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Dual-language drama as a door to classic literature

Ezekiel Glenn Stear

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DUAL-LANGUAGE DRAMA AS A DOOR TO CLASSIC LITERATURE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Bilingual/Cross-Cultural Education

by
Ezekiel Glenn Stear
June 2007
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TO CLASSIC LITERATURE

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Approved by:

Dr. Barbara Flores, First Reader

Dr. Enrique Murillo, Second Reader
ABSTRACT

In this project, I argue for the formulation of a dramaturgical pedagogy centered on primary language theatrical adaptations of the classic literature as prescribed in the California Social Studies and Language Arts Standards from grades 5 to 8. Using drama will give students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds access to works of literature from which they have traditionally been marginalized.

Evidence for drama as a powerful motivator to encourage student interest in literature comes from a variety of sources ranging from socio-cultural approaches to more traditional text-oriented strains of thought. This project will develop curriculum and materials from my own experiences in a sixth grade Spanish-English Dual Language Program using dramatic adaptations of ancient literature I authored.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the course of this project, I have been undeservedly favored with the help of many family, friends, and colleagues. I am grateful to my mother Mary Kay Stear, my sister April, and my lovely fiancée Olivia. Their patience and support made his present work possible. In addition, I owe a debt of gratitude to John Bawden, Jonathan Townsend, Christopher Biffle, Rafe Esquith, the Pyeatt family, Ben Thomerson, Edward Olivos, Margarita Casas-Machado, Dr. Jill Kemper-Mora, Grupo Hoy, Timothy Thelander and Andrea Castañeda Aguilar. A special thanks goes to my thesis advisor, Dr. Barbara Flores, and to my reader Dr. Enrique Murillo. Both of these professors generously gave of their time during the final preparation of this thesis.
DEDICATION

I write this in loving memory of my Father Ken. He opened the door to some of my greatest teachers: stories.
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

Although in recent years the demands of high stake testing have persuaded many districts to eliminate the arts from their budgets and curricula, evidence of the effectiveness of the arts in promoting a variety of academic and social skills abounds. In relation to language development and literacy, drama in particular offers teachers and students alike a wealth of material for meaningful learning experiences imbued with authentic language usage. In such activity, students of all walks of life, but in a unique sense English Language Learners (ELL's), come into close contact with texts of literary import. Classroom drama, once commonly viewed as simply a worthwhile extra curricular activity, through research is now beginning to show itself as a tool to support language development and enhance overall academic performance.

Context of the Problem

The Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum for the upper elementary grades, junior high and high school
boast of a number of works of classic literature. Yet, while California state policy dictates that students read and be familiar with them, current materials usually contain mere excerpts, usually in lofty prose versions. Hence, a curriculum gap has come to exist in upper elementary grades and junior high for Spanish-speaking ELL students in the area of Language Arts. For that reason, the need to address the lack of quality renditions of classic literature for ELL populations forms the impetus of this project. In contrast to present basal-centered curricula, there is a need to write works of authentic literature with a view to maximizing bilingual and biliterate students' cognitive and linguistic schemata.

The current problem of disengagement from academic tasks - and specifically from works of literature - is by no means unique to bilingual and biliterate students. The issue is noticeable among many students in upper elementary and junior high regardless of cultural or linguistic background (Moffet, et. al., 1992, p. 92). However, this difficulty of making the material of state-mandated classic literature relevant and engaging to students is exacerbated by the marginalization that
ELL, bilingual and biliterate students experience in public schools. English Language Learners, when faced with classic literature, often find themselves up against yet another force of alienation.

Significance of the Project

The significance of this project thus lies in the relationship between Curriculum Development as a field and the changing ethnic and linguistic demographics of the United States. Traditional text-centered views of what education should be continue to hold sway in the U.S. and in western societies in general. Clearly many occupations in our society that wield economic and political power (e.g. doctors, lawyers, or teachers) require a considerably high level of literacy. Yet the obstacles facing many ELL students further complicate their task of accessing the kind of literary works that will prepare them for academic success in junior high, high school and post-secondary education.

While success in school is not always directly related to success in the workplace, it is safe to say that academic skills generally accompany affluence. Hence, in a very concrete way, encouraging student
proclivity toward classic literature would be a service to them. Drama, like no other medium, is capable of making literature relevant and meaningful to these students.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to argue for the formulation of a pedagogy of primary language theatrical adaptations in order to give students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds access to works of literature that have traditionally been considered as "classic". The mediation of classic literature through drama would increase students' opportunity for academic success on the secondary and post-secondary levels of education necessary to access occupations within spheres of power and influence in our society.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project.

Blocking - With its origin in the Theatre Arts, this term refers to all of predetermined movements and positions that an actor carries out on stage during a performance. Blocking must be well orchestrated to
allow for the audience and the actors to fully enter into the performance.

**Classic Literature** - This term refers to all works of literature commonly held to contain and communicate universal and timeless essential information on what it means to be human. Classic literature tends to contain archetypal characters and situations that are repeated in other works of literature and the popular consciousness of a culture.

**Classroom Theatre** - This term refers to formal uses of acting in an educational setting, with the purpose of rehearsing and performing a play. Producing a quality product that entertains is the main goal of classroom theatre. This use of acting is educational, however, since it requires participants to understand their character’s motivations and emotions. Classroom theatre also requires a considerable level of reading comprehension, and the oral fluency consistent with excellent public speaking.

**Dramatic Adaptation** - This is the process of transforming a prose version of a story into a script, usually for the purpose of a performance.
Literacy - The California Content Standards divide literacy into four main components: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. Literacy in this sense is not strictly concerned with reading and writing, but offers the possibility of integrating all of an individual's linguistic faculties.

Process Drama - This term, invented by British drama expert Dorothy Heathcote, refers to all uses of role play performance that do not have the end of a production in mind. Students may perform for each other within the context of any number of assignments and focus only on the linguistic and cognitive value of the performance. Hence, process drama is not meant to entertain, but to teach, although entertainment can be a byproduct of the activity.

Process playwright - This term, which I have modified from "process drama" (Mc Caslin, 1975), I use to refer to the sum of a teacher's writing and exploration. Process playwrights are comfortable with the uncertainty of learning outcomes, and are willing to provide relevant materials for their students.
Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided among three main axes. The first is the literature review, which itself has a dual purpose. Literature is presented which defends the use of drama independently of its application in English Language Learner or dual language classrooms. However, certain findings form a constant thread throughout the literature review that suggests the medium of classroom drama may be a particularly useful tool for ELLs and bilingual/biliterate students.

Another principal axis of the present work regards the researcher's personal experiences with classroom drama. Stear gives an overview of two year's experiences with his original Spanish language adaptation of The Epic of Gilgamesh in the context of a dual language classroom. The thematic Social Studies and Language Arts unit culminating in the presentation of the play is explained. Stear also includes critical reflections on his work as a dramatist teacher.

The final axis of the thesis consists of policy and curricular recommendations, accompanied by educator resources for the wider implementation of classroom drama. By aligning the California Social Studies Content
Standards with specific works of authentic historical literature, recommendations for policy and curriculum development naturally follow. The appendices are meant largely for teachers who wish to use any resources discussed in this thesis.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review consists of a discussion of literature relevant to the possibility of a theatrical pedagogy for classic literature. It will examine the current uses of drama for educational purposes in the areas of cognitive and language development and in the instruction of English Language Learners and bilingual/biliterate students.

Drama and Learning outlines the pedagogical benefits of the theatre arts. In addition, its cognitive and social benefits are discussed by a number of experts in the fields of both Education and Theatre Arts. The didactic possibilities of theatre are considered from a variety of perspectives, and a reference to teacher resources is also provided (see Appendix C).

Another important area reviewed, Teaching Social Studies and Literature through Theatre in the Middle Grades, deals with how educators are currently using the medium of theatre in the classroom to present content from the aforesaid subject areas. Additional
ramifications for classroom instruction are also discussed.

The next three sections of the literature review are concerned with current instructional practices in Language Arts and literature instruction for English Language Learners. Prevailing Approaches to ELL Literature Instruction considers methods employed to give these students access to complex narrative texts. Teaching ELL’s through Theatre examines programs whose aim is to use classroom drama in English as a vehicle for teaching language and literature to these students. Similarly, Primary Language Theatre for ELLs highlights instances of bilingual dramatic projects aimed at teaching language and literacy in a culturally relevant way.

The final section of the literature review is Spanish Adaptations of Classic Literature. This section forms a bridge between English and bilingual drama used to supplement ELL instruction and the primary language scripts necessary to fill the curriculum gap discussed above.
Drama and Learning

Over the past several decades, proponents of the use of drama in the classroom have marshaled a considerable volume of research and theory in favor of their position. They uniformly comment on the beneficial aspects of this teaching and learning modality for various reasons. Some have focused on the claim that - in broad terms - classroom theatre tends to optimize receptive communication skills (e.g., listening and reading comprehension). Other voices remark on classroom theatre's effects on productive language skills (e.g. speaking and writing). Beyond commentary on the academic benefits of theatre in the classroom, certain writings also propose a relationship between classroom theatre and the development of cognition and social skills.

In addition to the theoretical side of the pedagogical dimensions of classroom theatre, the literature provides classroom teachers with a wealth of resources. These include lesson plans, scripts, conferences, and newsletters whose aim is to promote the use of theatre in the classroom. Taken as a totality, these sources for classroom teachers are worthy of mention as together they suggest a consensus among
practicing professionals as to the value of classroom theatre.

Four contributions of drama to students' cognitive development appear as salient: intellectual growth, emotional development, aesthetic appreciation, and behavioral awareness (Kennedy, 1998). In this present inquiry, intellectual growth and emotional development are subsumed under the category of cognitive development. Aesthetic appreciation, although difficult to measure, certainly is closely related to any art form. Behavioral awareness, on the other hand, is concerned with social skills, hence it finds a place in the present review.

Several theorists maintain that educational drama promotes the cerebral association of new and previous knowledge. Margery Hartzberg (2001), an Australian educational proponent of the use of classroom drama, holds that theatre serves as a bridge connecting students' life experiences with scenarios on stage. Thus, it is an activity forging cognitive links between old and new knowledge (Hartzberg, 2001, p. 9).

Others (Verriour, 1985) elaborate even further describing drama as a dynamic link between knowledge gained at home and academic contexts encountered in
school. They suggest that drama heightens children's awareness of nature and function of language. In a word, classroom drama facilitates, "their transition from the limited context-dependent thought of the preschool environment to the abstract, context-free thought required in school learning" (Verriour, 1985, p. 183).

Similarly, with an eye to students' future, some have commented on classroom drama's value as a cognitive tool for tying present classroom experiences to situations that may potentially be encountered in the real world. "Drama frames can be constructed with essential elements of authentic contexts, thereby bringing the laboratory to the classroom" (Anderson, 2004, p. 4). Through drama, real life situations can be mediated in the most realistic way possible.

Notable British pedagogue and drama teacher, Dorothy Heathcote (Bolton, 1989), took situational learning in drama to a new level by developing it into an explicit pedagogy. Her training was in drama, but in whatever subject she taught, she used theatre to put her students in scenarios where they were the experts in a given field. For example, if her students had a laboratory assignment in chemistry, she addressed them as adult
scientists with specific lab orders and directions to fulfill. Her "mantle of the expert" approach to situational learning through drama has had lasting and far-reaching effects (Bolton, 1989).

Since drama provides more tangible experiences to young people, it is usual for a number of those experiences to correspond to their personal interests (Verriour, 1985). Whereas the lecture-discussion format of instruction and written exercises tend to disengage the interest of many young people, theatre tends to hold their attention more.

A Canadian middle school teacher, after a case study with his eighth-graders, concluded that, "learning through the arts [specifically drama] provides a vehicle for students to become actively engaged in their own learning" (Gamwell, 2005, p. 359). Students not only have their attention more fully engaged, but also are participating in the construction of a learning reality in which they are intimately involved.

In the light of the engaging nature of educational drama and its constructivist elements, some have suggested that theatre as a constructivist activity has a concomitant in Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences
theory. Theatre provides many types of action and language usage that better compliment the wide array of student proclivities (Gamwell, 2005)

Closely related to students' cognitive development, is the emotional engagement necessary for them to actively participate in the construction of new knowledge through classroom drama (Gamwell, 2005). Under proper guidance, the raw emotion of an enthused young player may be used productively (Heathcote, in Mc Caslin, 1975, p. 108). Cognition and emotion, sharing the same brain, are necessarily inter-related.

Drama sharpens cognitive functions and optimizes general intelligence merely by virtue of its presentation of a fictional world with which observers and participants can compare their perceptions of reality (Courtney, 1993). Fiction and narrative are two means by which students may reflect upon and interact with their personal circumstances in a constructive way. Under favorable conditions, classroom drama encourages metacognition specific to students' own developmental stages.
Cognitive and Social Aspects of Drama

Cognitive and social aspects of classroom drama challenge children intellectually by giving them a purpose for learning (Verriour, 1985). With a purpose for learning, and a highly visible manifestation of that learning, specific attention may be given to what has been learned during the dramatic process and to what type of knowledge is being communicated on the classroom stage.

Researchers point to drama as an effective instructional strategy to increase reading comprehension, especially in cases where traditional approaches have not made headway. Indeed, one student participant in a study on drama as a tool for reading comprehension was not at a loss for words when asked why drama helped him understand the text. "[T]hat's easy...because it helps me pay attention. If we just read it in a book, I probably wouldn't have been paying attention" (Gamwell, 2005, p. 379).

Likewise, a reading of the same script occurs numerous times during a rehearsal process, which tends to enhance reading comprehension. Peer readings also provide a non-threatening manner in which students can correct
each other during rehearsals. Another receptive dimension of language appears during the actual performance of a dramatization, when the audience receives the communication of the performers (Flynn, 2004). Needless to say, the players themselves receive many verbal and non-verbal cues from the audience as well.

The opportunities that drama in the classroom offer for the production of language are also various. In spite of their multiplicity, it is clear that they are all united by a concerted effort on the part of individual players. When young people “play” in dramatic scenarios in the classroom, it differs greatly from the generally aimless play that they may engage in on other more recreational occasions. They are subjects, actively fashioning their own learning space and experience. Hence, the adolescent engrossed in his role on stage seems say, “I am making it happen, so that it can happen to me” (Bolton, 1989).

Productive language in classroom drama, as some sagaciously point out, may be verbal or non-verbal. Certainly oral fluency, confidence in speaking and cadence can all be developed through rehearsal. Yet similarly students can engage the text on another level
with stage directions and blocking. The way a child physically portrays the role shows not only her comprehension of it, but also her attitude toward and analysis of it (Herztberg, 2001).

One noteworthy idea for the classroom is that teachers and students may take the function as commissioned playwrights, fashioning scripts that allow for full group participation and producing material adapted to the class’ context (Flynn, 2004). Such assignments carry with them the kind of motivation to encourage young writers to compose much more than they may otherwise in a standard prose narrative. Being able to enjoy the product of their writing by acting it out is similarly a reward in the order of intrinsic motivation (Evans, 1984).

This type of assignment encourages the production of original language in a number of ways. Composing the script is in itself a considerable narrative assignment. Students must consider character motivation, emotions and the overall plotline of a story as they write. The performance of the original work also encourages the production of at least two kinds of communication: verbal lines and non-verbal blocking, stage directions and cues.
Moreover, a number of writers point out that educational drama – beyond the simple production of language – encourages critical thinking about complex issues (Jasinski, 2006). While many students and teachers reap the benefits of critical thinking on academic matters through the use of drama, others go further by using this feature of classroom drama for critical thought on social issues (Boal, 2000).

Many contend that the situational learning and the "as-if" scenarios present in drama indeed may offer a valuable forum for psychologists to study human behavior (Anderson, 2004). The social aspects of classroom drama treated by the literature are concerned mainly with human development. Some consider how to optimize early linguistic and social interactions in school. Still others are more interested in a more subtle use of theatre as commentary on social issues.

The Role of Cooperative Learning in Drama

Teachers acclaim the value of the cooperative learning that occurs during educational drama. Indeed, a number of dramatic theorists concur that cooperative work
in drama can play an essential role in social development in general (Faust, 1995).

Some theorists, following a socio-cultural line of thought, indicate that educational drama sparks learning through social interaction in a powerful way that more closely resembles real life scenarios:

...[B]ehind much learning lie tacit dramatic acts. Impersonation (standing in someone else’s shoes) is the prime activator of most learning. The perspectives from our actual and dramatic worlds, when compared, transform our knowledge and beliefs so that we can learn. These cognitive changes increase our potential intelligence.

Just as a child learns to speak by mimicking adults, so too can young learners in classroom drama learn by imitating their peers and teacher.

In addition to its collaborative potential, classroom drama offers a link to the community, which may not otherwise have existed (Gamwell, 2005). The simple act of inviting parents to view a classroom performance opens lines of communication and gives the product of the learning an added character of seriousness. Nonetheless,
many also see the pure enjoyment of the socialization that occurs in dramatization as a great benefit.

It soon becomes fairly apparent to even casual observers of classroom drama that students tend to find it more enjoyable than usual lecture-discussion format of instruction. This type of motivation has obvious advantages for teachers who creatively harness and manage student energy to use classroom drama as a vehicle for content instruction. "Children love to learn, but hate to be taught" (Yasha Frank, as cited in Goldberg, 15). The literature on drama and learning provides many resources for teachers to foster learning environments through drama as an alternative or supplement to direct instruction.

Instructional Resources for Classroom Drama

A myriad of resources are available to educators who wish to incorporate drama into their instruction. A growing number of internet-based drama education resources offer useful materials ranging from scripts of non-copyrighted stories, to theatre games, to classroom management, to drama curriculum guides. Several lesson plans are also available online. Professional journals
offer valuable insights to for teachers, administrators and researchers, and several tomes of note have been written in the past twenty years to aid classroom teachers in the implementation of classroom drama. Appendix C of this paper contains a precise listing of sources on classroom drama for educators.

