this unit of "otherness." While some students might not think of gay people as a direct part of their reality, gender must be approached as an issue obviously directly impacting students in the room. At first glance students might think they have moved beyond the issue of regarding gender as "other," thinking that high school age students know women are as capable as men and vice versa. Drama can be a way of drawing students more directly into situations that bring up society's perception of gender versus the reality. While the perception of women might be "You've come a long way, baby" with total equality in the new millenium, the reality differs. A typical classroom discussion keeps the issue strictly on an intellectual level. A scenario played out through drama elicits some of the underlying expectations of society.

One scenario set up in the classroom could be a talk show with listeners calling in. The prompt for the discussion can be a man named Joe who has called in saying he is looking for the perfect wife, a good old-fashioned girl. He has proposed marriage to several women and been turned down. He wonders if there are any good, old-fashioned girls left out there? The students playing Joe and the talk show host are on the line to respond to callers. The rest of the students in the class take on the roles of callers, responding to the topic. One question may involve having Joe clarify what he means by an old-fashioned girl. The definition of a "perfect wife" would probably be addressed by callers. With side-coaching from the teacher, Joe could push the discussion by describing the "perfect wife" as one who might have her own job, but when the kids are sick, would want to be the one to stay home with the kids. She would want to have a clean house and

be a great cook. She would not resort to frozen foods either, only the best for her-- food from scratch. She would be available for social events with Joe and his associates but would also want Joe to have social time on his own, so she would take care of the kids. These are just some examples Joe could suggest. The callers' responses might delve into perceiving that Joe's expectations are of a 1950s wife but that maybe in reality the woman is still expected to bear the brunt of housework, even if both woman and man are busy. Men's issues might arise during the call-in show, also. A caller might ask if Joe is willing to be a house-husband or a Mr. Mom. Issues of men who choose such a role still being viewed as "other" could come up. The drama generates real reactions to the issues instead of students' politically correct intellectual responses to society's views on gender.

Age Issues

Since ageism appears on student lists of those treated as "other" in our society, on both ends of the spectrum-- the elderly and teenagers, drama allows exploration of the theme in concrete ways. For many high school students, the elderly seem completely distant, except for a grandparent or elderly neighbor. It is difficult for high school students to imagine people being 50 years old, much less 80 years old. In preparation for the class period exploring the elderly through drama, students can be asked to consider their community. What accommodations are made for the elderly? What are expectations of the elderly? What would an elderly person living in the community contend with? Students can be asked to observe some interactions between people in the community and the elderly, such as retailers or waitresses. Students come to class having made some observations over a period of several days.

In class the drama activity proceeds. Most students take on the roles of elderly people living in this community. They are at a town council meeting with an agenda item set to discuss the lives of elderly in the community. A few students take the roles of town council-people. A couple of students might take on the role of middle-aged people who are attending the meeting for other agenda items but get involved in the discussion of the elderly. Points raised by the "elderly" students may acknowledge ways they are accommodated, things that are appreciated and made use of, such as the community senior center or the senior bus. Others might voice concerns or complaints about specific issues. Students draw on evidence they culled from their observations around town. The discussion might take several directions, but always students are thinking about the elderly through the eyes of the elderly. The drama facilitates students' taking a different perspective, which draws them into the issue of how the elderly are treated as "other" instead of maintaining a distanced objectivity.

The elderly are not the only age considered "other." Many students think that teenagers are treated as "other" by adults. Since the class consists of teens, the opposite of the previous situation exists. Instead of needing to use drama as a way of drawing students into a closer connection with the group, like the elderly, drama can be used to pull them back a step from the issue of teens as a category of "other". They will have their own examples of ways teens are treated as "other," but using a specific scenario with drama broadens their perspective.

The scenario is another town council meeting. During this meeting, one of the agenda items is the issue of teens loitering at the local mall. A city ordinance has been presented that no teens can hang out at the mall without being accompanied by an adult.

If teens have a specific purchase to make, they make it and leave. Adults are hired to monitor the mall, questioning groups of teens that do not appear to be gathering for a particular retail reason. The town council meeting is attended by students representing not only the council-people but also shop-owners, parents, and teens. Since the issue of having mall rules regarding teens loitering is a contemporary reality being addressed in some cities, the drama has particular resonance. Malls have experienced problems with teens that congregate in large numbers; the malls take the place of the streets. Students consider the issue and discuss various elements of it in the town council meeting; the drama helps students see it not only from the teen perspective, being treated as "other," but also from multiple perspectives of people involved in the situation. The drama allows students to take a step back from their own perspective as teens.

Throughout any of the drama activities involving scenarios of society's treatment of certain groups as "other," students interact with each other and the ideas while being in the shoes of those affected or closely involved. "Walk a mile in someone's moccasins" is an old adage that drama in the classroom facilitates. Throughout the drama activities, the teacher can be in certain roles to help push the discussion in various directions, or the teacher can have established that s/he will be side-coaching along the way. The teacher's influence can help steer students in the drama deeper into a situation rather than just touching on issues and moving on.