Perhaps one of the best summaries of the multifaceted instructional applications of drama comes from the keyboard of Jenifer Catney Mc Masters (1998). This third grade teacher from Syracuse, New York, through her independent research and observations of her own class and her colleagues' classes, has compiled and offers the following conclusions on drama's didactic possibilities. I have italicized her recommendations, while leaving my commentary in regular font.

1. Students develop affect through drama. Dramatic activity in and of itself contains and communicates to students a powerful intrinsic motivation, capable of engaging them in the task at hand.

2. Dramatization is a source of scaffolding for emergent readers. By acting out the reading selections the teacher assigns, they form
background knowledge and life's experience that helps them to engage the text they are reading, and future texts.

3. **Dramatization helps students to develop symbolic representation.** Symbolic representation reinforces the alphabetic principle and prepares students to learn more complex mathematical and scientific representation.

4. **Dramatic activities provide students a meaningful environment for oral language.** Through repeated readings of the text and acting, students learn voice inflection and appropriate character emotional response. This bolsters overall reading and oral fluency.

5. **Vocabulary presented in the drama context provides students opportunities to acquire the meanings visually, aurally, and kinesthetically.** Whole brain learning theory encourages techniques that activate as many cerebral areas as possible. Arguably, there is no other activity so closely related to
literature that accomplishes this sort of corporal-cerebral integration.

6. *Drama helps students acquire the knowledge of word order, phrasing, and punctuation that contributes to the meaning of a written sentence.* The necessity of the student-players to revisit their scripts constantly greatly increases the amount of ambient print in their lives. One outcome of this is a greater familiarity with writing conventions.

7. *Drama activities help students read different genres.* Theatre Arts are usually applied to literature; however, it is possible to dramatically represent nonfiction as well.

8. *Students monitor their own comprehension in drama and develop effective reading strategies.* All actor movement on stage (blocking) requires not only a focused team effort, but also that the players fully comprehend the action and plot of a selection. Hence, effective reading, peer support, and comprehension skills all come from drama.
9. *Teachers can use drama as an assessment tool.*

The Speaking and Listening components of literacy are immediately available for assessment in drama. Additionally, drama can be used as a preliminary activity for writing, or for unit literature or vocabulary tests. All of this is made possible when students actively read the text; thus drama also accurately assesses reading comprehension.

Drama as an art form uses both time and space in order to transport participants to a uniquely co-constructed world. “Its power lies in the capacity of a single dimension of action to release a volume of meaning” (Bolton, 1986). Drama and learning, as research and theory suggest, appear to be closely intertwined. Cognitive development is accelerated, especially in the areas of language reception and production. Moreover, educational theatre calls forth the negotiating of the social skills necessary for collaborative work, and an invitation to include the even larger audience of the surrounding community. With such fertile ground for presenting content in an engaging way to students, it is little wonder that many teachers and curriculum designers
increasingly see the value of the dramatic approach to learning.

Teaching Social Studies and Literature through Theatre in the Middle Grades

The position that dramatic adaptations of classic literature should fill a curriculum gap for ELL students, at closer inspection, shows itself as an interdisciplinary concern. Instructors of the Social Sciences in particular seek ways to avail themselves of the didactic tools that classroom theatrics afford. In many cases, what is commonly referred to as classic literature is often tied to historical events, personages, or literary and ideological movements in history. Hence, it is quite logical for teachers to use classroom drama across subjects. Indeed, drama offers the possibility of building a unique bridge between Language Arts and Social Studies in public school classrooms.

The literature treating the use of drama as a teaching tool in the Social Studies classroom reflects an abiding interest in the medium, on both the primary and secondary levels. While teachers themselves do not generally don the dramatic mask, many do write skits and
even extended plays to facilitate student understanding of history.

One case study of a seventh grade Social Studies class describes the process by which a teacher drafted and edited original historical plays. Based on the standard textbook for Mr. Welch's class, these selections he designed to make academic content comprehensible and relevant to students' present cognitive and social development (Morris, et al., 2003).

"Plays personalize Social Studies," report Welch's researchers, who describe the creative and collaborative process he used to write short plays that not only taught seventh graders about ancient Egypt, the Middle East and India, but also presented issues relevant to students' milieu. For that reason Welch's characters, like his students, were adolescents coming of age and witnessing historical events. Many of these characters Welch specially designed as "dynamic women of color" (Morris et al., 2003, p. 56).

Plays in this Social Studies classroom were meant to bring learners as close as possible to the actual events and people they described. "The educational power of the scripted play here may lie in the essence of narrative
fiction as a vicarious experience for adolescents—especially when students couple kinesthetic, visual, and auditory stimulation” (Morris et al., 2003, p. 58).

While some Social Studies teachers uniquely craft their own plays to supplement existing material, other teachers use a more Socratic approach to classroom drama. Mary Kathleen Barnes (1998) used this approach with her third grade class to facilitate understanding of the three branches of the federal government and the electoral process. However, instead of writing a script, Barnes placed students in scenarios that supplemented existing visual and text-based explanations of the content.

Drama, for these third graders, was a way to form a new government, modeled after the United States federal government. While simultaneously teaching through art and reading, Barnes used drama as an additional means to give all students an active role in the three branches of government and offer the opportunity to run for offices. Barnes comments that in this case drama built upon their existing schemata to extend their knowledge into new areas. Indeed, after the unit, the sophisticated comments students made about the three branches of government and
the electoral process suggest not only that information was assimilated, but that it was done so in a cognitively engaging way (Barnes, 1998).

In another seventh grade class, a teacher also encouraged her students to improvise appropriate reactions to historical situations simulated in the classroom. These educational scenarios, set by a physical rearrangement of the classroom or by questions posed to students, called on the learners to act in a way fitting to the time, place and characters suggested by these prompts. For example, the following are instructions on how to establish a scenario in ancient Kush:

[P]ass out pita bread only to... farmers and ask a student who is wearing a sign saying 'wild desert tribes,' ‘Do you want some too? How are you going to get it? What will you need to do?’ Students act out concepts of scarcity, poverty... and war to help them understand how these ideas transpired in northern Africa as the wild desert tribes raid the farmers for food. Students also act out how both nations responded to these forces and how they used technology and trade to respond (Morris, 2003, p. 45).
This use of improvisational and interpretive process drama was part of a larger interdisciplinary unit on ancient Kush and Egypt. The teacher did not provide students with a script, but rather encouraged their own reactions to help them learn historical empathy. Once again, the value of the improvisation has a firm foundation on the experiential aspect of classroom drama. The engaging nature of these assignments suggests that students are more likely to make history their own if they are immersed in the dramatic medium (Morris, 2003).

Another consideration of drama, as an interdisciplinary approach to literature and history, is to have students write their own dramatic scripts. In March of 2004, the entire eighth grade class of Edgemont Junior/Senior High School in Scarsdale, New York took a step back to the 1920’s. In contrast to performing a teacher-written script, or to improvisation, these students researched the economy, politics and technology of the 1920’s in order to write and record their own radio plays.

Students worked in groups on an interdisciplinary project involving Social Studies, English and Science teachers. The unit culminated with a field trip to a
studio in Manhattan where students professionally recorded their radio plays to be preserved in the school library. The authentic nature of the project, whose end goal was a professional recording, enhanced student engagement. This high level of engagement was reflected in the quality of the final products and in students learning not only about history but also about English composition, theatrical skills, and the development of radio technology (Schuchat, 2005).

The Benefits of Classroom Drama

The literature on current instances of classroom drama as a teaching tool repeatedly evidences that both students and teachers report higher levels of engagement and motivation while participating in drama. Classroom drama involves pupils in learning in a way that many teachers and curricula cannot. "Learning through theatre gives students an opportunity to find the relevancy of their class work and communicate it in an exciting way to others" (Beehner, 1990, p. 287).

Both Social Studies and Language Arts teachers find that drama increases the applicability of subject matter by placing it directly in the students' context. Drama is
living literature; hence, prose, poetry and many other writing genres immediately lend themselves to theatrical adaptation. Research on the current use of classroom drama as a teaching tool in Language Arts reveals a variety of instructional foci. While some are concerned with contributive aspects of literacy development such as reading comprehension, others view drama as an essential tool for the overall development of language and literacy.

Reading comprehension in one study showed growth after student participation in a drama-enriched literacy program. Whirlwind, a Chicago-based non-profit literacy organization, collaborated with researchers to produce a comparative statistical analysis of the results of their literacy program versus those of the regular state-approved literacy program. Their study included 94 students in the experimental group who participated in the Reading Comprehension through Drama program (RCD) and a control group of 85 students who received instruction via the standard Language Arts curriculum. All of the students in the study represented an ethnically and socio-economically diverse cross-section of the Chicago
metropolitan area. Further, many of them were English Language Learners (Rose, et. al, 2000).

The experimental drama group, for a total of twenty hours, met with a drama artist for one-hour sessions, twice a week. The control group read the district-approved basal readers and practiced literacy skills in traditional workbook exercises. At the end of the ten-week study, both groups took the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) to assess the influence of the RCD on reading comprehension. According to standard measures of literacy development, students who participated in the RCD program showed an average of three months more progress than those in the control group (Rose, et. al, 2000, p. 60). Such findings suggest that drama is an effective tool for developing reading comprehension.

Readers Theatre

Other proponents of drama to enhance the effectiveness of Language Arts instruction report on Readers Theatre. This theatrical modality can range from dramatic readings by students seated at their own desks to rudimentary stage movements, with actors aided by their scripts. This instructional tool has even been used
in school libraries to foster greater appreciation for selections read aloud to students (Mc Pherson, 2005). In any case, the instructor, following sessions of Readers Theatre, will guide students through an analysis of such elements as the author’s intent for writing, character development, plot and setting (Annarella, 1999).

Among further aspects of Readers Theatre that make it useful to teachers is that it allows them to use one text for their entire class. This is true since in Readers Theatre, individual students draw reading comprehension and fluency support from instructor and peer modeling, along with an augmented set of contextual clues. Readers Theatre thus automatically differentiates instruction (Stewart, 1997).

In classroom theatrics, productive language skills, such as reading aloud, go hand in hand with receptive skills, such as reading comprehension. In a word, Readers Theatre and classroom drama in general offer Language Arts teachers a means of simultaneously cultivating various aspects of literacy. Students can even learn critical thinking and rhetoric through classroom drama. Actors, by virtue of their mere participation in a scene already attempt to argue and convince the audience and
the other characters of their own authenticity (Moffet, et. al., 1992, p. 93).

Dramatic scripts especially call for this sort of participatory elaboration of the text. All actors implicitly advocate their author’s most essential view: namely, that her story is worth telling. In light of this, students who interpret a work of poetry or prose in a Language Arts class enter into the piece, becoming collaborators in the author’s creative process. As classroom drama turns “what happened into what is happening,” the learner begins to realize that drama can be seen as simply an elaboration of a written text, and a written text as a summary of life’s drama (Moffet et al., 1992, p. 108).

Cases of Drama in the Curricular Spotlight

Drama, with its intimate link between dynamic experience and a written text, like no other medium, offers educators and authors the possibility of giving their readers access to any number of historical periods, situations and settings. It should come as no surprise then, that educators have seen the power of drama to
bring classic literature off the pages and into the reality of their classrooms.

When classroom drama finds itself as an integral part of an entire school’s Language Arts curriculum, the task of presenting students with state-mandated literature, while still challenging, seems to drive students and teachers onward with intrinsic motivation. For example, Far Brook School in Short Hills New Jersey features a Language Arts curriculum that relies heavily on the visual arts and especially drama. The reoccurring theme of student engagement holds true at Far Brook as fourth grade students excitedly ponder ancient Egypt. These students prepare and perform a play each spring on the Nile civilization. At the same school, fifth graders perform selections from the Greek playwrights Aristophanes and Sophocles. A highlight of the sixth grade at Far Brook may even be a production of Shakespeare’s Coriolanus (Wood, 1998).

The East Manhattan School for Bright and Gifted Children also builds their Language Arts and Social Studies programs around drama. Site teachers report what they perceive as the benefits of drama:
[It]... stimulates the youngsters' thinking; it provides outlets for energy; it encourages self-esteem and cooperation with the teachers and other children; it teaches independence, responsibility, and self-discipline; it has a wonderful effect on aggressive children or very shy children; it develops memory and ability for public speaking; and, last but not least, it encourages research and promotes knowledge (Pigott, 1990, p. 4).

While the schools in these two examples serve affluent populations, and cannot boast of the ethnic diversity of many public schools in urban settings, their privilege allows them to construct drama-centric and student-centered curricula that, in the best of worlds, could serve those students who are most in need of them. Nonetheless, as other examples of applications of drama in public schools have shown, drama as a teaching tool is possible in wide range of instructional settings.

An interdisciplinary unit, taught to eighth graders in San Antonio, Texas, focused on Sophocles' play Antigone. Patricia Gray is the Language Arts teacher who coordinated this project with the help of Social Studies
instructors at her site. She maintains that the value of drama in this case lay in the fact that the project helped students make connections between history and literature (Gray, 1987). The project passed through a number of instructional phases including whole class readings from *Anitgone*, exposure to recordings of Greek music and a culminating student performance of scenes from the play.

School sites where drama is center stage hold a different model for instruction in the sight of the vast majority of their counterparts. Students who spend their elementary years in these kinds of settings are better prepared to access the content of junior high and high school Language Arts and Social Studies classes. This level of engagement and this kind of preparation are increasingly difficult to achieve through standardized Language Arts curricula.

*Prevailing Approaches in Literature Instruction for English Language Learners*

English Language Learners face many challenges in receiving quality instruction in middle school. Teachers with good intentions, but perhaps who lack proper background knowledge, do their best to reach these
linguistically marginalized individuals. Prevailing policy recommendations in ELL focus on text-based curricula or orally-based approaches. In addition, there are many who see a socio-cultural awareness in teacher practice to be key in activating student learning. Whatever the case, recommendations on improving the quality of ELL education abound, in spite of current instructional tendencies that keep quality in its state of mediocrity.

Given the challenges ELL’s face in reading, one solution is to provide students with explicit lessons on metacognitive strategies for comprehending all text. One such study, conducted with a mixed group of twenty-two primary students (with 6 ELL’s) — showed, “significant increases in students’ use of reading comprehension strategies as well as their levels of reading comprehension” (Eilers et al., 2006).

Students participating in the study were trained to use a Comprehension Strategy Checklist when deciphering any text. The three strategies on the list were: use prior knowledge to make connections, use context clues to make meaningful predictions, and remember the sequence of events in the story. These three, articulated in more
accessible terms for younger learners, made possible for
the ELL students in the group an increased comprehension
of texts and a greater level of engagement in reading.

A different case study focused on the effects of
literature circles on ELL fourth graders in a school
district in the Pacific Northwest (Carrison, et. al.,
2005). Using the same fourth grade texts that the rest of
their mainstream group were reading, five ELL’s (of their
class of twenty-four) read together in a literature
circle in which a teacher provided necessary modeling and
scaffolding. This instructor lead readings, asked
questions to monitor comprehension, and facilitated
discussions on novels. The rest of the class was involved
in the same literature circles, although without the same
level of specialized instructor attention. The
researchers summarized their results, “Although all
students reported enjoying participating in literature
circles, the greatest successes and increased levels of
enthusiasm were evident among the ELL students and the
reluctant readers” (Carrison et al., 2005, p. 97).

Another case study, conducted in a middle school ESL
pull-out program made use of content-based instruction in
an effort to improve reading comprehension and oral
fluency. Through thematic units, technology and standardized achievement test preparation, texts were emphasized heavily during the study. The conclusion was that, "content-based instruction expands the students' conceptual base while teaching language through meaningful activities" (Papai, 2000, p. 81).

Whether meta-cognitive strategies, literature circles or ESL pull-out programs be the setting of interventions and case studies for the sake of improving practice, the aim of these three case studies is clear: improve ELL students' reading comprehension, and their overall performance in school and proclivity to study will improve. Additional research and policy recommendations bring subtle nuance to the discussion.

Guadalupe Valdés, in her notable work, Learning and Not Learning English, provides readers with four case studies of middle school ELL students who are Latino/as. At the close of the book, after 3 have been adversely affected by ESL programs which did not maximize pupil learning potential and one has succeeded in a high-quality content-based program, Valdés makes seven recommendations on general policy for secondary ESL programs (Valdés, pp. 148-154).
Recommendation 1

ELL students must be offered ESL courses that are designed to develop their academic English, that is, the English-language skills needed for academic subjects.

Recommendation 2

Programs for immigrant students must be seen as school-wide initiatives for which all teachers are responsible.

Recommendation 3

All school personnel must contribute to creating a context in which English-language learners have access to both interpersonal and academic language.

Recommendation 4

Schools must find ways to end the isolation of immigrant students.

Recommendation 5

School must build on the existing academic strengths of immigrant students.

a) Advocating for the creation of a national database of school programs in other countries.

b) Teaching language-learning and metacognitive strategies

c) Demanding ESL textbooks that have L1 support
Recommendation 6

Students must be given access to the curriculum while they are learning English.

Recommendation 7

Revolving-door policies and practices that release English-language learners from ESL programs in one school only to place them in such programs once again in other schools must be changed.

While a number of these recommendations counter administrative practices that isolate ESL students from the general student population, or that keep them in a cycle of ESL classes that Valdés herself dubs the "ESL ghetto" (Valdés, 145), it is noteworthy that three of her admonitions relate directly to text-based instruction. Her research, and indeed that of many others suggests that reading and writing are essential to student achievement. The written word is the prime vehicle for content and meaning in academic circles. That is undeniable. In order for ELL students to overcome the achievement, it is fair to conclude that reading and writing play a vital role.
The Development of Oral Language in a Secondary Language

In contradistinction to theorists who argue for curricula with a considerable emphasis on reading and writing, there are those who urge teachers and policy makers to aim first for a strong oral base, before placing much insistence on the primacy of written academics. Orally-based approaches offer another view of ELL student’s predicament and possible approaches to providing the best education possible for them.