After the drama activities, the teacher can introduce a writing assignment. Students choose one of the groups considered "other" by society, develop a thesis, and write an essay exploring issues addressed by that group's position as "other." The drama helps generate various angles of the issue for the students to explore further in writing.

The writing itself becomes stronger and more impassioned because the student writer has connected with the topic.

As James Moffett stresses, students should be developing a range in the spectrum of their writing, so that they choose the best format for communicating their ideas (*Active Voice* 10-11). Optimally, as students in the high school English classroom shift between creative writing, expository writing, or persuasive writing, they use the tools at their disposal for communicating. Arthur Applebee also emphasizes that writing needs to be a method of learning and communicating students' ideas, rather than merely recording acquired knowledge (*Literature in Secondary School* 201). Instructional methods that encourage students' postulating their own questions and making their own meaning, that encourage collaborative work with peers and the teacher, and that encourage challenging learning tasks without being overwhelming are all effective for student learning. Drama in the classroom is one such method. Through drama, students generate ideas as well as build on ideas in the writing classroom.

CONCLUSION

A statement that Maxine Greene made at the 1999 National Council of Teachers of English Convention in Denver struck me. She said that facts are only data; they are incomplete things. The real learning occurs when students go beyond the facts. In contemporary high school classrooms, the push for accumulating knowledge that will show up on some standardized test is misdirected. Amassing a body of information does not constitute learning. Students must be guided to be active learners who make connections. Maxine Greene emphasizes that "the classroom situation most provocative of thoughtfulness and critical consciousness is the one in which teachers and learners find themselves conducting a kind of collaborative search, each from her or his lived situation" (*Releasing the Imagination* 23).

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which takes a "cross-cultural perspective of human cognition," outlines seven types of intelligence (Campbell xvi). While linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences are the most recognized and rewarded competencies in American schools, the five other intelligences-- spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal-- merit attention in acknowledging all students' proficiencies (Smagorinsky 5). In English education, Applebee's studies point out the tendency to assess students' reading and writing in quantifiable ways, "stressing the more logical functions of language, such as grammar and analysis." Scores of measurable outcomes do not target the aesthetic learning and meaning construction necessary in the English classroom. More educators are realizing the need to give

students opportunities for responding to course material in multiple ways, addressing multiple intelligences (Smagorinsky, *Expressions: Multiple Intelligences in the English Class 5*).

Teaching in the contemporary classroom requires imagination these days. Drama in the classroom is one way of drawing students into course texts and ideas as well as facilitating depth of thinking in their active learning process, targeting multiple intelligences. Learning through drama is a discovery process for both students and teacher alike. Drama pushes students' cognitive learning. As active learners they do not just absorb information; they formulate questions, interpret ideas, and synthesize connections. Drama offers a balance also with affective learning. Through drama, students are intrinsically motivated to learn. Instead of external motivation-- working for a grade from the teacher-- students want to explore and question for themselves. The collaborative aspects of drama are advantageous as peers push each other, stimulated by the work of the group. Students gain skills in working with their peers, developing communication skills as they listen to each other as well as convey their ideas as clearly as they can. Because drama meets students at their level, it is a method that builds students' self-confidence. Each student has experiences s/he brings to the classroom and the drama as students and teacher together explore texts and ideas. When a student's self-confidence is enhanced, the outcomes are positive, not only for that class but also for a lifetime of learning. Drama in the classroom is not a luxury meant only for gifted and talented students. It meets students at whatever level they are on and challenges them with positive outcomes.

The validity of drama's position in the contemporary high school classroom is voiced in *Imagining to Learn*:

Calls for "inquiry-based" education, "cooperative grouping," "caring communities," "holistic assessment," "integrated curricula," "learning as design," and "situated learning" are all examples of a shift from content-oriented and "drill-and-skill" views of education to more authentic meaning constructive approaches to classroom-based teaching and learning. The curriculum can no longer be regarded as a prepacked thing which is delivered to students; curriculum is meanings which are *cocreated* by teachers and students in their day-to-day lives in the classroom. In drama, meanings about matters of significance are continually created as teachers and students imagine, interact, reflect, and inquire together in situated, integrated contexts. (Wilhelm & Edmiston 14-15)

Teachers need not covertly conduct drama activities, hoping the high school principal will not walk by the classroom door. Drama as a pedagogical method is sound. Reams of educational theorists' paper advocate the benefits of a dramatic methodology at the high school level; however, I give the most weight to students' responses to the method. In theory drama in the classroom sounds viable, but the real test comes in the typical classroom, such as fourth hour 11th grade English class.

The following excerpts are from a student journal in one of my 11th/12th grade English classes. Since classroom drama was integral to the course, the following journal entries reflect a student's response to drama activities:

I would not trade this class for anything.... I can't believe how much it's helped me already. I don't even consider myself that shy in front of a group, and yet I'm noticing a difference ALREADY. I bet it will do really great things for the people who are shy. I think it's wonderful. I feel so good about myself when I come out of that class. I keep thinking we're going to run out of fun things to do, but when I get to class every day, there you are smiling and we start something new and fun. I've never once been bored. You always keep my mind going, to create and think about unique and creative things.