The oral language that ELL students are most likely to come in contact with in the public school environment has two sources: peer-talk and teacher-talk. Of these two the latter is often the most challenging for ELL pupils. This is especially true in middle and high school when adolescents often seek their identity and affirmation primarily from peers rather than from adults. Thus, researchers have noted that oral proficiency with a colloquial register is often gained within two years, whereas it may take the same students up to seven years or more to acquire an academic lexicon (Ernst-Slavit, et. al., 2002).
Rather than see the comparatively slower acquisition time of academic language as a barrier, it is possible to see the rapid acquisition of oral language as a window to the future of proficiency in academic registers. In fact, some contend that such an approach is the only viable way to give some ELL students in middle and high school access to further language development (Fu, 2004).

Be that as it may, the period of time during which students labor to learn English suggests that there are many smaller steps that learners must take before they break through the threshold of fluency. One continuum suggested by researchers for oral language acquisition is comprised of four principal steps: Stage One, Preproduction; Stage Two, Early Production; Stage Three, Speech Emergence; and Stage Four, Intermediate Fluency (Ernst-Slavit, et. al., 2002).

The researchers indicate that Stage Three is a pivotal moment since at that time not only is the learner beginning to participate in verbal exchanges meaningful to her, but she has also begun to view concretely to what extent she will acculturate and in what ways she will preserve her heritage.
“Schools should demonstrate appreciation and respect for cultural diversity” (Ernst-Slavit et al., 2002, p. 120). In schools where that appreciation and respect are demonstrated, ELL students feel more comfortable and achieve accordingly. Sociocultural approaches to language instruction offer a view into a more holistic attitude toward ELL students and their learning needs.

“Interactive approaches are favored by some on the grounds that teachers and parents who are competent readers and writers can provide learners with individualized guided instruction that corresponds to their zone of proximal development, in line with Vygotsky’s theory of development and learning” (Genesse, et. al., 2006, p. 116).

Student interaction is seen as a valuable tool in the assimilation of information, and in making it comprehensible.

Second language acquisitions specialists have discussed the importance of...social interaction...which provides students with large amounts of comprehensible input. Input becomes comprehensible to language learners when language is
used in meaningful ways within authentic contexts. (Curran, 2003)

Others suggest that even simple interaction on the part of teachers with their students can also produce noteworthy results in terms of academic motivation. One researcher reports, after extensive interviews with Miguel, an adolescent ELL student, that two of his teachers during his eighth grade year by simply caring about him and making accommodations for his language acquisition process, motivated him to work hard in school. One example of kindness to Miguel was his English teacher Ms. Domingo who allowed him to read a novel in Spanish and write the subsequent report in English. Although Ms. Domingo did not speak Spanish herself, she was aware of how primary language support would assist Miguel in his completion of the task (Rubenstein-Ávila, 2003).

Family Involvement in Language Acquisition

Involving family in the process of language acquisition is yet another key element to optimal ELL education mentioned in the body of literature outlining socio-cultural approaches. One case study describes the
role that a one girl's mother and father played in her learning English. This family immigrated to United States from China. Upon arrival, her parents accompanied her to school, monitored her assignments and used cassette recordings of her conversations with native English speakers to buttress her efforts to learn English. Within fourteen months, she had made astounding progress, especially orally (Educational Development Center, Inc., 2003).

In this case, the parents encouraged immersion in the new language and valued its acquisition by their child. In other cases, where the influence of peers discourages students from learning English and parental influence may not be as far-reaching, other kinds of school interventions have yielded success.

One remarkable approach in Waco, Texas to instruction for recent arrival ELL students from various parts of Mexico was to offer them enrollment in an advanced-placement (AP) Spanish class. A case study was conducted on this AP intervention over the period of three years at a middle school. In the face of student feelings of alienation from the native English-speaking majority of the student body, and peers with negative
attitudes toward schooling, the AP Spanish class was hypothesized to help students gain high school and college credit for advanced Spanish courses. It was also predicted that students' academic success in Spanish would foster a more positive attitude toward schooling, and higher achievement across subject areas.

The results affirmed both hypotheses. Of the 117 student enrolled in the AP intervention, ninety-two of them had earned college credit by the end of the eleventh grade, at the close of the third year of the intervention. Academic proclivity in most of these students increased as well (Gifted Child Today, Winter, 2006, p. 44). In an environment where their language and culture were valued, these students excelled, not only in Spanish, but in other areas as well.

...[W]hen students' first languages are valued and fostered - either through bilingual education or other first language support - they are actually more successful academically because they are allowed to draw on a richer and larger source of background schemata. (Curran, 2003)
Hence, bilingual education on the whole has shown greater success for ELL student than have early-exit or immersion policies.

Obstacles to Second Language Acquisition in School

The success stories of these and many other case studies inspire confidence in educators' ability to provide ELL students with the tools they need to learn English and to overcome obstacles in their path. Nonetheless, a number of circumstances, which tend to detract from the quality of ELL education persist. As long as these circumstances go unchecked, they threaten these students' access to the same opportunities as their fluent English-speaking peers.

Schools where students' primary languages are not valued only serve to further marginalize ELL students. One author recommends the elaboration of "language ideological and ideological" frameworks for the sake of ensuring that minority languages are protected on campuses (Razfar, 2005, p. 423).

Mandated State Curricula in Language Arts are also an obstacle to ELL students. These international students come from diverse backgrounds that are best addressed by
flexibility in curriculum, rather than the scripted lessons now adopted by the State. Although proponents of basal systems proceed with the best of intentions (Papalewis, 2004), they risk further alienating students from the educational system, especially in upper elementary grades and the secondary level.

Another ideological shadow cast on the path of ELL academic achievement is the deficit view concerning their capabilities (Flores, Cousin & Díaz, 1991). This view permeates even to the university level. One researcher writes, “We know poor readers are more likely to come from homes of poverty and where English is a second language” (Papalewis, 2002, p. 26). Such a perspective on ELL’s native capabilities promotes a limited understanding of their overall language skills. “Older students who read poorly and are from low socioeconomic or minority status not only have reading difficulty in fluency, but with general verbal skills” (Papalewis, 2002).

Learning environments where students’ primary languages are undervalued, mandated state curricula that restrict the materials available to ELL students, and the pervasive deficit view of ELL’s (Flores, et al, 1991) all
currently pose a threat to their academic engagement and achievement. Yet there is reason to believe that texts can be made interesting to ELL students. The fact that strong oral programs promote higher achievement suggests possibilities for growth and achievement in spite of institutionally imposed limitations.

"...[T]he narrative mode of thinking is an excellent medium through which to introduce...abstract concepts" (Ernst-Slavit, 2002, p. 122). Curriculum specialists and concerned teachers turn increasingly to learning modalities that blend meaningful and challenging texts with dynamic verbal activity. One such modality that immediately suggests itself as a way to utilize the powerhouse of oral communication is classroom drama.

Teaching English Language Learners through Theatre

Considering the viability of Theatre Arts as a vital part of Language Arts curriculum for English Language Learners continues among researchers and classroom teachers alike. The power of theatre as a medium to awaken the desire that students naturally have to express themselves and join it to either a set curriculum or
exercises of self-understanding fascinates teachers and students alike.

Current uses of classroom drama can be grouped according to their instructional aims. Certain programs involve students in a dramatic learning process for the sake of greater appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity. Other instances of classroom theatre exist to help students develop their oral fluency in English and give them access to literature.

One Theatre in Education (TIE) program, based in Birmingham, England, proposes that theatre fosters the type of intra- and intercultural understanding that promotes educational equity between monolingual English speakers and bilinguals (Blackledge, 1994). This line of thought attempts to demonstrate that "children will make greater progress in English if they know that their knowledge of their mother tongue is valued" (Blackledge, 1994).

The Language Alive! Theatre-in-Education Company writes and performs original plays for adolescent audiences in secondary schools. Many of the Language Alive! actors bring their Indian heritage to the stage by intertwining Hindi and Punjabi with English dialogue.
Their plays generally explore topics related to Indian history, such as the struggle for independence from British rule, although they do perform a piece relating Cortez's conquest of the Aztecs.

*Language Alive!,* in their use of different languages on stage, distinguishes between two different kinds of bilingualism. Bilateral bilingualism, where one character speaks a language other than English, is used to set the protagonist's perspective on different plane than the rest of the ensemble. Integrated bilingualism, however, calls for all actors on stage to use English and at least one other pertinent language (Blackledge, 1994).

The troupe performs for students of secondary schools ranging from largely White private institutions to ethnically diverse public settings. Student audience members are informally interviewed after performances to gauge their understanding of and cultural appreciation for a piece.

Interview responses seem to bolster the perspective that bilingual theatre provides an environment for educational equity between monolinguals and bilinguales. "None of the pupils felt that the use of Hindi as well as English prevented them from understanding the content."
In fact, “[p]upils were positive about the use of Hindi, mainly because in the context of the programme it helped to contribute to the credibility of the Indian setting” (Blackledge, 1994, p. 63). Hindi-speaking and English monolingual students alike were consistently positive regarding actors who used both languages onstage. Both thought, “it was an educational advantage to be bilingual” (Blackledge, 1994, p. 66).

Theatre that challenges these adolescent audiences to value their heritage languages offers a curricular advantage to monolingual venues. Engagement and interest in the play is increased, even though students themselves are not on stage. Language Alive’s shift away from Eurocentric cultural forms has its counterparts on the western side of the Atlantic as well.

An ELL program at Central Falls Senior High School in Central Falls, Rhode Island uses drama as part of a larger integrated arts unit. This arts unit is meant to utilize students’ aesthetic and cultural background to help them negotiate the meaning of their own immigration to the United States.

The arts unit combined photography, poetry and performance for a presentation to an audience of parents
and friends from the community. Students took photos of local scenes that were meaningful to them. They then composed original poetry about their pieces. Finally, during the culminating presentation, students dramatically interpreted their poems to an audience, who observed their photographs projected onto large screens in the school auditorium.

This multimedia project, which the students entitled *Postcards from America*, draws on Lev Vygotsky’s concept of communities of practice. The art and performances produced by the students were meaningful both to them, to their families, and to the community at large. This convergence of communities to enjoy the student performance was intended to promote a greater understanding of their various cultures and to help students to “document and communicate to others the rich and complex experience of being a newcomer to the US” (Landay et al., 73). When students are able to examine their lives onstage, they are better prepared to critically engage the United States’ culture.

Theatre Arts have also found a place in programs geared to providing students born and raised in the US with a venue for critically examining societal issues.
One such program, the Urban Odyssey in Cleveland, Ohio, tackled the issue of racism. While this program did not have the explicit aim of teaching English to Language Learners, it did incorporate the cultural backgrounds of linguistically marginalized youth, who would compare and contrast their manner of speech with Standard English.

A free summer school program, the Urban Odyssey worked with nine adolescents from urban settings in the Cleveland, Ohio area. The group was comprised of five African American girls, two African American boys, one Asian boy, and one Puerto Rican girl. During a three-week course incorporating drama, dance, music, and creative writing, the youths used these tools to come to a greater understanding of racism, and how they may work to influence inequitable situations (Sanders, 2004).

One theatrical technique employed during this program that achieved high levels of student engagement was Agosto Boal’s innovation of Forum Theatre. In Forum Theatre, a scenario is presented to the audience involving a social problem. The skit is short, and ends without resolving the injustice caused. Members of the audience are then given the opportunity to come onstage and act out new and different endings to the inequitable
scenario, with an eye to finding a more humanizing end to the scene (Sanders, 2004).

In the Urban Odyssey, one scenario of forum theatre placed an Asian boy along with an African American girl and boy in a Math class. The African American female teacher posed simple arithmetic questions to her class. However, while all members of the class raised their hands, the teacher only called on the Asian boy. The scene ended shortly thereafter; and the remaining students in the program one by one came forward to act out original alternative endings to the scene (Sanders, 2004). Through this substitution of various endings, the group was able to negotiate together what a just situation would be onstage, and by extension negotiate corporately what a more just society would look like.

In so doing, these student actors follow in the footsteps of Augusto Boal, the theoretical father of Forum Theatre, and of other theatrical techniques designed to allow for the critical representation and discussion of pertinent societal issues. In his classic, The Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal explains how the very convention of the audience confined to a role of spectators alone lends itself to the perpetuation of
injustice and the continuation of existing power structures.

The spectator is less than a man and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore him to his capacity of action in all its fullness. He too must be a subject, an actor on an equal plane with those generally accepted as actors, who must also be spectators. All these experiments of a people's theatre have the same objective - the liberation of the spectator, on whom the theatre has imposed finished visions of the world. And since those responsible for theatrical performances are in general people who belong directly or indirectly to the ruling classes, obviously their finished images will be reflections of themselves. The spectators in the people's theatre (e.g., the people themselves) cannot go on being the passive victims of those images (Boal, 1979, p 155).

Forum theatre, with its refusal to relegate audiences to a passive role, offers a solution to the status quo social visions presented by conventional theatre. Audiences are empowered to no longer accept
injustice in real life, just as they learn to not accept it on the stage:

...[F]or the spectator does not delegate power to them to act in his place. The experience [of forum theatre] is revealing on the level of consciousness, but not globally on the level of the action. Dramatic action throws light upon real action. The spectacle is a preparation for action. (Boal, 1979, p. 155)

Boal (1979) not only poses his audiences with problems, but allows them to step into the role of the actors themselves. This reveals to all participants, spectators and actors alike, that they posses the capacity to work for societal change, both on and off the stage. When classroom drama is used in conjunction with language arts instruction in this manner, students immediately find themselves in a fascinating and participatory environment in which participation is easy.

Second Language Theory for Language Learning and Critical Literacy

One of the main components of Stephen Krashen’s theory of second language acquisition has to do with the comprehensibility of input in a second language. If the
input in English (for example) is comprehensible to listeners, their cognitive develop of that second language will necessarily progress (Krashen, 2000).

Hindi-English theatre and the dramatic interpretation of poetry in Central Falls, Rhode Island both provide listeners with comprehensible input. The Urban Odyssey goes one step further, however, by challenging students to collaborate on alternative endings, using a common language to work toward common social goals. Arguably, such an environment, given student interest, would afford ample opportunities for oral language development.

The use of drama as a tool for consciousness raising certainly educates for societal change. From this perspective, theatre arts in education could be seen as a forum in which participants conduct sociological and psychological explorations for greater inter- and intrapersonal understanding. In contradistinction to research highlighting these forms of theatre, are those voices which prize classroom drama for its capacity to foster language development or give greater access to works of literature.

The tendency of dramatic movement to promote greater alacrity in expression and language acquisition has not
escaped the attention of researchers. Simple conversational movements, similar in mode to those of an actor on stage, work to establish a more extensive neurological network in a speaker’s language processing centers. Seen in this light, a commonplace conversation between two individuals is in a certain sense a dramatic interplay. They are, each for the other, an audience, and they present themselves choosing to reveal or conceal the essentials of a calculated yet entirely improvised performance (Mc Cafferty, 2002).

In light of Vygotsky’s theory of socio-cultural epistemology, to postulate that second language learners enter a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) via usage and interpretation of new and various gestures becomes quite tenable. Hence, “gesture either by itself or in conjunction with speech” opens before the learner new and ever expanding ZPDs for language acquisition (Mc Cafferty, 2002, p. 196).

When gesture and language unite, even greater possibilities for comprehension and expression emerge. The more of the body language learners are able to incorporate into listening and speaking, the more they
have to speak about - and indeed the more eager they are to speak about it.

One English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil comments on the tremendous amount of student engagement she observed after training her classes in readers’ theatre, and understanding of character motivation. Laura Miccoli (2003), on the premise that drama provides specific motivation for language use, interwove short dialogues and theatrical games with traditional reading, writing and grammar exercises in the course of a semester. The culmination of this drama-and-language course was a series of student performances, each twenty minutes in length, and taken from recognized works of U.S. theatre such as Our Town (Miccoli, 2003).

Aware of how closely related language is to culture, Miccoli (2003) maintains that, “learning a language cannot be divorced from culture learning” (Miccoli, 2003, p. 123). In fact, learning through North American plays not only helped these Brazilian students see one context in which English thrives, but places them in the middle of that context. Trusting her students to rehearse on their own and provide their own props and costumes made
the project particularly meaningful to them. The students
gave several testimonials reporting on how theatre had
helped them to develop greater confidence in public
speaking and greater ease in speaking English in general
(Maccoli, 2003).

Maccoli’s (2003) students eagerly received and used
theatrical tools to make English their own. Memorizing
and interpreting a play in one’s second language is a
concrete task that makes other language acquisition tasks
seem much more feasible. Yet while students are given
lines to memorize, the interpretation of these lines is
necessarily unique and requires a good deal of
negotiation on the part of the actors.

Another ESL professor at Pace University in New York
City brings a similar instructional approach to
Shakespeare. Through a series of activities designed to
allow students to negotiate with the text in their terms,
“Hamlet,” “Romeo and Juliet,” and other classics come
off of the dusty bookshelf and into their lives. Students
in Dr. Heyden’s (2002) classes have assignments ranging
from rewriting original Shakespearean texts in modern
language, to sending a letter to a character, to
inventing scenes that give original plot twists and endings to classic works.

The use of modern colloquial language as an interpretive lens for Shakespeare may be a generative means for teaching the work of this classic playwright to students from all walks of life. Yet this method has particular applicability to the situation of ELL’s who are especially hindered from accessing these works unless they be articulated in comprehensible terms. “[U]nless we give ESL students a strategy for accessing the cultures of the English speaking world, we have not quite done our job as English speakers” (Heyden, 2002, p. 1). By allowing students in essence to make their own adaptations of Shakespeare, Heyden (2002) challenges teachers and writers everywhere to make their adaptations more relevant to the lives of their language learning casts.

Another teacher who uses the power of Shakespeare to inspire his students teaches at Hobart Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. As a veteran teacher of over 20 years of experience with fifth and sixth graders, Rafe Esquith (Hobart Shakespeareans, 2007) demonstrates the power of Shakespeare to awaken a sense
of curiosity and awe in his students (Hobart Shakespeareans, 2007).

With performances ranging from Hamlet, to The Taming of the Shrew to Love’s Labor Lost, Esquith (Hobart Shakespeareans, 2007) uses abridged texts of the originals themselves. Students memorize and enact those lines necessary to move the action forward. This technique resonates with one of Heyden’s (2002) comprehension activities in which students are encouraged to rewrite scenes using only the keywords in the original Shakespeare text to make the action move forward more fluently. It is noteworthy that both Esquith and Heyden have not drained Shakespeare of its rigor, but have simply given their students concrete strategies to make it comprehensible. Both instructors, through their innovative efforts, are taking ELL students to new levels of achievement.

Current applications of classroom drama to teach English to language learners reveal a wide array of instructional aims. While some are concerned primarily with the actors’ self-understanding, others consider how theatre may be used as a tool for social change. Daring and committed English instructors on all levels find in
theatre a dynamic medium that opens the door to a world of language growth which surprises teacher and student alike.

In the glow of that pleasant surprise, the common themes and cognitive components of classroom drama emerge. Image and gesture, when combined with the spoken word, propel students into their personal Zones of Proximal Development. Within the continuum of their personal development, they are free to use their newfound linguistic and literary capital to challenge the order around them, or to gain access to spheres of dominant influence.

Primary Language Theatre for English Language Learners

In the previous section of the review of literature, I learned of several applications of theatre in public instructional settings, ranging from fifth grade to the university. One commonality of all of those examples of classroom drama is their use English to give students access to content and to promote further language development. My point of departure in this section relates directly to the hypothesis that appreciation of students' primary languages supports their overall
academic achievement. Assuming this hypothesis, it should be possible to find applications of classroom drama in students' primary languages.

The literature indeed shows a number of applications of theatre in students' primary languages. In a like manner to their English counterparts, these instances of classroom drama come in two main categories: those designed to give pupils greater access to curriculum, and those whose aim is to provide a forum for analyzing and grappling with social issues. In harmony with these two approaches, however, emerges a third - and somewhat less developed - application of primary language theatre for English Language Learners. Through a union of the two overarching purposes, some dramatist instructors aspire to show how primary language theatre can simultaneously give access to classic literature and be a voice of social critique.

In the fall of 2005, a unique theatrical production debuted in the U.S. Marshall Islands. Under palm fronds-turned-curtains, local high school students, in conjunction with Dartmouth college undergraduates, presented five performances to capacity audiences of Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The play was a
bilingual and bicultural adaptation of the well-known classic.

Andrew Gerrod (2005), Head of Teacher Education at Dartmouth College, co-authored and directed the theatrical production. In his bilingual adaptation of the play, he aimed, "to show respect for both Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter and the vitality of the native language, Marshallese" (Garrod, 2005, p. 3). With the aid of Mark Stege, son of the Marshall Island Secretary of Education, Garrod (2005) translated most of the comical prose sections of the play into Marshallese. The decision to translate those sections suggested itself to the writers by way of the fact that the original is divided between sections of prose and poetry. This helped Garrod and Stege to preserve the original Shakespearean verse, and allowed the stage movements and a good portion of the dialogue to be cast in the local idiom (Garrod, 2005).

The net effect of this interweaving of languages and local customs was to transport the classic to the contemporary South Pacific. Garrod (2005) and Stege changed characters’ names to Marshallese and transformed their occupations to those commonly found on the islands.
Further, traditional island dress and Fijian dances made the play visually engaging and relevant (Garrod, 2005).

Garrod’s (2005) expectations for the learning outcomes of the play included visible academic skills and more intangible intra-personal results. In terms of academics, Garrod (2005) believed the play would “foster a love of reading,” and improve their public speaking skills. In a more abstract sense, Garrod (2005) hoped the production would reinforce community values, be a political forum, “increase their pride and sense of accomplishment,” and give them the enjoyment of entertaining and teaching others (Garrod, 2005).

The students fulfilled many of these learning expectations. Certainly, the troupe experienced a great sense of pride in their collective accomplishment. They interpreted Shakespeare in their native tongue with “unbounded delight” (Garrod, 2005). When it came to composing the score, the players themselves spontaneously arranged a series of harmonies based on traditional island melodies (Garrod, 2005).

The production also proved to be a powerful episode in the players’ young lives for the formation of a critical view of their socio-economic circumstances.
During the three months of rehearsal and productions, many of the students shifted in their political self-perception. "Some now talk of aspirations to be a lawyer, a flight attendant, a pilot, and an actress. 'I was searching for a new life,' Yutaka Ishoda... told me, 'I've decided what I want to be when I grow up - a lawyer or an actor" (Garrod, 2005, p. 11).

Garrod and his undergraduate student teachers report that the Midsummer's Night Dream project was "immensely gratifying and energizing" both for the Marshallese high school students and themselves (Garrod, 2005). This adaptation, by incorporating many aspects of local culture along with the language Marshallese itself, managed to bring Shakespeare to life both for the company and the audience. Shakespeare's reading of humanity seemed able to transcend time and space to become Marshallese. Thrilled after the closing performance, some players even rode around their island in the back of a truck triumphantly shouting "Shakespeare!" to their neighbors (Garrod, 2005). That night Stratford Upon Avon flowed all the way to the Pacific.

The Marshallese interpretation of Shakespeare highlights what can be accomplished when educators value
the wealth present in local language and culture. Students found new empowerment through participation in the production. Their career goals after the play strongly suggest a newfound affinity for academics. When student actors see what they are capable of, theatre becomes a vehicle for social mobility. Another form of primary language theatre that also trains participants for greater social consciousness and ascendancy is *el Teatro Campesino*.

*El Teatro Campesino* traces its origins to the United Farm Workers’ Delano Grape Strike in 1965. Luis Valdez, then a fledgling playwright and director, in an attempt to rally the union’s workers, began to write dramatic shorts that lampooned the main players in the historic strike. His short plays, called *actos*, questioned the policies of growers through the ancient literary device of the wily servant, which Valdez himself thanks the Roman playwright Plautus for (Savran, 1988).

Valdez’s innovation in Spanish language theatre in the United States paved the way for a number of influential archetypes in bilingual and Chicano literature. Perhaps the most notable of these is the Zoot suit-wearing, Spanglish-speaking *pachuco*, who would become
“his pre-eminent symbol of cultural resistance and self-definition” (Maufort, 1995, p. 217). While Valdez did not invent el pachuco, he did make him into a cultural spokesperson, portraying him not as a disembodied stereotype, but as a human being onstage capable of elucidating the complexities of life in the barrio, and critically examining accompanying injustices.

Even from the early days, el Teatro Campesino clearly defined its goals as a movement. First, it aimed to “refigure cultural stereotypes by controlling them and by then reasserting them as positive”. Second, el Teatro was determined to “foster cultural nationalism by self-representation” (Maufort, 1995, p. 217). Valdez hoped to accomplish these two goals by way of his practical maxim: “put the tools of the artist in the hands of the humblest, working people” (Savran, 1988, p. 269).

Many educators have given Valdez’s advice a considerable amount of importance, as they endeavor to place the artist’s tools in the hands of some of the least powerful in our society, children. In one mid-western classroom, fifth grade teacher Gerald Campano (Campano & Medina, 2006) and his student teacher Angelica
have incorporated drama into the daily Language Arts curriculum. Although they are concerned with students developing their oral communication skills in English and Spanish, they have focused their instruction in a particular way on writing.

In this bilingual classroom, over 50% of the students have been in the U.S. for less than two years. They come mostly from Mexico and El Salvador. (Campano & Medina, 2006). Campano and his student teacher encourage students to invent fictitious characters who are children from other countries on their first day of school in the U.S. They are asked to give them advice via journal entries. Through this and other similar activities, students find catharsis for their own experiences as immigrants (Campano & Medina, 2006). Campano and Angelica respond to these journal entries on a weekly basis.

The dialogue journal is complimented by another dramatic activity called the “hot seat.” In the hot seat, the student-invented new immigrant characters sit and answer questions posed to them by classmates. Together, they process the complexities of the immigrant experience, with its attendant successes and injustices.
This serves as a fitting preparation for more involved dramatic activities (Campano & Medina, 2006).

In the process of the hot seat and dialogue journaling Campano and Angelica became aware of a reoccurring theme of teacher ignorance to the truth of their students' life circumstances. At this point, the instructors changed their students' writing assignments from journalizing to script writing. Students worked on vignettes treating cultural miscommunication between students and a fictitious teacher named Mr. Sid. The eventual result of their efforts was a compilation, made into a dramatic performance, which the student playwrights dubbed, *What the Teacher Didn't Know* (Campano & Medina, 2006).

*What the Teacher Didn’t Know* follows a continuous pattern of student-teacher dialogue, a halt in the action called “freeze,” and a concluding soliloquy explaining the miscommunication caused by lack of teacher empathy. The following selections illustrated the effectiveness of this modality as a means for students to interrogate their own school experiences.

SUSANA

Maestro, yo no tengo un libro para leer.
MR. SID

Yes, Susana. What? I cannot understand what you are saying.

STEVEN

Yo entender poquito español. I can translate for you. She needs a book to read.

MR. SID

No! You cannot read in English, so how do you expect to read one of those blue-labeled books? That table is your only choice! Everybody should get their homework ready to be turned in. And this is the U.S., so there will be no foreign languages!

FREEZE

SUSANA

What the teacher didn't know is that I just came from Mexico five months ago, so sometimes I don't know how to say things in English. He didn't know my language is an important part of me. Speaking Spanish is something I feel proud of, but he is cruel for not encouraging me to maintain my traditions. Instead, he put me down and made me feel like a stranger. And also, my teacher didn't know
that people spoke Spanish here before English!

(Campano & Medina, 2006, p. 338)

While the first of these vignettes reveals teacher ignorance in terms of culture and language, another shows greater indifference, even on a level of basic human needs.

MR. SID

There is no excuse for not bringing your homework. You are a lazy, irresponsible, wretched, horrid, indolent, diminutive little beast. Don’t talk to me. Go back to your seat!

FREEZE

CRYSTAL

What the teacher didn’t know is that I had to take care of my two little brothers and my sister. My mother worked until 8 p. m., so I was in charge of my family after school. I had to feed my brothers and change my sister’s diaper. She has Down’s Syndrome and has difficulty caring for herself. By the time my mom got home, I was exhausted and fell asleep without having my homework done (Campano & Medina, 2006, p. 338).
The students' soliloquies, far from being an occasion merely for lampooning school life, reveal many relationships of injustice that may otherwise go unnoticed by even the most experienced teachers. It is clear that they possess a certain "epistemic privilege" conferred upon them by their social position (Moya, 2001, p. 479). It is through the medium of theatre, however, that they are able to make others aware of their struggles as newly arrived elementary school immigrants.

Theatre of this type encourages children to explore what Paulo Freire called Generative Themes. Students are given the tools they need to critically examine their surroundings, along with their socio-economic circumstances. Such examination is preparation for social action meant to oppose a specific instance of injustice. This is realized when marginalized groups examine specific issues that affect them using the wealth of culture and insights that only they possess (Freire, 1970).

*El Teatro Campesino* usually finds its application in to an issue of immediate concern, as a way to challenge oppression. This stands in contradistinction to those forms of theatre that provide ways of accessing the
literary works of what may commonly be called "high culture." The Marshall Island production of a Midsummer’s Night Dream exemplifies this approach as it sought to give participants a genuine experience of Shakespeare that is both true to the original and the local culture. As a blend of these two approaches, there exists a third, which seeks to combine elements of socio-cultural theatre, and the theatre of relevant classics.

Founded in 1992 by actor and director Tony Plana, the East L.A. Classic Theatre Company offers a number of dramatic projects designed specifically to make classic theatre culturally relevant and socially active. The motto on the homepage of their website reads:

“A vision of cultural inclusion and academic excellence” (East L.A. Classic Theatre Company, 2007).

Tony Plana and his troupe have two main theatrical projects. The original mission of the East L.A. Classic Theatre (ECT) was to perform theatrical adaptations of classic literature in way that was both culturally relevant to the urban youth they served, and that was true to the original texts. One example of such a production was their series of performances in the summer of 1999 of Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing. The play
was recast in the California of the gold rush days. The Characters were a mixture of Mexican high society—donning fine suits and dresses and surveying the land from their haciendas—along side of dusty, rollicking white settlers with gold fever. Dialogue was a mixture of Spanish and English appropriate for the time. The musical score was even performed by a full mariachi ensemble (L.A. Times, 29 July 1999).

The performance was aimed at intergenerational audiences in East Los Angeles, and the setting was meant to resonate with the history of Mexicans in what has now come to be part of U.S. territory. True to the motto of the company, Plana commented in the L.A. Times press release,

East L.A. Classic Theatre’s Mission is to ‘create these artistic bridges between the minority cultures and the literary cannon of the dominant culture,’ Plana said. ‘Shakespeare is universal in how he writes about human nature and the human condition. We want kids to go beyond their borders, look at Shakespeare and say, ‘That can be mine too’” (L.A. Times, 29 July 1999).
The East L.A. Classic Theatre Company started by performing their adaptations for the audiences they intended to serve. Yet the next step in their development was to design a theatrical project training youth in theatrical arts and literacy. Beyond Borders took the initiative to partner with public schools to provide supplementary literacy instruction through the medium of drama. Their 16-week courses serve more than 26,000 pupils, teachers, and community members each year (East L.A. Classic Theatre Company, 2007).

Beyond Borders' curriculum provides literacy instruction divided between teaching skills necessary for acting, and guiding students through writing their own plays. At the end of the course, the students present these original works. What is noteworthy about ECT's work in East L.A. is that evidence, based on standardized testing, demonstrates the program's support for student gains in literacy skills. The Stanford 9 Language Arts assessment, when applied to students before and after enrollment in Beyond Borders, shows gains of between 49 and 54.6 percentage points on average. Remarkably, these same percentage gains appear in Mathematics as well. In addition, a study from Loyola-Marrimount University shows
that students who participate in *Beyond Borders* tend to show greater participation in other extra-curricular activities such as student government (East L.A. Classic Theatre Company, 2007).

One noteworthy branch of *Beyond Borders*, Shakes-Fest, has open auditions for student actors who are interested in performing Shakespearean adaptations relevant to southern California Latino urban culture. *Zoot Suit Romeo and Juliet* incorporates code switching and *barrio* slang into its lively dialogue and action. Culturally relevant adaptations that stay fresh and yet endure across the years are the hallmark of ECT’s performance repertoire (East L.A. Classic Theatre Company, 2007).

Kurt, Wootton (2004), a teacher of urban high school students from Rhode Island maintains that, “high culture is not the oppressor”; to the contrary, in the service of the oppressed it can be “an agent of their liberation” (*New York Times*, 18 August 2004). *Beyond Borders* brings together a unique combination of socio-cultural approaches consistent with the Chicano activism of *el Teatro Campesino* and the idea that universal literature does exist. Increased student performance and greater
participation in school and community activities bode favorably for the continued success of Beyond Borders.

Primary language, when combined with quality drama and language instruction, seems to foster in students a marked enthusiasm for learning. The increased presence of primary language adaptations suggests a growing interest in drama as a dynamic medium for increasing student engagement in academics.

Spanish Dramatizations of Classic Literature for the Middle Grades

On Friday, May 2, 2004 the curtains of the Reynolds Theatre were raised to cast of teenagers from Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, and the United States, many of whom were first-time actors. These youths put on for the first time in the state of North Carolina a Spanish production of Romeo and Juliet.

'I think Latinos will be very happy, since this is the first time it's been done in Durham,' said Ernesto Menendez-Conde, a Cuban graduate student in Duke's Romance Languages Department who translated the piece written by Joseph Henderson, co-director of the Walltown Children's Theatre (Duke News,
Children’s Theatre to Perform Classic in Spanish, 2007).

This performance was open to the community, and many Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish-speaking viewers came for a night with this classic. These actors, whose primary language now made them the keepers of high culture, took advantage of a unique kind of performance opportunity. Although their audience was not primarily adolescent, the junior high and high school cast no doubt gained much from the production in terms of their linguistic development and their understanding of classic Literature.

The literature on Spanish adaptation of classics includes other instances of similar performances opportunities. A simple internet search for “Spanish Children’s Plays” yields one link to a company which writes and sells a Spanish language adaptation of The Wizard of Oz. The Children’s Theatre offers a number of English scripts and one, El Mago de Oz, in Spanish. This is ported as appropriate for a school-wide production.(Children’s Theatre, 2007).

While this online resource for a Spanish play does offer the possibility of a production in Spanish, it
apparently does so without explicit theoretical direction. Intuitively, or perhaps for lucrative reasons, these companies know that there is a demand for this type of theatre. Yet, none of these speak to the need for a comprehensive pedagogy of literature instruction for ELL’s based on theatre.

Moreover, the array of scripts for sale on the internet is not situated in the context of an interdisciplinary approach to Literature, History and Social Studies. They are isolated pieces, to be purchased and enjoyed one by one, rather than to be studied in conjunction with the historical circumstances from which they emerged. This could lead to a fragmented view of Literature and History in the mind of students, who are given no detailed conceptual framework with which to organize their ideas in these subjects.

In contrast to these kinds of scripts sold to performers who play to a passively receptive audience, others, inspired by Boal (1979) and Freire (1970), endeavor to put the tools of the theatre into the hands of those who would normally be spectators. Boal’s (1979) concept of the spec-actor thus resonates more with a drama-based pedagogy of literary classics. Further, since
the conscientização at the center of Boal (1979) and Friere's (1970) thought requires critical understanding of history, isolation of literature from historical context is avoided.