This journal entry was written by the student later in the semester:

Your question about what kinds of things have helped me... well I guess it's just the fact that you give that little extra push. When you think your [sic] done with ideas, you make us exceed the capacity to what we think we can do. Then we realize that we can do it. It's great. The class is starting to come together too. Feeling more comfortable, opening up more.

Notable more for its enthusiasm than writing style, this student's journal echoes the affirmations of the educational theorists concerning classroom drama. The student feels good about herself, the class, and her role in the class work. A student who acknowledges that she has "never once been bored" and appreciates that she is encouraged to "exceed the capacity to what we think we can do..." is one who feels positively about the learning experience. She will not soon forget the learning or the confidence she felt about learning in that classroom.

Betty Jane Wagner makes the point that while researchers for several decades have tried to encourage the use of drama in the classroom by "marshaling solid empirical evidence," the impact on actual teaching has been negligible. Wagner cites Lee Shulman's observation that "most teachers find specific cases and stories more powerful influences on their decisions than impersonally presented empirical findings, even though the latter constitute 'better' evidence" (*Educational Drama* 241). Wagner states that research and "reductionist reports of results" provide little help for daily life in the classroom. She suggests that the growth of drama in the classroom lies in "look[ing] at what good drama teachers do and...know[ing] which methods of introducing drama in the classroom are the most effective" (241).

The use of drama as a methodology will increase if teachers are provided with specific drama activities that they can use in their own classrooms. The activities described here are intended to function as a springboard for teachers. From here, they can begin to create their own activities, applicable to their own students. The key is to get teachers using drama in high school English classrooms. It should not remain relegated to the elementary classroom; its viability has been demonstrated. With these specific activities in hand, teachers can take a deep breath and begin.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

WARM-UPS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSROOM

While warm-ups are regular fare at the beginning of a sports practice or a physical education class, it may seem strange to think about warm-ups at the beginning of a high school English class. This appendix develops the rationale for using theatre warm-ups in the high school English classroom and describes specific applicable theatre warm-ups. Some of the warm-ups that I have compiled for this appendix are presented in the original form from theatre resources and included because they are useful in developing students' educational drama skills. Other exercises are adapted as warm-ups for working with literary texts. The warm-ups provide an effective vehicle for entering into the content material of the class period as well as promoting drama skill development.

Just as stretching out one's leg muscles is beneficial before doing intense sprint running in track, initial warm-ups in English class are beneficial for work during the class period. It is not uncommon in the initial five or ten minutes of a class to use focused free-writing on a particular idea to introduce the day's material. Drama warm-ups can function in the same way. Drama-in-the-classroom works most effectively when warm-ups are a part of the initial work done together as a class. The term "warm-ups" refers to theatre exercises and theatre games which can be used not only for a theatre rehearsal but also in the classroom. Following a confusing chemistry lecture, a successful accounting test, or a rowdy study hall, students' minds are on everything except English! Warm-ups facilitate focusing students' minds on English class and the task at hand. Other

preoccupations shift to the background while involvement in the warm-up takes the foreground. The warm-up time becomes an effective transition into the more in-depth work planned for the crux of the class period. A key to effective warm-ups in the classroom is that they are employed only for a short period of time. Warm-ups typically need to take only five to ten minutes of the period.

Besides being a helpful transition into English class, warm-ups serve several other purposes. Some warm-ups are designed to build trust among the participants. Many classmates may not know each other very well; trusting each other during drama-in-the-classroom activities might be difficult and so diminish the educational effectiveness of the activity. By working on exercises that build trust, students develop their relationships with each other.

Along with trust, many warm-up exercises foster a spirit of collaboration. Working together to accomplish an exercise is an integral part of many warm-ups useful in the classroom. The skills of working as a team carry through to later drama activity work with literary texts or students' writing. The more comfortable students are in working with each other, the more effective the class will be. Being a collaborative learner is not an inherent skill. Specific theatre warm-ups can help students develop their skills in working together, cooperatively rather than competitively.

Another positive attribute of warm-ups is honing students' concentration. In theatre, actors must constantly concentrate on stage, listening and responding. Concentration is equally important when working with drama in the classroom. Through warm-ups, students practice focusing, concentrating on the task at hand and blocking out extraneous information.

Warm-ups serve as an avenue for exercising students' imaginations. In my experience, it seems less and less emphasis is placed on creative imagining as students advance through our school systems. While using one's imagination in elementary school is prioritized, the focus seems to shift by the time students reach high school. Absorbing information and processing the material become the educational goals in many high school classrooms. Imagination is deemed less important than content area acquisition. Fostering students' imaginations is a key facet of drama in the classroom, and warm-ups provide a venue for stimulating and exercising students' creative and spontaneous imaginings. Many warm-ups stress spontaneity. John Hodgson and Ernest Richards believe that the more one is absorbed in the activity, responding moment to moment, the more natural the dramatic situation will be (56). Greg Atkins, a teacher and performer of improvisation, stresses the mental agility needed for many warm-ups. With improvisation, instead of trying to pre-plan a clever, witty statement, he encourages trusting one's ability to think and respond in the moment. Being tuned into one's impulses creates surprises in the drama (6-8). Atkins discourages censoring one's responses by assuming an idea will not work without trying it. He feels it is important "not to [block] the creative process" (9). Warm-ups provide ways for students to develop the skills of thinking on their feet and trusting their ideas. The skills then transfer to the drama activities when working with literary texts or students' writing.