In the fall of 2003, the chorus speaking for the use of a Spanish language theatre of classic literature gained another small voice from a dual language program in Banning, California. Ezekiel Stear, a sixth grade teacher in a 50-50 Spanish dual immersion program led his students through a production of a theatrical adaptation of The Epic of Gilgamesh. In 2006, a local newspaper featured the second performance of this original theatrical adaptation. The following article excerpts give a glimpse of the finished product and its overall linguistic and literary impact on the student-actors and the audience.

The production was a culmination of the hard work the sixth graders have put in their dual immersion (learning both English and Spanish) class and that of Mr. Stear for his adaptation. From costumes, to lighting, and even aiding in the directing, the kids did it all (The Black Voice News, 34.40, B-1).
The journalist adds a commentary on a pedagogical aspect of the adaptation.

Stear’s adaptation kept in context with the original... [and]... flowed smoothly with the re-telling more as a story than a poem. The original version may be complicated to understand, but Stear made his adaptation easy to understand for the students as well as the audience (*The Black Voice News, 34.40, B-1*).

This Spanish-language play stands as somewhat unique among the existing literature. Not only is it accessible to the students, but it also is true to the original and is part of a comprehensive and interdisciplinary unit combining Social Studies and Language Arts.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

From a variety of sources, in a number of distinct instructional settings, and over time, drama continues to be a respected and effective medium for teaching not only Literature, but also Social Studies. Moreover, an attendant set of intra- and inter-personal skills benefit from participation in drama. From cognition to behavioral understanding, aesthetic consciousness, and emotional
awareness, classroom drama is a unique avenue for academic and personal growth.

Standardized testing has confirmed the power of drama to promote reading comprehension. In addition, statistical evidence exists suggesting that drama will encourage overall academic performance and extra-curricular involvement. Theatre Arts seem, in this sense, to offer remarkable engagement to students during the middle years of their education; a period commonly characterized by boredom, rebellion or a general malaise.

Given the integrated nature of the language skills and academic content communicated through drama, it is no wonder that instructors of English Language Learners increasingly avail themselves of this instructional tool. Acting works with the usual strength of ELL’s: their oral language abilities. Additionally, performance of plays – and especially classic literature tied to history – gives ELL’s unparalleled access to content. Content in a range of subject areas is often neglected in programs designed for these learners. Moreover, when student performers have the opportunity to act in their primary language, enthusiasm for the art and its content greatly increase.
Playwrights such as Luis Valdez, Tony Plana, Joseph Henderson and Ezekiel Stear seek to use theatre to give language learners a voice in the midst of their formal education. Classic literature, introduced to students in their primary language, appears to be a little-explored area of writing and research. Research and writing in the field of bilingual education can only stand to benefit from an increase in holistic interdisciplinary theatrical adaptations.
CHAPTER THREE

WHY THEATRICAL ADAPTATIONS?

Introduction

Classic literature already exists in excerpt form in many basal readers and anthologies. Theatre, however, proposes a participatory forum for the representation of similar literary genres. Students in the commonplace drone of the prose of required readings are immediately more engaged by a script, which encourages their full participation. As Paulo Freire (2000) points out, when the teacher is the only subject in a classroom and students are meant to be passive receptors, "alienating verbosity" and "narrative sickness" are two results (Freire, 2000, p. 71).

Hence, proposing drama as an essential tool for literary access seeks to remedy problems of student alienation brought about by "banking education." Collaboration of this kind between teachers and students takes its cue from what Freire (2000) has called "co-intentional education."

"Teachers and students,...co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling..."
reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge” (p. 69).

Background

This project is a response to a specific need for new materials; thus it belongs squarely in the field of Curriculum and Instruction. Drawing on research and theory, this project attempts to answer the question: how can literature and history become more interesting for ELL students in upper elementary grades as they begin their adolescent years?

The Literary Tradition of Theatre Arts

In the ancient world, theatre was the preferred means of public story telling. Indeed, what our society may term “theatrics,” when seen from a basic perspective, refers to story telling. All societies and cultures have their particular ways of story telling; and thus they can all be understood more or less as theatrical.

Theatre is living literature. There is no other medium that asks people to take on the characters of a story as their own and perform them, establishing a world made of real people who portray contrived events. Indeed,
film is nothing more than the modern equivalent of this age-old art.

Playwrights compose stories that they intend audiences to see. The virtual world of the stage is meant to be participatory. Educators for years have used this medium as a concrete way to engage students in literature. From elementary school productions of The Nutcracker to high school renditions of Grease, drama has for years been considered an important subject for a rounded academic life.

Theatre Arts in the United States Public Education Classroom

Currently, Theatre Arts finds itself primarily on the junior high and high school levels. There it is offered as elective classes available in schools with economic resources to support them. Their existence is also dependent on administrator attitudes toward their educational merit.

The Diminishment of Theatre Arts as a Didactic Tool

In recent years, budget cuts and the demands of high stakes testing cause many districts to cut their arts programs. In schools where the dramatic arts are not
explicitly taught, teachers who wish to use them to supplement their regular instruction are left to their own devices. Schools labeled as “performance improvement” or which are seen as full of “at risk” students necessarily have a different atmosphere than those in affluent areas left relatively unaffected by such budget cuts.

Consequently, nowadays schools spend money on reading coaches and Language Arts specialists long before they spare any funds for Drama or Fine Arts. Thus, students in many public schools possess little familiarity with theatre as a medium or as a constructive means of self-expression. The lack of experience on the stage means a corresponding lack of experience as an audience member.

Obstacles Facing Theatre Arts in Public Education

School wide academic performance determines funding and curricular choices of administrators. Schools with lower test scores do not tend to have performing arts, just as they do not tend to have many other electives. It is not uncommon currently for some junior high school students to be enrolled in three periods of Language
Arts, two periods of Mathematics and one of Physical Education. Such a student schedule is a likely scenario for an English Language Learner at a low-performing school. The concrete effect of this scenario is that such an education in no way prepares students for high school content area classes.

Funding and curricular choices are not the only reasons drama is taught less and less in public schools. Among the teachers who do remain, there is uneasiness about teaching in any way that defies convention. Drama may be a very effective way to mediate literature and other subjects. However, the classroom management dynamics that come along with it, many teachers feel, may make the enterprise too risky.

If administrators make a surprise visit, teachers want their students involved in activities that appear to be academic in a traditional sense. The door should open to the teacher leading her class through workbook exercises, and not to small groups of kids practicing their lines. Dramatic arts are thus silenced both as an elective and as a didactic tool available to teachers.
Theatre Arts as a Perennial and Cross-Cultural Solution

Attitudes of aversion toward theatre arts as a means to facilitate greater reading comprehension and analysis of texts are unfortunate. This is especially the case in light of statistical data confirming the effectiveness of drama as a gateway to student motivation and overall performance. Elements such as plot, setting, and message or intent of the author are much easier to communicate to students through theatre than through conventional reading and writing exercises.

Theatre arts connect with a means of expression that transcends time and culture. Hence, theatre is perennial in the sense that it recurs throughout human history as a medium of human expression. Acting is a community-oriented activity. When student-actors perform for their community, they reaffirm authentic relationships existing between them. Whereas many traditional academic tasks emphasize individual achievement, theatre promotes the integration of the individual into the goals, achievements and larger life of a community. Thus, drama is a humanizing activity.
While there is little room for debate on whether or not theatre is perennial (valid across different times and cultures), there may be some doubt as to its relevancy to all students in a contemporary setting. The need for multi-lingual learners to rapidly learn English, goes a certain line of reasoning, precludes even the possibility of any sort of drama instruction. Yet attitudes that would marginalize students from the arts based on their academic performance ironically deny them one powerful tool with which to increase their achievement.

As the demographics of the United States change, more and more students of color attend public schools. These students particularly are affected by the budget cuts in arts, while other affluent populations may still have access to such programs. Social inequity is thus reflected as well by a concentration of arts programs in districts that do not have as many students of color.

Drama, as shown by a number of recent developments, can be harnessed for use in the ELL classroom, and for use in Dual-Language programs. It has been done with much success. As such, evidence builds for the acceptance of Theatre Arts in the classroom as a perennial
cross-cultural solution to the achievement and curriculum gap facing English Language Learners.
CHAPTER FOUR
CURRICULAR TOOLS FOR THE ADAPTATION OF CLASSIC LITERATURE TO A THEATRICAL FORMAT

Introduction
Classroom teachers who wish to incorporate drama into their instruction are not without resources. A number of internet and published sources provide the intrepid dramatist teacher with ready-made scripts, along with ideas for games, costumes and sets. Yet, beyond using another’s material, there are those who consider that original compositions would best serve the needs of their students. This chapter considers especially the latter more innovative of those two options.

The Process Playwright
The process playwright does not see his or her work as finished at any one time, but should see it as an ongoing, layered development. The conscious and critical revision of scripts in this manner causes the playwright to develop in terms of both composition and teaching skills. All playwrights are teachers in their own right, so it is indeed fitting for a professional teacher to
consciously use the mode of process playwright to address specific instructional concerns in his/her classroom.

The trailhead of the process begins with knowing your students' talents. It is important early in the year to be open to oral presentations and other forms of assessment that call on the student to verbally and physically represent their knowledge. This helps the teacher to assess what elements of the theatre arts will most aid a class's overall engagement in learning.

Knowledge of students' differences in read aloud fluency is also essential to the process. When it comes time for auditions and assigning roles, high readers naturally have more access to longer lines, while struggling readers are usually more suited for brief lines in action-driven parts of a play. In either case, classroom drama automatically works to provide readings at a challenge level appropriate to each student.

Once familiar with students' dramatic talents and their reading levels, giving them process drama assignments is the logical next step. To begin with, the basic technique of tableaux vivants uses simple performances of still images - students striking poses - to convey an idea or a frozen moment of action. These
beginning performances also provide the useful and timely opportunity for brief lessons on audience etiquette.

Next, there are a host of theatre games that encourage students to begin using short lines and dialogue, delivered with appropriate tone and feeling. A wonderful resource is Augusto Boals' (1979) theatre classic, *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, which serves to this end. After a period of gaining familiarity with performance, students should be prepared for a formal script.

Teachers who themselves read the literature that they are required to teach to their students are better equipped to write theatrical adaptations. Teaching literature, drama and history is an interdisciplinary task that requires great familiarity with the material being studied. This familiarity should be truly conversational, characterized by an open attitude from student and teacher alike. Students and teachers who stage productions should realize that they are in a dialectical relationship with the texts they use: the texts provide information and background; yet students' and the teachers' experiences will determine how meaningful classroom drama comes to fruition.
Teaching, Writing and Directing a Spanish Language Adaptation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in a Sixth Grade Dual Language Classroom

Just as with any other type quality instruction, when it comes to classroom drama, teachers should organize for success. Providing activities that support student learning before, during and after a dramatic undertaking will maximize learning and the overall quality of the final performance. In this section, I, Ezekiel Stear, recount my experiences writing and directing an original Spanish adaptation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in a sixth grade dual language classroom.

In the fall of 2003 as I began my first year of teaching, I looked at some of the visual aids I had made for a unit on Mesopotamia that my students were studying. I began to ponder the interdisciplinary nature of Social Studies in general. In California, where I taught, sixth graders are expected to be familiar with the art, religion and politics of ancient Mesopotamia. That was when the idea of writing a Spanish adaptation of *Gilgamesh* first occurred to me.

I knew that an adaptation of that size was a considerable undertaking. In order to know my material
well, I found as many prose adaptations of the work in Spanish as I could. While in 2003 I based my script largely on a college-level prose adaptation in English and a children’s version in Spanish, in 2004 I had more resources for writing. At that time I found a Spanish college-level poetry adaptation of the epic, which was translated word-for-word from the original Akkadian. This not only improved the quality of my second script, but also gave me a better feel for the way in which the original must have been read or chanted from the over 2,000 small clay tablets on which it is preserved.

In the Dual Immersion program where I worked, Spanish materials were few. I did, however, have a set of Social Studies books in Spanish, which did help provide the students with needed background knowledge to facilitate their reading of Gilgamesh. If the kids were going to have their own copy of the epic, I would have to put it in their hands. This I did. The first year, it was a series of photocopies, which they bound in construction paper. However, the second year, I formatted the play horizontally on half sheets, so that with proper pagination, the whole script could be more professionally
bound. This gave the play and the whole project a more professional feel.

The unit of instruction centered on the play. I first introduced the work itself explaining its place in the history of Mesopotamia. With this explanation, I interwove introductions of the main characters, and asked students to journalize about their expectations for the play.

The first reading of the play was done as a whole class. I chose the names of students randomly to read, but soon started to refine my reader choices based on how personal talents fit the characters. Thus, the first reading of the play served both as a preliminary casting call, and a chance for the students to familiarize themselves with the story they were to perform.

Further readings of the play I assigned in the context of small groups. I asked the groups to read the play three times in this setting. Meanwhile, I took advantage of this intermediate step in the pre-rehearsal readings to shift the members of the groups according to their strengths and the needs of a particular scene.

By the end of the initial readings, I had character assignments configured for my whole class. Each team was
responsible for the interpretation of two scenes, staggered throughout the play in such a way that no one group presented two scenes consecutively.

I gave students a mediated structure to individually consider their characters’ motivations and emotional makeup. Taking my cue from Constantine Stanislavski, the father of Method Acting, I asked students to analyze their characters’ emotions. They were to identify a character’s emotions during their scene, and think back to a time in their own lives when they felt similarly. Using their own lives’ experiences, therefore, they could find a way to personally enter into the actions of their characters. I have included this mediated structure in Appendix D.

In order to encourage wise time management during group work, I provided student groups with worksheets to help them choose jobs. The jobs I gave them to help them manage their groups were: Capitán(a) (Captain), Co-capitán(a) (Co-Captain), Apuntador(a) (Note-taker) (See Appendix D). I also offered groups prize incentives for memorizing lines.

The 2003 performance of Gilgamesh was the trial run. Hence, the intervening year taught me that the more
organization during the rehearsal and performance process, the better. I chose stage managers, prop managers, and light technicians to help with various technical aspects of the production. The first year, our lighting was restricted to turning on and off the classroom's regular light switches between scenes. However, by the second year, I was able to bring a lighting rig complete with dimmers and colors of red and blue. Blending colors and intensities gave us the possibility of painting an ambient mood on the set. The white board at the front of the room was transformed into a stage.

After approximately one month of rehearsals, carried out during the regular Language Arts block of instructional time, the play was ready to perform. In 2003, the piece debuted in two performances to the fifth grade classes of the same Dual Language program. In fall of 2005, however, with more props, better lighting, and a larger classroom, my students were able to perform to a total of ten classes, during five performances. It was to one of those performances that Lee Ragin Jr., a reporter from Black Voice News attended. It is his article on the play from which excerpts appear in the literature review.
Critical Reflections

At the conclusion of the performances, I led the class through critical reflection on the play. I asked them oral questions on the plot elements. Taking my lead from the Language Arts standards, I also asked students to describe the development of King Gilgamesh’s character during the epic. In addition to the oral debriefing, I also gave students a grade sheet (See Appendix D) offering them feedback on their performances.

The results and engagement the students exhibited during the debriefing were extraordinary. When asked to state in one sentence the main problem of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, one girl stated succinctly,

"It is about how Gilgamesh is afraid to die, so he searches for immortality."

When I asked one minute later for students to explain how he solved that problem, several commented, "He learns to accept the fact that one day he will die."

The universal message of the epic - humanity’s mortality - rang clear to these students. I believe that the message was much clearer than it would have been by simply reading the blurbs on *Gilgamesh* in our textbook.
One boy understood the message of the play so well, that reviling the specter of old age, he exclaimed,

"Eeeewww! That’s gross! I don’t wanna grow old and die and get all wrinkly!"

There was no need to correct him. The intensity of his reaction made it abundantly clear that my instructional objectives were met. He had entered the mind of King Gilgamesh.

The overall success of the project did not eclipse the necessity for me as an educator to critically reflect on my performance. I was by and large optimistic about the outcomes, and reasoned that perhaps all things worth doing are worth doing even poorly. Even so, my reflections on process drama and the teacher’s role as process playwright led me to a number of conclusions on the unit’s possibilities for improvement.

One lesson I learned was to differentiate between process drama, which is concerned with teaching content through drama and literary exploration and classroom theatre. The second of these terms refers to a final finished product for consumption by a viewing audience. What I had not anticipated was that all of the students involved were at different points on the process drama
and classroom theatre continuum. Some with no theatrical experience learned by leaps and bounds as they put themselves in a character’s shoes for the first time. Other students who had acting experience were more driven to memorize their lines well and give their utmost for the final production. Regardless of this difference of dramatic development, since the project placed an emphasis both on process and product, there was a place for everyone.

Another feature of the play’s composition that affected the overall quality of the performance was my choice to borrow ancient writing conventions. One of these is the tendency of characters to repeat their credentials and acclaim themselves at every introduction. This ancient Semitic literary device is meant to emphasize grandeur. However, in twenty-first century Southern California, sixth graders’ attention easily drifted as King Gilgamesh gave yet another summary of his credential and his life’s story. Further editing of the script can prevent this problem and optimize its most engaging qualities.

When considered as a whole, The Epic of Gilgamesh was the crowning and memorable process and product of a
successful interdisciplinary unit. Students were exposed not only to the Social Studies standards on the ancient Near East, but also gained access to a literary work normally available only to the affluent. The primary language adaptation of this play was true to the original, and true to the richness that the student actors had to offer culturally, linguistically and personally.

The Alignment of the California Social Studies Standards to Classic Literature through Theatre, Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8

The purpose of this section is to show how the California Social Studies standards may be aligned to various works of classic literature. This may function as a simple resource for educators who consider writing their own theatrical adaptations. Also, those interested in supplementing their existing instruction with prose versions of these classics may also do so.