Trust Development

Since the structure of many high school classrooms does not encourage student interaction, students can sit in several classes together and still not know each other very well. Likewise, students may be acquaintances but have never worked cooperatively

together. Trust exercises are especially effective early in the semester. The trust developed between students during the first several weeks is then built upon as students are involved with more educational drama throughout the semester. The following trust exercises work well in the classroom as general warm-ups, regardless of the class lesson for the day.

Fingertips

Amiel Schotz describes this trust exercise as a good one for students working together in pairs. Two students touch all ten fingers together, by fingertip. Their goal is to move around without losing fingertip contact. One student is the leader; the partner, following, closes his/her eyes. While kneeling, sitting, bending sideways, and walking, the leader guides the partner throughout the room. The pace tends to be set by the partner following because the leader needs to keep contact with his/her partner (21). After two to three minutes in this arrangement, the teacher calls out "switch," and the follower becomes the leader. It is helpful for the teacher to remind students throughout the exercise that their goal is to work together. The leader must protect the follower from bumping into desks, walls, or other pairs of students, and the follower depends on the leader's guidance, trusting the partner where s/he is led.

Leading By a String

This warm-up, with students also operating in pairs, involves a leader and a blindfolded follower. The two hold a piece of string between them. Four to five feet is a workable length for a classroom because it gives some space between partners but does not create the collisions with other pairs that a longer string would cause. Each leader's goal is to verbally maneuver his/her partner over and around obstacles that have been

placed throughout the room. Desks scattered strategically, a vertical pile of books in the middle of the floor, and several book-bags in a random pattern may all provide challenges to the pair as the leader verbally guides the blind partner. The only physical connection is the string (Schotz 21). Again, after two to three minutes the teacher announces "switch," and the partners reverse roles. This warm-up also provides an opportunity for students to be in a position of trusting each other.

Driving the Car

I learned this warm-up on a low-ropes course several years ago and have found that it transfers successfully to the classroom. In partners one student is the "car" and the other is the "driver." This is a nonverbal exercise, so non-verbal signals are needed for the driver to communicate with the car. With the driver standing directly behind the student as the car, a tap on the car's right shoulder indicates a right turn, a left shoulder tap signifies a left turn, two hands on the car's waist communicates reverse, and two hands on both of the car's shoulders means stop. When the driver is not touching the car, the car should be moving forward. The challenge is that the student as the car is blindfolded, so the driver determines where it is safe to travel without bumping into people or obstacles. Again, the teacher should side-coach, reminding pairs that speed is not the point (although typically the car will not be moving very quickly) and light taps on the car are sufficient. The teacher continually reminds students that it is a non-verbal exercise. Verbal instructions such as "step left and then go forward" are not allowed. The driver must physically signal the direction of movement to the car. After two to three minutes, the partners should switch roles. An environment where students have

experienced trusting each other facilitates the depth of learning students can accomplish together.

Collaborative Skill Development

Since working together collaboratively is required for drama in the classroom, warm-ups that facilitate students working together on short exercises build teamwork skills.

Half-time Show

This is a physical warm-up by Greg Atkins involving the group working together to form a letter of the alphabet without speaking or gesturing with hands. By moving and being aware of each other's positions, students together create a letter or a word (32). For starters, a student designates the letter to be shaped on the board; then, the class physically creates the letter with their bodies. After students do this method a few times, they can silently work as a group and create a letter without its being spelled ahead of time.

An alternate version of this warm-up, which has worked quite successfully for me, involves students lying down to create a letter. If there is space, the class can be divided in half with each half trying to be the first to create the letter called out by the teacher. Cooperation among students either as a whole group or in smaller groups is essential to the success of the activity.

Machines

A never-fail warm-up for getting students to work together physically involves building a machine. Students in small groups may create an actual machine such as a lawn-mower, sewing machine, or toaster. As a whole group they may build an abstract

machine. One student moves to the center, enacts a repetitious movement with her/his arm, leg, or body, and a corresponding sound of some kind. A second student joins the first by touching in some way and adds his/her own movement and sound; gradually all join in. Eventually the entire class has created an abstract machine with moving parts. The teacher can side-coach the machine by encouraging it to speed up as it works at full speed then coaching it to slow down until as a group, feeling the rhythm of movement and sound, it eventually stops (Novelly 50-52, Heinig, *Improvisation* 10, Atkins 41). The warm-up is a successful one with students all contributing to a group effort.