I have given short and fitting commentaries - in which I quote the standards - on the possibilities for theatrical adaptations. While this list is by no means comprehensive, it is a starting point for bringing more
authentic literature into classrooms to supplement or
even replace basal readers and Social Studies textbooks.

Grade Five: United States' History and
Geography: Making a New Nation

Christopher Columbus' original diary, entitled, *El
diario de Cristóbal Colón*, offers fertile ground for
theatrical performances. This is especially true since
daily entries in the journal make for shorter scenes,
which are easier to perform. In Columbus' journal there
appear such accounts as the first recorded encounter of
Europeans with Native Americans (SS 5.2-1).

Another work of authentic literature coming from
early settler-native relations of that historical period
is the Cherokee-language newspaper written and printed by
that tribe. A play could be easily written about the
Cherokee Sequoyah, who though being illiterate himself,
inferred the alphabetic principle and invented a Cherokee
alphabet. The possibilities here are rich not only for
affirming the value of literacy, but also for valuing
Native American heritage (SS 5.3-4).

Concerning later explorations of the North American
continent, the diaries of Lewis and Clark are uncharted
territory as well for theatrical adaptations. Especially
of interest for dual language or heritage maintenance programs is the role of Sacegewea as interpreter to Lewis and Clark. A play could be written with her as the protagonist, reflecting the key role of women of color at important moments of exploration and transition in the United States (SS 5.8-3).

Other stories of U.S. territorial expansion also appear in authentic adaptable literature of the time. Of interest for their action are accounts of the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War. Davey Crockett and the Alamo would be a fascinating dual language play, if it were bilingual and shown fairly from both sides. Also, the U.S. invasion of Mexico led to the story of *Los Niños Héroes*. This work lends itself to discussions and projects on Mexican heritage (SS 5.8-6).

Grade Six: World History and Geography

Ancient literature permeates the Social Studies standards in sixth grade. Ancient Mesopotamia boasts of the very first epic poem, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Additionally, there are a number of original Egyptian pieces of literature that lend themselves to theatrical adaptations. I have written - though not published - one
called, *The Castaway*, or *El Náufrago*, from the ancient Egyptian tale entitled, "A Shipwrecked Sailor." While the *Book of the Dead* is the most known work of ancient Egyptian literature, since it is largely made up of hymns to gods, and has no overarching plot, it proves difficult to adapt (SS 6.2-3).

The history of Israel offers many opportunities for theatrical adaptations. Biographical accounts from the Bible, judiciously adapted may serve to teach about a faith that has shaped history. Explaining the significance of the stories of Abraham, Moses, Naomi, Ruth, David and Yohanan ben Zaccai forms a Social Studies Standard. Also in the standards appears the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt (SS 6.3-3 and 6.3-4).

The standards on Greek civilization and history offer direct references to required reading for sixth graders. Sixth graders are required to be conversant and familiar with Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In addition, they are to have read a number of *Aesop's Fables*. While the first two of these necessarily entail longer productions, *Aesop's Fables* are concise stories that are not episodic. These could easily be performed in less than five minutes each (SS 6.4-4).
Instruction on ancient India would not be complete without giving students direct access to two accounts that from the subcontinent that have changed the world. The standards include as required reading the story of the Buddha, and the Bhagavad-Gita, a foundational text for contemporary Hinduism. Both of these stories would make fine adaptations of no longer than fifteen minutes apiece (SS 6.5-5 and 6.5-7).

Confucius appears in the sixth grade Social Studies standards on China. A short play on his life and scenes from the Analects would be a great way to familiarize students with his teachings and contributions to Chinese culture (SS 6.6-3).

The Roman world offers a number of possibilities for classroom drama as well. Students are required to know foundational Roman stories such as the Aeneid and the tale of Romulus and Remus (SS 6.7-1). Further, with an objective and historical stance, it would be possible to portray the activities of the early apostles and government authorities during the beginnings of Christianity (SS 6.7-6). The spread of Christianity via written accounts found outside of the New Testament would
also be appropriate historical sources for theatrical adaptations (SS 6.7-7).

Grade Seven: World History and Geography: Medieval and Early Modern Times

An episode in the ultimate disintegration of the Roman Empire could be represented theatrically by looking to the account of Constantine's vision before he conquered the city of Byzantium (7.1-3).

Islam during the Middle Ages provides possibilities for further dramatics. The life and teachings of Muhammad could be recounted in play form, bearing in mind that Muslim beliefs require that the face of the Muhammad not be seen (7.2-2). Trade routes, cities, products and inventions of the flourishing Islamic culture of the Middle Ages could be seen through the lens of a theatrical adaptation of One Thousand and One Arabian Nights. These tales are episodic and offer many roles for males and females. It is also noteworthy that the protagonist (Shaherazade) outwits her captor who desires her execution with these nightly tales (7.2-5).

The diffusion of Christianity to the north of the Alps could be seen via the life of St. Patrick. History could be preferred to legend surrounding the man and his
lasting historical contributions (7.6-2). The development of feudalism during that time could also be illustrated by a dramatization of the tales of King Arthur. Although these tales are legend, they do represent the social and political order of the time accurately (SS 7.6-3).

The Spanish conquest of the Aztec empire has an excellent source in a volume entitled, La visión de los vencidos. This book contains Spanish translations of indigenous testimonials beginning with the first encounter with Europeans on the Yucatán peninsula up until the conquest of Tenochtitlán. The implications for a critical examination of the history the colonization of Mesoamerica abound. Episodes in this book contain many roles for both genders (7.7-3).

Grade Eight: United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict

While the Social Studies standards are an elaboration of many concepts introduced in fifth grade, there are a number of noteworthy dramatic possibilities in this grade as well. Samples of classics required in the standards are writings of Louisa May Alcott and Herman Melville. Perhaps adaptations of Little Women or Moby Dick could address those needs (8.6-7).
The lives of pioneers, and especially of pioneer women are key to eighth grade standards as well. Laura Ingalls Wilder in particular opens a window for potential adaptations of her writings (8.8-3).

The autobiography of Fredrick Douglass could be a dynamic and action-driven play, if scenes were carefully chosen. This would help students to better understand the life and contributions of one important abolitionist leader (8.9-1).

The reasons for wars between the U.S. cavalry and Native Americans could be vividly re-enacted in a short play on the battle of Little Bighorn. General Custer’s and Chief Sitting Bull’s personal writings provide the background for what could be a very exciting dramatization. Dual perspectives could affirm the Native American cause while valuing the humanity of the Custer and his cavalry (8.12-2).

The California Social Studies Content Standards provide a literary framework for the development of innovative classroom dramatizations. The standards already require that students be familiar with works of classic literature, pivotal historical events, and even with foundational religious texts. Current Social Studies
materials, however, provide limited access at best to these works. The advantage of theatrical adaptations lies in their ability to present all essential plot and historical content in a way that is much more accessible and engaging to pre-adolescent learners. The need to engage all learners, and particularly ELL's and bilingual/biliterate students calls educators to continue to weave drama into their curricular tapestry.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The sheer volume of literature supporting the use of drama in the classroom together with the many possibilities existing in the state standards for the adaptations of classics augurs favorably for the use of drama to teach Social Studies and literature. Both Drama and Bilingual Education are multi-faceted, and any attempt to articulate the specifics of a union of the two will have much to account for. Be that as it may, the present thesis yields a number of conclusions.

1. Drama is not an isolated teaching strategy. Although in recent years in California there has been a move away from dramatics as an instructional tool, there is an abiding interest in the medium both in the U.S. and internationally.

2. Drama is a powerful means to aid second language acquisition.

3. The intervention and enrichment programs that show the most promise for closing the ELL
achievement gap are those that rely exclusively on primary languages. The more content that a language learner has access to in her primary language, the better she will be equipped to excel in her new language.

4. The potential for primary language theatrical adaptations of authentic historical literature is great. The survey of the California Social Studies standards for grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 in this thesis alone shows 35 possibilities.

Recommendations

Given the premise of this project; that is, that primary language theatrical adaptations of classic literature will help to close the ELL achievement gap, the following recommendations can be made.

1. Individual teachers must take the initiative to use drama in their classrooms. If interest is truly wide-spread enough, then policy and general student expectations will reinforce its skillful practice.

2. Policy advances should be made for the implementation of drama programs, especially
for English Language Learners. Advocating on a local, state and federal level will raise consciousness on the effectiveness of dramatic adaptations of authentic literature.

3. Those involved in the field of Curriculum and Instruction would do well to increment the production of primary language theatrical adaptations of classic literature.

4. Further research should be done on the effectiveness of drama to promote second language acquisition.

5. Budget allocations for the Performing Arts and the resources needed must be seriously targeted to public schools.

Summary

This present project is not an attempt to articulate a comprehensive theory of how to teach historic literature through primary language drama. Rather, by marshalling evidence on the effectiveness of such an interdisciplinary multi-lingual approach, this researcher/teacher/playwright hopes to convince readers of the necessity to continue to write primary language
adaptations and to blaze new trails in curriculum development and educational policy.

This is a time of much opportunity in the area literacy for English Language Learners. Dual Language classrooms offer the kind of setting necessary to optimize the power of primary language theatrical adaptations. Bold educators who take the kinds of risks their kids need to help them understand the classics will open up new areas of knowledge.

Future generations will inherit the world's literary and historical knowledge base. Whether they ignore it or put its insights to good use depends largely on how we present it to them. The stage is truly set and the audience of tomorrow awaits. Now will the actors come out?
APPENDIX A

GILGAMESH, REY DE Uruk: A Spanish Language Theatrical Adaptation of Ancient Bablonian Epic of Gilgamesh
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk

Una obra basada en

*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*

Poema de la Babilonia antigua

Ezekiel Glenn Stear Provenza
Redlands, California, EEUU
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*(Gilgamesh, King of Uruk)*

A play based on the
ancient Babylonian
epic poem, *The Epic of Gilgamesh)*

Ezekiel Glenn Stear
Redlands, California, USA
All rights reserved, 2005
Los personajes de la obra:
Narrador
Rey Gilgamesh
Soldados (dos)
Anu, Dios del Cielo
Mujer 1
Mujer 2
Gente del mercado de Uruk
Aruru, Dios Creador
Ninurta, Diosa Creadora
Enkidú
Cazador Trampero
Hijo del Cazador Trampero
Shamhat
Shamash, Dios del Sol
Humbaba
Ishtar, Diosa del Amor
Toro del Cielo
Hombre-escorpión
Siduri
Urshanabí
Utanapishtim
Enlil, Señor de los Cielos
Enugui, el Dios de los Canales
Ea Dios de laCivilización
Gente de la ciudad de Shurupak
Adad, Dios de las Tormentas
La esposa de Utanapishtim
Serpiente
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 1
Escena 1

(Dentro de la ciudad de Uruk, un día de mercado. La gente pasea, compra, vende, y cambia, pero en silencio para que se escuche la voz del NARRADOR.)

NARRADOR
(Sale vestido en una túnica común de pastor y lleva una vara. Se detiene en el centro del plataforma y comienza con una voz fuerte y dramática.) Desde el principio de la historia, no ha vivido un rey como Gilgamesh de la gran ciudad de Uruk. Este es el cuento de cómo él sufrió muchas pruebas, de su amistad con el fuerte e impresionante Enkidú, de sus aventuras y hazañas, y de cómo viajó hasta la casa de Utanapishtim, donde supo los secretos del gran diluvio y de la inmortalidad.

Desde su nacimiento, Gilgamesh tuvo un destino; por eso los dioses le crearon con un cuerpo perfecto, para ser el hombre más fuerte del mundo. (baja la voz, y con intensidad) Nadie podía controlarlo ni domarlo, tal era su carácter de guerrero. Nadie dudaba de que era su destino ser el rey de Uruk.

Mientras habla lentamente se suben las luces en todo el plataforma, donde lleguen personas de Uruk a lo que es la Plaza Mayor de la ciudad: están en sus labores, comprando, vendiendo, cambiando, pero en silencio; y el REY GILGAMESH está elevado sobre la gente sentado en su trono con los brazos cruzados y una mirada arrogante.

Nadie lo podía vencer, y después de cualquier batalla contra él, Gilgamesh no dejó hijo a su padre. Como un toro o un búfalo salvaje, nadie podía controlarlo.

De repente dos SOLDADOS tratan de sorprender a GILGAMESH, saliendo de su escondite detrás de su trono. Sigue una breve batalla donde GILGAMESH con sólo dos golpes, uno para cada soldado, sale victorioso, y los soldados huyen.)

Gilgamesh era un tirano y no tenía misericordia, ni con sus enemigos, ni con su propio pueblo. Cuando los hombres de la ciudad lo molestaban u ofendían, los mandaba a la cárcel; además, injuriaba a las mujeres.

(Dos MUJERES pasan por delante del trono, y GILGAMESH se rie a carcajadas, señalándolas exageradamente. Las dos, bajan la cabeza y muestran caras tristes al público.)

No encontró a ningún hombre que lo igualara en su fuerza, pero por ser tan arrogante, todo el pueblo lo temía.

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(Se bajan las luces en el mercado, y se retiran los estímulos del mismo. Las dos MUJERES y los SOLDADOS heridos por GILGAMESH, se juntan delante de un altar de ANU, DIOS DEL CIELO. Mientras reza MUJER 1, se retiran GILGAMESH y su trono. En su lugar llegan los dioses ANU, ARURU y NINURTA.)

MUJER 1
(Reza con una voz dolorida.) Oh, Anu, Dios del Cielo, te pedimos justicia. El Rey Gilgamesh no tiene misericordia con nosotros, y no vemos ninguna manera de oponerlo ni controlarlo. ¡Por favor, manda a alguien fuerte que pueda salvamos de su ira!

NARRADOR
La gente se quejaba con los dioses, pidiéndoles justicia y que hicieran algo para controlar a Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk. Anu, Dios del Cielo, escuchó las quejas del pueblo de Uruk, y hablando en confianza con Aruru, Dios Creador, dijo:

ANU
Aruru, creaste a ese hombre Gilgamesh, y mira el desastre que ha causado; ahora crea a otro con la fuerza igual o mayor a la de ese rey arrogante, para que vuelva la paz a Uruk.

ARURU
Así lo haré, Anu, con la ayuda de Ninurta, Diosa Creadora.

NARRADOR
(Extiende la mano para invitar a Ninurta, quien le acompaña, y los dos bajan a donde está una masa de barro en el piso.)

NARRADOR
Aruru formó del barro de la tierra a un hombré y Ninurta, Diosa Creadora terminó de hacerlo. Ella cubrió con pelo su cuerpo entero, y su cabello lo hizo del color de la cebada.

Ninurta trabaja sobre la forma de Enkidú, y cuando termina, emerge el hombre. Durante todo el proceso de la creación de Enkidú, Anu está parado en lo alto, con los brazos cruzados y una sonrisa.

NARRADOR
Vivía en la llanura como animal, comiendo lo que pudiera encontrar, y tomando agua de los ríos como una bestia. El salvaje era tan fuerte que podía con cualquiera, hasta con Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk. Anu estaba satisfecho con el trabajo de Ninurta y Aruru y dijo:

ANU
Lo llamaré Enkidú.

(Se bajan las Luces.)
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 1
Escena 2

(El bosque fuera de la ciudad de Uruk. Un CAZADOR TRAMPERO y su parados en el centro hablan de ENKIDÚ.)

CAZADOR TRAMPERO
En toda mi vida como cazador, nunca he visto a un ser como éste; es feroz y mata como un lobo, ágil y ligero, toma agua del lago como un venado. Fue justo ahí que lo vi pasar antes de que llegaras, hijo mío, y por eso me ves tan asustado.

HIJO DEL CAZADOR TRAMPERO
Sé que has atrapado muchos animales, y mejor que nadie conoces el bosque por estas partes. Si te asustas al ver esta bestia, debe ser salvaje y peligroso.

CAZADOR TRAMPERO
(Pensando en cómo podía proteger a su familia, y a la gente de Uruk, aconseja a su hijo.) Hijo mío, si vas a la ciudad y traes a una mujer hermosa, es probable que cuando Enkidú la vea se enamore de ella, y al casarse, dejará de vivir como animal.

HIJO DEL CAZADOR TRAMPERO
Sí mi padre, que sea así: que Enkidú nos deje en paz, que entre en la ciudad y empiece a vivir como un hombre civilizado.

(HIJO DEL CAZADOR TRAMPERO desaparece y entra en la cuidad a buscar a una doncella hermosa para llevarla a conocer al salvaje ENKIDU. Entretanto, sigue hablando entre sí el CAZADOR TRAMPERO.)

CAZADOR TRAMPERO
Creo que sí... una mujer siempre puede domar a los hombres más salvajes, espero que esta vez no sea ninguna excepción; pues tengo que hacer algo para que se vaya de aquí, y deje de llevarse los animales que atrapo.

(En eso regresa HIJO DEL CAZADOR TRAMPERO trayendo consigo a la doncella SHAMHAT. Llevan a la dama hasta el lago donde coincida con Enkidú, quien vino a tomar agua. Al instante que el salvaje la ve, se enamora de ella, su aspecto y gestos de bestia se vuelven tímidos, como si fuera un cachorro.)

SHAMHAT
(Acercándole) Ay mi hermoso Enkidú, con pelo de león, mira qué fuerte y hombre se ve:

(Se para al lado del lago junto a ENKIDU y espera a que él le hable.)
ENKIDU
Muuuuuujerrrr... ¡ayyyyy, qué bella! Tuuuuú, mey gustaarrrr.

SHAMHAT
(Coqueta y mandaona a la vez) Mira, si quieres ser mi novio, te voy a tener que enseñar algunas cosas. Lo primero que tienes que hacer es cortarte este mugroso pelo que tienes....

ENKIDU
(Da un triste grito bestial.)

(Siguen los dos platicando, en silencio mientras el NARRADOR entra en la escena.)

NARRADOR
Pronto se dio cuenta de que para conocerla y para casarse con ella, tendría que cambiar su forma de ser. El amor venció a Enkidú, se bañó, se cortó el cabello, y de esa forma fácilmente la doncella Shamhat lo guío hasta la ciudad. Gracias al poder de su belleza, Enkidú perdió la fuerza de los brazos, y su domesticación fue total al entrar en la ciudad de Uruk.

(Pasan los dos por las puertas de Uruk y se acaba la escena.)
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 1
Escena 3

Dentro de la ciudad de Uruk. La gente se congrega en la Plaza con ENKIDÚ y SHÁMHAT. GILGAMESH está en su trono, viendo a todos con su acostumbrada arrogancia.

NARRADOR
Noticias de Enkidú ya habían llegado a Gilgamesh, quien siempre buscaba a su igual en la pelea, y no temía a ninguno. La gente decía que era tan fuerte como Gilgamesh, y que podría ser su igual. Cuando el Rey Gilgamesh supo de la fuerza de Enkidú, quería pelear con él.

Gilgamesh baja de su trono y pasa a la Plaza, se para, cruza los brazos, y mira fijamente a Enkidú. Dos soldados lo acompañan.

GILGAMESH
Enkidú, veo que sí pareces como un animal fuerte, pero muchas veces he matado a los lobos y leones del bosque, así que, no me da miedo pelearme con uno como tú, sobre todo porque siempre estás con tu (cantando como niño) noooovia.

Los soldados se rien, y la gente alrededor se ve nerviosa frente la actitud de Gilgamesh. Enkidú, ofendido, gruñe como un perro bravo, y los dos se preparan para la lucha. De lados opuestos del escenario, los dos corren hacia el centro donde chocan y empiezan a luchar. Gilgamesh tiene a Enkidú sujetado con dos manos contra el piso, pero de repente éste encuentra su fuerza, y se vuelve de manera que Gilgamesh esté perdiendo.

MUJER 1
(Asombrada) ¡Mira que fuerza tienen!

NARRADOR
Desde luego, por los chismes de la gente y por ser tan presumidos los dos, se odiaron, y se pelearon, luchando en el polvo. Se hubieran peleado toda la tarde, pero Gilgamesh se dio por vencido.

ENKIDÚ se apodera de GILGAMESH, apretándole la garganta para ahogarlo, pero en el momento que parece fatal para el rey, ENKIDÚ siente compasión por él.

ENKIDÚ
Con razón dicen que eres el hombre más fuerte de Mesopotamia. Te admiro por la fuerza de tus brazos y te digo que eres mi igual en la batalla. No hay otro rey como tú, que tienes la cabeza elevada sobre todos los demás. ¡Dejemos de pelearnos, Gilgamesh, y seamos amigos para siempre!
GILGAMESH
(Respira profundamente, cansado) Sí... Enkidú... creo que eres mi igual en la batalla... Creo que sí es mejor que seamos amigos, porque juntos somos mucho más fuerte que solos. En todas las aventuras que vivimos, ¡seremos victoriosos!

La gente en la plaza aplaude y levanta gritos de alegría. Enkidú levanta a Gilgamesh, y los dos se dan la mano en señal de amistad.
Empieza la escena en el palacio lujoso de GILGAMESH dentro de Uruk. ENKIDÚ y GILGAMESH están recostados, descansando, y bien atendidos por sirvientes que les ofrecen platos de comida.

GILGAMESH
Enkidú, desde que nos hicimos amigos, la vida ha sido muy fácil y divertida. Mira como nos atienden. Estamos a gusto. La vida es rica. Estás feliz acá en la ciudad, ¿no?

ENKIDÚ no está feliz. Tiene ganas de llorar, pero trata de no mostrar su sentimientos a Gilgamesh.

ENKIDÚ
Sí, amigo, la vida nos trata bien ahora; pues te digo que desde cuando entré en la ciudad, he estado muy contento.

GILGAMESH
¡Qué bien! Me da gusto saberlo, y para que sigas contento... (hablando hacia los sirvientes) Oigan, traigan más uvas para Enkidú. Él es mi mejor amigo, y quiero que esté contento, y que coma bien.

Ahora, ENKIDÚ no puede aguantarse las ganas de llorar, y empieza a chillar se le llenan los ojos con lágrimas. GILGAMESH se soprende por el cambio de humor de su amigo.

GILGAMESH
Enkidú, ¿qué pasa? ¿Dije algo mal?

ENKIDÚ
No te preocupes. No eres tú, no tienes la culpa. Cuando te dije que estoy feliz aquí en la ciudad, dije una mentira. No estoy feliz, de hecho, me siento muy triste (levanta la cabeza y aulla hacia el cielo) Es que estamos aquí todos los días, comiendo, bebiendo y descansando, pero comparado con antes, ahora me siento muy débil y perezoso. ¡Amigo mío, la fuerza ha dejado mis brazos por estar tanto en la ciudad, y ahora estoy muy débil!

GILGAMESH
(consolándolo) Cuando la buena vida y los lujos de la ciudad nos quitan la fuerza de los brazos y el corazón, hay que buscar una nueva aventura.

ENKIDÚ
Pero, ¿en dónde buscaremos aventuras? Antes de que entrara en la ciudad, rodaba por todo el campo, y no vi mucho interesante.
GILGAMESH
Ah, pero solamente has conocido por la ciudad. Hay muchas aventuras en el mundo, necesitamos ir lejos de Uruk para encontrarlas. Me han contado, querido amigo, de un enorme bosque de cedros donde vive un monstruo feroz y malévolo que se llama Humbaba. Lo mataremos, y sí salvaremos al pueblo.

ENKIDÚ
(Miedoso) Ay, también he escuchado de Humbaba, y sé que es un monstruo horrible para la gente. ¡Oh, Gilgamesh, por más fuerte o valiente que seas, te digo que Humbaba es un monstruo terrible: su boca es fuego y su aliento es muerte! No sólo por eso le temo, sino porque nunca duerme. Lo que es más, ve y escucha todo lo que pasa en el bosque.

GILGAMESH
(Decidido) Enkidú, pensaba que eras un hombre valiente, pero ahora, ¿dónde está tu gran valor? Anda, vamos al bosque, y matemos a Humbaba; y si no me acompañas, iré solo.

NARRADOR
Enkidú, siendo gran amigo de Gilgamesh, no quería dejarlo ir al gran bosque de los cedros para pelearse solo contra Humbaba; y decidió ir con el Rey de Uruk, su amigo.

**Durante el parlamento del narrador, el ensamble actua en silencio.**

Gilgamesh mandó traer las mejores espadas, escudos y hachas para la batalla contra Humbaba. Luego, se despidieron de la gente de Uruk, y pidieron la protección de Shamash, Dios del Sol.

GILGAMESH
Vamos al bosque de los cedros y a nuestro encuentro con Humbaba. El camino al bosque es muy largo, y tardaremos sies días en llegar. Pidamos la ayuda de Shamash, Dios del Sol, para que nos proteja en el camino, y nos dé la victoria contra Humbaba.

**Se bajan las luces.**
ENKIDÚ
Mira, amigo, ya llegamos al bosque de los cedros. Antes de que viviera en la ciudad, pasaba por aquí mucho, pero nunca he entrado en el bosque. Los cedros son unos árboles enormes que hueinen rico, pero el peligro dentro del bosque me da miedo. Sólo ahora contigo me siento valiente y listo para una batalla contra Humbaba.

Una voz misteriosa y masculina se escucha como de la nada.

VOZ
¡Gilgamesh!
GILGAMESH
Sí, Enkidú, dime.

ENKIDÚ
¿Qué pasó? No dije nada.

VOZ
¡Gilgamesh!
GILGAMESH
Sí, Enkidú, aquí estoy. ¿Se te ofrece algo?

ENKIDÚ
No, gracias, no fui yo, de veras.

Gilgamesh no le cree a Enkidú, y está molesto.

VOZ
Gilgamesh y Enkidú, soy yo, Shamash, el Dios del Sol.

GILGAMESH
(con reverencia) Oh, Shamash, permítame hacerle una pregunta: ¿Por qué nos espantó tanto?

SHAMASH
Ah, eso nada más fue una broma, perdón si les asusté. Gilgamesh, he escuchado sus oraciones, y he decidido ayudarlos, porque de veras Humbaba es un terrible monstruo, y entre más pronto esté vencido, mejor será.

Gilgamesh, ten ánimo, ahora es el mejor momento para atacar a tu enemigo Humbaba. Tiene siete placas grandes de metal que son su armadura, pero hoy, pensando que todo estaba seguro, se ha quitado sies de esas placas, y ahora piensa que con solamente una se protegerá. Claven sus espadas en su lado flaco.

Gilgamesh y Enkidú dan las gracias con señas muy exageradas.
GILGAMESH Y ENKIDU
Gracias, Oh Shamash por el favor que nos ha hecho.

SHAMASH
De nada.

ENKIDU
¡Entremos al bosque y ataquemos al monstruo Humbaba! Aunque dicen que es grande, dos cachorros son más fuertes que un león solo.

(Avanzan con precaución.)

GILGAMESH
No veo ni rasgos de nuestro enemigo... Ah, ¡Mira esas huellas grandes!

ENKIDU
Sí, las veo, parece que tiene poco que Humbaba ha pasado por aquí.

En el fondo del escenario, se sacude un árbol.

GILGAMESH
¿Escuchaste eso?

ENKIDU
Se me hace que vino desde allí (señala al árbol que se sacudió).

De repente, se asoma HUMBABA, es feroz, pero asustado frente a los dos guerreros, se echa a correr. Corren los tres entre los árboles, GILGAMESH y ENKIDU persiguen al monstruo hasta que lleguen a la cueva donde vive. GILGAMESH saca su espada, y está a punto de matarlo.

HUMBABA
Oh Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk, te ruego que no me mates, si me dejas vivo, siempre seré tu sirviente, y te construiré un palacio de los cedros de este bosque.

ENKIDU
¡Mentiras! Gilgamesh, no le creas. Sólo engaña este monstruo.

GILGAMESH alza la espada y se lanza hacia GILGAMESH. Éste salta, y se escapa por el momento.

HUMBABA
Bueno, ya les di la oportunidad de hacernos amigos. Ahora veo que no puedo confiar en ustedes. Escuchen mi maldición: si me muero por sus espadas, que ninguno de los dos llegue a ser viejo, y que Enkidú muera primero.

Trata de evitar las espadas de GILGAMESH y ENKIDÚ, pero no se escapa y GILGAMESH le corta la cabeza.
GILGAMESH
Gracias, amigo por lo que hiciste ahora. Si no fuera por tus palabras, capaz que hubiera creído las mentiras de este horrible monstruo. Pero no fue así, Shamash nos dio la victoria.

ENKIDÚ
Vamos a Uruk para que todos vean la cabeza de Humbaba, y sepan que el bosque de los cedros está seguro.

Salen victoriosos, y se bajan las luces.
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk  
Acto 2  
Escena 3  

GILGAMESH está solo en su cuarto y acaba de bañarse. Está vestido con una túnica limpia y se ha peinado. Satisfecho, habla consigo mismo.

GILGAMESH  
Ahh, qué rico es ser Rey de Uruk, y matar a un monstruo tan terrible como Humbaba. Lo único más rico que eso es estar bañado y limpio. Voy a ver que estará haciendo Enkidú...

Esta a punto de salir del cuarto cuando aparece ISHTAR, Diosa del Amor, quien le habla tiernamente.

ISHTAR  
Gilgamesh, eres poderoso y ahora famoso por tus hazañas. (Se aproxima más él, y coquetea) Fuiste estupendo cuando mataste a Humbaba. Con razón has llegado a ser el rey de Uruk.

(Se le acerca más hasta que los dos están frente a frente casi tocándose.)

ISHTAR  
Mira, ahora cuando vi lo que hiciste tuve que venir a hablar contigo. En ti, veo al hombre que siempre he buscado, por lo que te pido que seas mi esposo. ¿Te quieres casar conmigo?

GILGAMESH abruptamente se separa de ISHTAR.

GILGAMESH  
Ishtar, aunque me regales riquezas, carrozas y caballos, no me casaré contigo. Eres un viento que entra por la casa y enfría todo. Eres una sandalia que lastima el pie de quien la usa. Siempre dices que amarás a un solo hombre, pero luego lo maltratas. De veras, no entiendo por qué te llaman la diosa del amor cuando haces cosas tan malas a los hombres.

ISTHAR pone cara de inocente.

GILGAMESH  
No me puedes engañar, Ishtar, conozco tus trampas. Me dijeron que una vez transformaste en sapo a uno de tus novios, y no quiero que me hagas algo así. ¡Ya basta! No me casaré contigo.

ISHTAR  
(Enfurecida, da un grito de angustia) Gilgamesh, nadie puede rechazar a una diosa, y mucho menos a mí, la más hermosa de todas. Te vas a arrepentir, Gilgamesh de Uruk, ¡verás que nadie puede contra Ishtar! Mandaré al Toro del Cielo para matar a todo el pueblo de Uruk.
Se rie y se retira del escenario. GILGAMESH escucha gritos en la plaza y baja a ver el TORO DEL CIELO persiguiéndolo y matando a su gente. Ve a ENKIDÜ.

ENKIDÜ
Gigamesh, vamos a rodear a este toro para atraparlo.

GILGAMESH
Buena idea, Enkidú.

*Persiguen al TORO hasta que lo atrapen, y ENKIDÜ, lo toma por los cuernos.*

ENKIDÜ
¡Mira! mientras lo tengo así controlado, clava un cuchillo entre los cuernos.

GILGAMESH clava su cuchillo entre los cuernos, y cae muerto el TORO DEL CIELO.

ENKIDÜ
Ishtar, mira lo que pasa cuando te metes con mi amigo. Hemos matado a tu toro, y mataremos a cualquier otra bestia que mandes. Gilgamesh no se casará contigo. Ahora vete y déjanos en paz.

Se escucha la voz de ISHTAR, fuera del escenario.

ISHTAR
Enkidú, como tu querido amigo también te vas arrepentir de haberme insultado. Por lo que has dicho, y por lo que los dos han hecho, te voy a hacer enfermo. (Carcajadas malévolas)

NARRADOR
Enkidú se enfermó y se murió pocos días después de una fiebre. Gilgamesh, que lo quería como a un hermano, mandó a construir una estatua de él, y la puso en medio de la plaza donde la viera todo Uruk.

(Se bajan las luces.)
GILGAMESH está de luto, vestido con andrajos. Lamenta la muerte de ENKIDÚ con chillidos y sollozos.

GILGAMESH
¡Ay de mí! No entiendo por qué la muerte se ha llevado a mi mejor amigo, y no sé que haré sin él. (Pausa, y piensa) Lo que es más, si la muerte lo lleva tan fácilmente, puede llevar a cualquier... hasta... No, ¡no puede ser! (Prosigue, pero más callado) Si Enkidú se ha muerto, eso significa que algún día moriré igual que él. Aunque sea el hombre más fuerte del mundo, no puedo contra la muerte.

EL NARRADOR aparece de nuevo.

NARRADOR
Gilgamesh de Uruk extrañaba a su amigo y querido compañero y por la primera vez en su vida empezaba a temer su propia muerte. Lo único que le daba esperanza era que a uno de sus antepasados, Utanapishtim, los dioses le habían dado la inmortalidad. Desde chico su madre le había contado de Utanapishtim y su casa más allá del Océano Cósmico donde vivía eternamente con su esposa en compañía de los dioses. Pensar en eso le quitaba el peso de la tristeza y le daba las ganas de seguir.

Con eso se alivia GILGAMESH, y deja de llorar.

GILGAMESH
Si es verdad lo que me contó mi madre siempre, Utanapishtim vive y sabe el secreto de la inmortalidad. Todo el mundo dice que su casa está en el otro lado del Océano Cósmico más allá de las Montañas de Mashu. Aunque la tristeza me pese el corazón saldré de la ciudad de nuevo para buscar el Océano Cósmico y la casa de Utanapishtim. Sólo quiero saber el secreto de la inmortalidad para no morir como Enkidú.

Sale del palacio y entra en un nuevo escenario de viaje.

NARRADOR
Caminaba por varios días, hasta que llegó a las Montañas de Mashu con sus altas cumbres cubiertas de nieve. Pasaba por entre las montañas, asombrado por su altura y su belleza, cuando de repente, se le acercó una criatura extraña que era mitad escorpión, y mitad hombre. Éste ahora habló con Gilgamesh:
HOMBRE-ESCORPION
Oh, caminante, ¿Por qué has tomado un camino tan largo, y por qué has venido hasta acá? Soy guardián de las montañas, y serviente de Shamash, Dios del Sol, y quisiera saber el motivo de su viaje.

GILGAMESH
(Temeroso) Soy Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk, y busco a mi pariente Utanapishtim, que nunca morirá, y vive más allá del Océano Cósmico. Quiero preguntarle sobre la vida y la muerte, porque sabe el secreto de la inmortalidad.

HOMBRE-ESCORPION
Hay unas cuevas que pasan por dentro de las montañas, y tienen una salida por el Océano Cósmico, pero Gilgamesh, nadie conoce las cuevas, su interior es oscuro, y hasta allí no llega la luz. Esas cuevas son la única ruta para cruzar las montañas, y el viaje es de doce días en la oscuridad. Pero si tanto quiere saber el secreto de la inmortalidad, te llevaré hasta la boca de la cueva.

GILGAMESH
Por favor, llérame a las cuevas, porque no hay nada que quiero saber más en este mundo sino lo que es el secreto de la inmortalidad.

El HOMBRE-ESCORPION lo lleva a las cuevas.