Sculpture With People Clay

Betty Keller describes an effective group-building exercise in *Improvisations in Creative Drama* involving students molding each other as clay. In small groups of three to four, one student as sculptor molds the others into a large non-human "work of art." The sculpture must be titled and put on display. Keller suggests side-coaching a rule: "Be kind to your clay." Sculptors should remember to sculpt positions the clay-students can hold stationary for awhile (16). Students form a group bond in working together and then taking pride in the art created by their group.

Model/ Artist/ Clay

A comparable exercise is Greg Atkins' version of molding people out of clay. Students are placed in trios. One student as the clay faces the student who is the artist. The third student stands behind the clay, unseen by the clay, and functions as the model. The model strikes a pose. The artist must only use gestures to indicate the positions the clay is to be molded to imitate the model. The artist cannot touch, speak, or assume the pose; instructions must be given through gestures (42). Students are challenged by the

non-verbal component of the exercise and motivated to work together to achieve a likeness of the model.

These warm-ups are examples of classroom activities that foster collaboration. Instead of being preparatory to one particular lesson, they can be a lead in to a wide range of lessons for the period. Some group warm-ups, though, can be geared directly toward a specific lesson that will follow during a class period.

Chain Sentence

Maria C. Novelly offers a warm-up involving participants in a circle. Each person adds one word to help build a sentence. *A, and, the, and prepositions* do not count as a student's single word. The goal is to work together to create a logical sentence as a group. Novelly then suggests a more advanced exercise after the group has mastered the sentence activity. The group makes each word of the sentence alphabetical (92). The teacher can help by side-coaching, reminding students to keep the sentence length manageable. When a sentence logically ends, the next student starts a new sentence. Students must listen closely in order to add words that fit the idea being created. This warm-up becomes a worthwhile prelude to the following "One Word Story."

One Word Story

The same idea, each student adding a word to a group idea, can be worked with in several ways. Greg Atkins suggests creating a group story with each actor adding a word at a time (36). For work with students, I suggest tying it into class content material. If the class is in the midst of working with a literary text for the day, the students can use the format to work together, reviewing the plot by going around the circle hitting plot highlights one word at a time. The exercise is challenging enough to keep students on

task, yet it is not overwhelming. Students must be balancing both their own impressions of what ideas to highlight from the plot as well as trying to follow where their peers are going with each particular sentence. Since each student can only add one word at a time, the results are definitely a group effort.

One Word Interview

On the same principle, an interview format can be set up with one person acting as a talk-show host and three others playing the single role of an interviewee. In answering the questions, each of the three says one word at a time to respond (Atkins 36-37). An adaptation of this exercise facilitates study of a literary text. The student as talk-show host asks questions of a character from a short story, novel, or drama. The three students, thinking about how the literary character would respond to the question, answer together by listening to each other and filling in one word at a time. The students observing the four in front find it humorous to see the three looking at each other, assuming they knew where the others were going with the sentence and then hearing that one was perceiving the character's answer in a different way. The interview functions well as a short exercise, employing facets of characterization in a literary text, while working closely as a small group.

Continuing Story

Another warm-up that can be used to review the literary plot of a particular text involves the group telling a story. In the theatre exercise, an actor points to someone who tells a story until the actor points to someone else. The speaker stops mid-sentence or even mid-word. The next one pointed to must pick up the story exactly where it left off without a break in the flow of thought (Atkins 37). An adaptation of this transfers to the

classroom well. The story being told is the narrative of a literary text; the student pointing changes speakers at will, so students need to be listening, alert, ready to pick up the narrative when they are chosen. Warm-ups such as these not only help develop students' abilities to work collaboratively but also focus students' minds on the text being studied during the class period.

Concentration Development

There are several warm-ups teachers can use to hone students' concentration. With most of these, sustained concentration is required when the entire class is working together toward a goal, and each student is a necessary link. A student does not want to be the one to trip up the rest of the group, so there is a social motivation to fully concentrate.

Last Letter Slap-Clap-Snap

One such warm-up involves a group rhythm. Depending on the size of the class, the teacher either groups everyone together in one circle or divides them into two circles of twelve to fifteen. The group will start a rhythm involving two hands slapping the thighs once, clapping once, a left snap, and a right snap. Once all have established the rhythm, a word gets spoken on the second snap. If one student calls out "feather," the next student in the circle calls out a word starting with the last letter of the previous word on the right-handed snap. The student might say "red," whereby the next person responds with "doorbell." Students must concentrate to keep a consistent rhythm and not mis-time their word. Words cannot be repeated, so the challenge increases as the exercise progresses (Atkins 50-51).

Concentration

This warm-up also involves a group rhythm. In a circle, students number themselves consecutively. They start the same slap-clap-snap-snap rhythm as in the previous warm-up. This time students call out their own number on the first snap and a classmate's number on the second snap. Again, the rhythm should not falter, so students must concentrate. If a person misspeaks, s/he sits out and that number is deleted. As the circle diminishes, the challenge becomes remembering which numbers remain (Atkins 54). Speeding up the tempo, as the warm-up continues, also increases the challenge and thus the concentration level. While these exercises are not tied to any particular literary text, they are still valid in their objective of facilitating students' development of concentration.

Accumulation

The effort of the group creating an alphabetical list linked with specific texts requires concentration. Where the traditional theatre warm-up involves an accumulation of nouns, e.g. "I like apples" with the next person saying, "I like apples and beetroots" (*Drama Guidelines* 55), elements of the text such as characters, setting, plot, and symbols can be the basis of this warm-up. If Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* is the text being explored, students will focus on applicable words in alphabetical order. The repeated mantra might include the following: "*Much Ado* means **A**rragon;" *Much Ado* means **A**rragon and **B**eatrice." The accumulation continues with possibilities like **C**omedy of Shakespeare, **D**on Pedro, **E**vil intent, **F**riar, **G**ullible Claudio, **H**ero, **I**gnorant local watch, **J**ealousy. As a result, in the initial minutes of the class period, students are focusing their concentration fully on the text at hand.

Imagination Development

Stretching students' imaginations should be a primary goal in the English classroom, regardless of the teacher's style and methods. Facilitating imaginative activity is a natural component of drama in the classroom. Since it is an effective method of sharpening students' skills in imaginative thinking, warm-ups provide a ground for exercising and developing those skills. Warm-ups stretch the imagination in relatively non-threatening situations. During an activity that takes three to five minutes, students push themselves, exploring the reaches of their imaginations. Some of the following warm-ups relate to literary texts while building theatre skills, and others target basic skills and imagination development without direct reference to a particular text.

Using an Object with Imagination

An effective warm-up with secondary students can be as basic as considering the multiple uses of an object. I have used objects such as a discarded cardboard wrapping paper tube. First, the teacher pantomimes an activity using the object, such as raising it horizontally eye level and peering out at the horizon. Students call out their surmises of the role of the object in that situation, such as a telescopic device. Then, another student takes the object and changes its function. Students observe how imagination transforms the object in each new setting (Atkins 51-52). The object can shift from being a golf club to a twirling baton to a javelin. The teacher can challenge the group to come up with twenty-five different uses. At the beginning of the warm-up, students think it is an improbable goal, but they are pleased when several minutes later the ideas keep coming. A key to the effectiveness of the exercise is to keep it moving. Each new pantomimer gets the object from the one just finished. Maria Novelly encourages pantomime use

early on in work with drama. Pantomime can be a fairly non-threatening activity for students who have not done much work with drama in the classroom. They do not have to worry about what to say. Instead, they can just concentrate on their idea and conveying it physically (24).

Walking Warm-up

Having students walk or move, spurred on by their imaginations, can be an easy and worthwhile warm-up. Whether students walk “through a dark, dangerous alley,” “in the burning desert looking for water,” “in a bowl of feathers,” “in outer space, weightless” (Novelly 29) or “as an athlete after a mile run,” “as a 10 year old whose shoes are too tight,” or “as a well-known movie star walking into a restaurant” (Cassady71), they are actively putting their imaginations to work. The movement across the classroom may be directed by varying emotions such as students crossing lazily, curiously, wearily, joyfully, or sheepishly (McCaslin, *Creative Drama in the Classroom* 52).

Textual connection can also work well with this warm-up. The teacher can direct students to move as Cornelia might while tiptoeing through Granny’s bedroom in “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” or as Granny walking up the aisle to her first wedding and then after being jilted. During the study of Twain’s “The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg,” the teacher can instruct students to cross the room as citizens of Hadleyburg who are not any of the prominent nineteen, and then to cross as one of the nineteen prior to the public unveiling of the secret statement. Students can be directed to walk as one of them trying to slip out of the courtroom before his/her note is read, bringing public humiliation. In a couple of initial minutes of class, this warm-up

encourages students to use their imaginations and to follow through with a physical movement, thinking of a character in a particular setting. The connections to texts can be readily made with many significant literary moments to engage students' imaginations. Because all of the students move simultaneously, individual students do not feel self-conscious; they are not on the spot, being observed.

Group Improvisation

Large group improvisations work well early on with students and later in their drama skill development. Everyone is involved in the same scene, so for the students who are uncomfortable with being watched, group improvisations provide ways for students to take on a role without an audience. Group improvisations can be situated in a variety of settings such as a playground, a beach, or a bus stop. The teacher assigns individuals or two to three students to a particular role or task within the setting. Students then enter the scene, one or two at a time, paying attention to how they can logically become a part of the scene as it unfolds. Some students may enact their role independently of the group, as in a student playing hopscotch, while other students may interact with each other's roles within that scene.

A toy store is one group improvisation setting providing a forum for students' imaginations. Students take on the roles of various toys in the toy store. In the wee hours of the night, the toys come to life—whether they are a set of soldiers, a fuzzy bunny, or a Barbie doll (Jones 54, McCaslin 97). Students imagine and play out the appropriate movement as well as the concerns or enjoyments of each toy as it comes to life.

This is an interesting warm-up in conjunction with Toni Cade Bambara's short story, "The Lesson." Recreating an upper class toy store stirs students' imaginations and

puts them up on their feet, interacting with each other in the first moments of the class period.

What to Do With the Money?

Hodgson and Richards suggest a scene where characters decide what to do with money they are given (61). This warm-up can be tied into a literary text being studied that day. Students take on the role of a character from the novel, short story, or drama being studied. Given \$75, what would their character do-- give it away, invest it, save it, spend it, or lose it? The teacher may assign several students the same character because often the text does not have twenty-five characters. With multiple students playing the same character, the class compares and contrasts the varying views toward the \$75.

If this exercise is used with a class exploring *Measure for Measure*, a student as Isabella may give away the \$75 to those who, through no fault of their own, need it, such as an orphanage or a family whose house burned in a fire. Angelo might invest the money for use later on. The Duke might spend it on something that initially seems foolish but later proves to have an educational purpose, such as a roomful of balloons for a party he throws for those showing mercy in a week's period. Lucio might either lose it while gambling in a pub one night, or spend it immediately on drinks and women, and then concoct a story to explain to the giver how it disappeared. In a circle, students explain as specifically as they can their view of a character in reference to the \$75. Again, the exercise is not meant to take much time, but the warm-up gets students pondering characterization. A pillow tossed from one student to another indicates the next speaker.

Freeze in Position

Some warm-ups can stimulate the imagination, which in turn can feed into ideas for students' writing. An exercise used by actors called "Freeze Tag" can be used in the classroom as well. Two people up in front engage in an activity. Once the activity is fully established, the teacher calls "freeze." The two must freeze immediately in whatever position they are in. One new student goes up, takes the place of one of the frozen students, and begins an entirely new activity, logically suggested by their physical positions but as different as possible from the previous scene (Atkins 75-76). Two students might portray a nurse's aide helping an elderly person shuffle down the hall. The new person taking the position previously held by the aide may change the activity to a dance teacher showing a particular bending movement in a dance routine. The other student picks up on what the new scene is and responds accordingly.

Each activity lasts only a few moments until the teacher calls "freeze," so it becomes a great warm-up for quick-thinking and imaginative scenes. Any of the scenes may become fodder for creative writing by the students.

Warm-ups need to take only a few minutes of the class period, but they can accomplish so much. They make the initial moments of class worthwhile, even with something as mundane as relocating desks and chairs. Because most high school English teachers do not have a classroom used solely for drama, desks and chairs are standard fixtures in the room. Space without desks in rows is beneficial for drama in the classroom and text-related activities can be used during the task of moving desks out of the way. Brian Way mentions several scenarios for students to play when clearing furniture from a space. Students may carry desks as if they were transferring medical

supplies arriving for researchers in jungle heat, moving delicate, precious ornaments, or creating a space platform as astronauts (slow motion in outer space) (83-84).

Instead of spending three minutes occupied with the purely logistical task of opening up space, students can be entering the world of a literary text they are studying. Katherine Anne Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" provides one example. The teacher instructs students to move the desks in the context of Granny Weatherall's sickroom; Cornelia is carrying in a tray of food or needing to quietly move a chair or two out of the way to give the doctor room to examine Granny. Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" could propel students as townspeople to volunteer, out of curiosity, to move furniture out of Emily's house after she has died, so they can get a look inside her place, which had been off-limits for years. Susan Glaspell's short drama "Trifles" could set the scenario of the investigative team looking for any clues to the murder, inspecting all items, tagging them for later reference, and clearing the space once each item has been examined. The activity facilitates students delving into thoughts of characters even in the prosaic task of clearing space of furniture for the drama work in the rest of the class period.

For a teacher who is just beginning to work with drama in the classroom, warm-ups can be a non-threatening way to work with students up on their feet. Warm-ups allow the teacher and students to practice basic creative drama skills. While they are not necessary to the success of later drama activities in the classroom, they can be beneficial. Warm-ups facilitate focusing students' attention and concentration on the moment, gaining group trust, building collaborative skills, and stimulating the imagination. While students might think they are merely playing games in class, albeit theatre games, the

teacher understands the pedagogical advantages for using warm-ups with drama in the classroom.

APPENDIX B

SPECIFIC POEMS-- CHAPTER IV: CLASSROOM DRAMA AND POETRY

"Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock" -- Wallace Stevens

The houses are haunted
By white nightgowns.
None are green,
Or purple with green rings,
Or green with yellow rings,
Or yellow with blue rings,
None of them are strange,
With socks of lace
And beaded ceintures.
People are not going
To dream of baboons and periwinkles.
Only, here and there, an old sailor,
Drunk and asleep in his boots,
Catches tigers
In red weather. (*Adventures in American Literature* 761)

"anyone lived in a pretty how town" -- e.e. cummings

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief

bird by snow and stir by still
 anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
 laughed their crying and did their dance
 (sleep wake hope and then)they
 said their nevers they slept their dream

stars rain sun moon
 (and only the snow can begin to explain
 how children are apt to forget to remember
 with up so floating many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
 (and noone stooped to kiss his face)
 busy folk buried them side by side
 little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
 and more by more they dream their sleep
 noone and anyone earth by april
 wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
 summer autumn winter spring
 reaped their sowing and went their came
 sun moon stars rain (*Adventures in American Literature* 793)

"Richard Cory" -- E. A. Robinson

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
 We people on the pavement looked at him:
 He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
 Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
 And he was always human when he talked;
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
 "Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich-- yes, richer than a king--
 And admirably schooled in every grace:
 In fine, we thought that he was everything
 To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
 Went home and put a bullet through his head. (*Adventures in American Literature* 497)

"Dedications"-- Adrienne Rich

I know you are reading this poem
 late, before leaving your office
 of the one intense yellow lamp-spot and the darkening window
 in the lassitude of a building faded to quiet
 long after rush-hour. I know you are reading this poem
 standing up in a bookstore far from the ocean
 on a grey day of early spring, faint flakes driven
 across the plains' enormous spaces around you.
 I know you are reading this poem in a room where too much has happened for you to
 bear
 where the bedclothes lie in stagnant coils on the bed
 and the open valise speaks of flight
 but you cannot leave yet. I know you are reading this poem
 as the underground train loses momentum and before running
 up the stairs
 toward a new kind of love
 your life has never allowed.
 I know you are reading this poem by the light
 of the television screen where soundless images jerk and slide
 while you wait for the newscast from the *intifada*.
 I know you are reading this poem in a waiting-room
 of eyes met and unmeeting, of identity with strangers.
 I know you are reading this poem by fluorescent light
 in the boredom and fatigue of the young who are counted out,
 count themselves out, at too early an age. I know
 you are reading this poem through your failing sight, the thick
 lens enlarging these letters beyond all meaning yet you read on
 because even the alphabet is precious.
 I know you are reading his poem as you pace beside the stove
 warming milk, a crying child on your shoulder, a book in your
 hand
 because life is short and you too are thirsty.
 I know you are reading this poem which is not in your language
 guessing at some words while others keep you reading
 and I want to know which words they are.
 I know you are reading this poem listening for something, torn

between bitterness and hope
 turning back once again to the task you cannot refuse.
 I know you are reading this poem because there is nothing else
 left to read
 there where you have landed, stripped as you are. (25-26)

"To a Waterfowl" -- William Cullen Bryant

Whither, midst falling dew,
 While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
 Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
 Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
 Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
 As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
 Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
 Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
 Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
 On the chafed oceanside?

There is a Power whose care
 Teaches thy way along that pathless coast--
 The desert and illimitable air--
 Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
 At that far height, the cold thin atmosphere,
 Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
 Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
 Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
 And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
 Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
 Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
 Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
 And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
 Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,

In the long way that I must tread alone,
 Will lead my steps aright. (*Adventures in American Literature* 151)

"The Chambered Nautilus" -- Oliver Wendell Holmes

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
 Sails the unshadowed main--
 The venturous bark that flings
 On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
 In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
 And coral reefs lie bare,
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
 And every chambered cell,
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
 As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
 Before thee lies revealed--
 Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
 That spread his lustrous coil;
 Still, as the spiral grew,
 He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
 Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
 Built up its idle door,
 Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
 Child of the wandering sea,
 Cast from her lap, forlorn!
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
 While on mine ears it rings,
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
 As the swift seasons roll!
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Till thou at length art free,
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea! (*Adventure in American Literature*
 312-313)

"I Hear America Singing" -- Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
 Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe
 and strong,
 The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
 The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves
 off work,
 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the
 deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
 The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter
 singing as he stands,
 The woodcutter's song, the plowboy's on his way in the morning,
 or at noon intermission or at sundown,
 The delicious singing of the mother, of the young wife at work,
 or of the girl sewing or washing,
 Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
 The day what belongs to the day-- at night the party of young
 fellows, robust, friendly,
 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs. (*Adventures in American
 Literature* 354)

"Mending Wall" -- Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
 That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it
 And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
 And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
 The work of hunters is another thing:
 I have come after them and made repair
 Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
 But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
 To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
 No one has seen them made or heard them made,
 But at spring mending-time we find them there.
 I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
 And on a day we meet to walk the line
 And set the wall between us once again.
 We keep the wall between us as we go.
 To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
 And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
 We have to use a spell to make them balance:
 "Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
 We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
 Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,

One on a side. It comes to little more:
 There where it is we do not need the wall:
 He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
 My apple trees will never get across
 And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
 He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
 Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
 If I could put a notion in his head:
 "Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
 Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
 Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
 What I was walling in or walling out,
 And to whom I was like to give offense.
 Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
 That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
 He said it for himself. I see him there,
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
 Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
 He will not go behind his father's saying,
 And he likes having thought of it so well
 He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." (*Adventures in American Literature*
 745-746)

"The Seven Ages of Man" -- William Shakespeare

All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players.
 They have their exits and their entrances,
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
 Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
 Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
 Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 Seeking the bubble reputation
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
 In fair round belly with good capon lined,
 With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,

Full of wise saws and modern instances,
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered Pantaloon
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. (*Adventures in Reading* 391-392)

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