HOMBRE-ESCORPION
Esta es la entrada al camino oscuro que lo llevará hasta la orilla del Océano Cósmico. Que le vaya bien, y que encuentre el secreto de la inmortalidad.

(GILGAMESH sale del escenario, y el NARRADOR recita el siguiente poema, pausando para que GILGAMESH hable.)

NARRADOR
Los poetas de toda la historia cantarán del viaje del Rey Gilgamesh en la oscuridad.

  Cuando había caminado
uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, sies, y siete días,
Era densa la oscuridad, no había ninguna luz;
no podía ver ni adelante, ni hacia atrás.
  Cuando había caminado
    ocho días, se puso a gritar.
(GILGAMESH *grita con angustia.*)

Cuando había caminado
nueve días, le sopló un viento fresco en la cara, y se alegró.

Cuando había caminado
diez días, la salida estaba cerca, y sólo faltaban dos días.

Cuando había caminado
once días, se sintió como el sol antes del amanecer.

Cuando había caminado
doce días, brilló la luz, y apareció un bosque precioso.
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 3
Escena 2

(GILGAMESH sale de las cuevas y se encuentra en un bosque precioso. Anda entre los árboles, disfrutando la luz, y el aire.)

GILGAMESH
¡Por fin, veo la luz de Shamash! Pensaba que nunca iba a salir de esas cuevas, pero ahora estoy libre, y qué suerte, veo allá una casa linda, quizás la gente de estas partes sepa algo del Océano Cósmico y de la casa de Utanapishtim.

(Llega a la casa, y ve a SIDURI en su jardín. Ella desconfía del viajero extraño y sucio, cierra la puerta del jardín, y echa la tranca. El ruido de la tranca llama la atención de GILGAMESH.)

GILGAMESH
Buenos días. Dime, muchacha: ¿Qué es lo que viste y por qué cerraste la puerta y echaste la tranca? ¿Acaso no sabes quién soy? Soy Gilgamesh el Rey de Uruk, vencedor de Humbaba y del Toro del Cielo. He venido hasta acá por las cuevas de Mashu, y busco la casa de Utanapishtim, que vive más allá del Océano Cósmico.

SIDURI
Pero, señor, si usted es el Rey Gilgamesh de Uruk, y si de veras venció a Humbaba y al Toro del Cielo, ¿por qué tiene la cara tan flaca y maltratada por el frío y el calor? Parece más bien como bandido que anda en el bosque buscando a quien robar. Soy Siduri, la encargada de este jardín.

GILGAMESH
Sí estoy flaco, cansado y sí tengo la cara maltratada por el frío y el calor. He sufrido lo más triste que uno puede sufrir, perdí a mi mejor amigo. Se llamaba Enkidú, juntos vivimos aventuras y hazañas, pero ahora ha vuelto a la tierra, y es polvo; y si al fuerte Enkidú le pasó eso, ¿cómo voy a evitar la muerte que puede llevarme en cualquier momento? Por eso busco a Utanapishtim, un pariente mío que vive más allá del Océano Cósmico y sabe el secreto de la inmortalidad, ya que los dioses se la dieron.

SIDURI
Gilgamesh, no hay paso para el país de Utanapishtim. Desde que el mundo existe, sólo Shamash ha podido cruzar el Océano Cósmico en su vuelta diaria del mundo. Las aguas del Océano Cósmico son aguas de muerte y matan a cualquier que las toque. Pero tiene razón, Utanapishtim vive en el otro lado del Océano Cósmico. Sólo le falta encontrar a su barquero Urshanabí para que lo lleve allá en su barco mágico.
(Sarcástico y obviamente ofendido) Gracias. Voy a buscar a Urshanabí para pedirle que me lleve a la tierra de Utanapishtim. (Saca su hacha y señala al océano.) Si no quieres dar la bienvenida al Rey de Uruk, a lo mejor Urshanabí me la dé.

(GILGAMESH camina hacia la playa, y sale el NARRADOR.)

NARRADOR
Giligamesh se frustró porque la muchacha del jardín no le dio la bienvenida, que creía que se merecía. Seguía enojado cuando vio a Urshanabí en su barco.

GILGAMESH
¡Urshanabí, para que entiendas que soy el Rey de Uruk, y que debes llevarme a donde quiera, voy a mostrarte mi fuerza!

(Con su hacha rompe los remos del barco.)

URSHANABI
Ay, joven señor, ¿qué hace con mi barco?

GILGAMESH
Lo que hago, hago porque la gente de estas partes no me quiere ayudar con mi viaje a la casa de Utanapishtim. En vez de darme la bienvenida y atenderme bien, la muchacha Siduri no me dejó entrar en...

(Interrumpe URSHANABI.)

URSHANABI
Mire joven, si me hubieras dicho, con todo gusto te hubiera llevado hasta la casa de Utanapishtim pero ahora no puedo, porque rompiste los remos y otras cosas que necesito para el barco. Si de veras eres Gilgamesh Rey de Uruk, ¿por qué tienes la cara tan flaca, y el corazón tan lleno de tristeza, y dime por qué andas por todo el mundo sin hogar?

GILGAMESH
¡Ay de mí, que nadie me cree! Si soy Gilgamesh, y he perdido a mi mejor amigo Enkidú, que juntos vencimos al monstruo Humbaba y matamos al Toro del Cielo. Pero aunque era tan fuerte, llegó a su fin y murió, que es el destino común de todos los humanos. ¡Tengo miedo de la muerte y vago por todo el mundo! Sólo tengo fe de que mi pariente Utanapishtim me cuente el secreto de la inmortalidad para que no me pase lo que pasó a Enkidú.

URSHANABI
Con las propias manos rompiste los remos de mi barco, y ahora con las propias manos trabajará para cruzar el Océano Cósmico. Toma en la mano tu hacha ve al bosque y corta ciento veinte árboles tan altos como zigurats.
Quítales las ramas, y con étos troncos empujaremos el barco hasta la casa de Utanapishtim. Necesitamos tantos troncos y tan altos porque una vez que empujamos el barco con uno, ya lo dejamos. Es que no podemos tocar las aguas del Océano Cósmico, porque quien las toque muere.

(GILGAMESH alza el hacha y se voltea hacia el bosque. URSHANABI lo espera. El NARRADOR domina el escenario.)

NARRADOR
Gilgamesh hizo lo que mandó Urshanabí, y pronto salieron los dos en el barco, rumbo a la casa de Utanapishtim. El Océano Cósmico es enorme, y tardaron tres días en hacer el viaje. El Rey de Uruk se consolaba pensando que todo su búsqueda no había sido en vano porque ahora iba a conocer a su antepasado, y le preguntaría el secreto de la inmortalidad.

(Se bajan las luces.)
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 3
Escena 3

(Se suben las luces. UTANAPISHTIM está por la orilla del mar mirando el barco.)

UTANAPISHTIM
¿Será acaso aquel mi barquero Urshanabi? ¿Por qué están rotos los remos, y quién va con él? Se me hace que lo conozco... Hace mucho que no estoy con mi gente y ¿quién sé yo? ¿Será algún pariente mío?

(Se escuchan los sonidos de la llegada el barco: madera choca contra madera, el chapoteo de GILGAMESH y URSHANABI al desembarcar, el arrastrar del barco sobre la arena. Pasan al escenario ellos dos.)

URSHANABÍ
Utanapishtim, mi amo, desde la otra orilla del Océano Cósmico, llegamos tras muchos labores, pero con mucho gusto le presento a Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk

UTANAPISHTIM
Desde los tiempos cuando llegué con mi esposa a vivir aquí en esta isla, no ha llegado ningún pariente mío de las tierras de los humanos a visitarme. Por eso, estoy alegre de verte, por favor, dime algo:

si eres el famoso Gilgamesh, ¿por qué traes la cara tan flaca y maltratada, y por qué pareces tan triste? La gente habla de Gilgamesh Rey de Uruk y matador de mostruos, pero veo ahora a un pobre desamparado vestido con pieles de animales, y no de telas finas de un rey.

GILGAMESH
Utanapishtim, tú como ningún otro entenderás porque traigo la cara tan flaca, porque me he vestido con pieles de animales, porque ando día y noche por todo el mundo, y sobre todo porque estoy tan triste. Tenía a un amigo que lo quería como hermano: era Enkidú, el hombre más fuerte que ha conocido la Tierra. Cuando lo conocí, lo odié y peleamos; en la pelea él tenía la oportunidad de acabar con mi vida, pero me dejó vivo, y nos hicimos amigos.

UTANAPISHTIM
Entonces, si eres Gilgamesh. Veo que de veras has peleado con Enkidú y que era tu amigo. Cuéntame más.

GILGAMESH
Pasamos grandes aventuras juntos, como cuando matamos al monstruo Humbaba, o cuando vencimos al Toro del Cielo, que la diosa Ishtar mandó a destruir mi ciudad porque no me casé con ella. Enkidú me ayudó siempre, y hasta insultó a Ishtar para defenderme, pero ay de mí, mi amigo ya no está
con nosotros: después de insultar a Ishtar, la diosa le mandó una fiebre y murió, dejándome triste y solito. Esa es la razón de mi dolor y el motivo de mi búsqueda. Sólo quiero saber cuál es el secreto de la inmortalidad para no morirme como Enkidú.

UTANAPISHTIM
(Se pone serio.) Nadie ha vista a la muerte, y nadie conoce su voz, pero es cruel y quiebra a todos. De veras, el primer hombre era ya su prisionero. En lo que toca la inmortalidad, sólo puedo contar lo que sé, y lo que sé es como los dioses nos la regalaron a mi esposa y a mí.
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 3
Escena 4

(UTANAMPISTIM y GILGAMESH están sentados en el lado derecho del plataforma. El Diluvio se presenta por actores en el centro del escenario.)

UTANAMPISTIM
En una edad lejana del pasado, el dios Enlil, Señor de los Cielos estaba enfadado; y llamó su padre Anu, a Ninurta, a Enugui, el Dios de los Canales, y a Ea Dios de la Civilización. Reunieron en la cuidad de Shurupak que está a la orilla del río Eufrates. Allí dijo Enlil:

ENLIL
El ruido de los humanos es insoportable y ya es imposible dormirme.

ANU, NINURTA ENUGUI y EA
Sí, siempre hacen demasiado ruido.

NINURTA
No valoran todo lo que les hemos dado.

ENUGUI
No cuidan el agua de los canales, y echan su basura a los ríos.

ANU
No nos dejan en paz y no podemos descansar. Vamos a destruirlos a ellos y a sus ciudades, porque esa es la única forma de callarlos. ¿De acuerdo?

ENLIL, NINURTA, ENUGUI y EA
¡De acuerdo!

UTANAPISTIM
Siendo las cosas así, decidieron destruir a los humanos. Llamaron a Adad, Dios de las Tormentas, y mandaron que levantara una tremenda tempestad con lluvias para inundar el mundo entero. Pero Ea, Dios de la Civilización creía que era justo avisar a la gente de Shurupak. Fui el único que escuché su mensaje y si no fuera por eso hubiera muerto con los demás.

NARRADOR
Ea tenía mucha lástima por Utanapishtim, y no quería que se muriera. No atrevía a hablarle directamente, y decidió más bien contar el secreto a los muros de la ciudad de Shurpakeo, para que ellos advirtieran a Utanapishtim.

(EA se separa de los demás, acercándose al público.)
EA
Pared, pared, escuchen paredes, y recuerden: Shurupak donde vive
Utanapishtim, destruye tu casa y construye un barco.

UTANAPISHTIM
Entonces, me contó perfectamente como quería que lo construyera con siete niveles y suficiente espacio para cargarlo con el oro y la plata que tenía, mi familia y mis sirvientes. Además me mandó que lo cargara con semillas para sembrar después de las lluvias y una pareja de cada especie de animal de la Tierra.

(Mientras UTANAPISHTIM da la lista de lo que llevó dentro del barco, pasan los actores por el escenario de la izquierda al derecho llevando los contenidos del barco.)

GILGAMESH
¿Qué pensaba la gente de todo eso?

UTANAPISHTIM
Le dije a la gente que iba a desembarcar en el Río Eufrates para mudarme a otra ciudad. Hasta pagué a los que me ayudaban a llenar el barco con todo lo necesario, y nadie sospechaba de mí. En verdad nadie sabía que los dioses iban a inundar el mundo más que mi familia y yo.

(El Dios ADAD entra corriendo con un manto largo de color azul que vuela tras él. La compañía lo sigue con banderas y listones de diferentes tonos de azul y verde para simular la tormenta y la inundación.)

UTANAPISHTIM
Pero gracias a la ayuda de la gente, terminé el barco justo a tiempo, ya que en la tarde del mismo día en que nos metimos en el barco, Adad vino volando desde las montañas levantando la lluvia. Cayó un aguacero recio durante seis días y siete noches, y las aguas cubrieron todo el mundo. Solamente mi familia y yo estábamos a salvo en nuestro barco.

GILGAMESH
(Se para por la emoción que siente.) ¿Y toda la Tierra estaba inundada? ¿Luego qué pasó?

UTNAMPISHTIM
(Hace señas para que GILGAMESH se calme y se siente.) En la mañana del séptimo día la tormenta acabó: se bajó el viento, y se retiraron las aguas.

(Tres actores, cada uno en su turno entran en el escenario con los pájaros indicados: uno lleva una paloma, otro una golondrina, y el último lleva un cuervo. Van del lado derecho al izquierdo.)
UTANAPISHTIM
Para ver si había tierra seca, solté a una paloma, y luego a una golondrina, los cuales pronto regresaron al barco. Pero unos días después, solté a un cuervo que no regresó, y viendo éso, supe que había encontrado donde aterrizar.

GILGAMESH
Todo lo que me cuentas es increíble. ¿En dónde descansaron el barco, y cómo fue que salieron?

(Entra la diosa ISHTAR, y pasa por donde están sentados UTANAPISTIM y GILGAMESH. Se para de un lado de UTANAPISTIM y le abre la mano invitándole a seguirla.)

UTANAPISTIM
Ishtar se preocupaba por nosotros y nos guió a una montaña donde pudimos descansar el barco.

(ISTHAR guía a UTANAPISTIM y GILGAMESH al centro del escenario donde los deja y sale por el lado izquierdo.)

UTANAPISHTIM
Cuando las aguas ya se habían retirado, abrí las puertas del barco para que salieran mi familia, mis sirvientes, y todos los animales que había salvado.

(UTANAPISHTIM señala a su alrededor, mostrando a GILGAMESH su casa.)

UTANAPISHTIM
El dios Ea y la diosa Ishtar nos trajeron entonces para acá a la orilla del Océano Cósmico. Nos regalaron esta casa espléndida que ves; además nos regalaron comida suficiente para toda la vida, y algo mucho más precioso: la inmortalidad. Ahora mi esposa y yo somos las únicas personas que jamás moriremos.

(Se apagan las luces.)
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 3
Escena 5

(GILGAMESH y UTNANAPISHTIM están parados en el centro del escenario con LA ESPOSA DE UTANAPISTIM.)

GILGAMESH
¡Esta historia me parece fenomenal! No sólo sobrevivieron al Diluvio, sino los dioses les dieron la inmortalidad. Veo que sí es posible: no tengo que mormirme como Enkidú. Sólo falta saber cómo puedo encontrar la inmortalidad también.

UTANAPISHTIM
Ganas no te faltan para encontrar el premio que buscas, pero ahora dime, ¿cuál dios te hará tal favor, y quién te dará la inmortalidad? (Pausa, y se rie.) Los que duermen son como los muertos. (Se rie.) Si quieres la inmortalidad, vamos a ponerte una pequeña prueba. Veamos si puedes pasar seis días y siete noches sin dormir. (Se rie.)

GILGAMESH
Acepto tu reto, puedo pasar más tiempo aún sin dormirme, pero para que veas cuánto quiero vivir y qué tanto odio a la muerte, seguiré despierto el tiempo que tú digas. (Mientras habla, el sueño lo invade, empieza a bostezar, y finalmente se vence por el cansancio y queda dormido.) No cualquier rey puede desafiar a la misma muerte (Bosteza)... De hecho, no cualquier rey iría hasta el fin del mundo para encontrar lo que (Bosteza)... todos los (Bosteza)... humanos buscamos (Queda dormido.)

UTANAPISHTIM
(A su esposa) Mira al hombre que tanto quiere la vida; como niebla, el sueño lo invadió. No puede mantenerse despierto unos minutos, y mucho menos sies días y siete noches.

LA ESPOSA DE UTANAPISHTIM
Toca a ese hombre para que despierte; que tome su camino y que se vaya tranquilo a su país.

UTANAPISHTIM
Ay, ¡cómo son débiles los humanos!

(Entra el NARRADOR.)

NARRADOR
Gilgamesh, que no se había dormido desde cuando empezó su viaje, quedó profundamente perdido en el sueño. Utanapistim y su esposa, lo dejaron en paz, pero en la tarde del sexto día de su sueño, Utanapistim lo despertó.
(UTANAPISHTIM sacude a GILGAMESH un poco pero no logra despertarlo. Redobla sus esfuerzos hasta que GILGAMESH se despierte y está molesto.)

GILGAMESH
Hombre, apenas me había dormido y tú, ¿tan pronto vienes a despertarme?

UTANAPISHTIM
Tienes seis días y siete noches dormido.

GILGAMESH
No te creo.

UTANAPISHTIM
Aunque no me creas, de veras tiene una semana que no te levantas de este lugar. Mira, mi esposa te hizo la comida. Ven y come antes de que se enfríe.

GILGAMESH
(Triste, pero a la vez agradecido) Gracias.

(GILGAMESH se sienta y empieza a comer. LA ESPOSA DE UTANAPISHTIM habla con su marido.)

ESPOSA DE UTANAPISHTIM
Oye, vino este pobre Gilgamesh, pariente tuyo desde las tierras de los humanos, se cansó, se esforzó, y tú, ¿qué le darás para que vuelva a su país?

(En esto, GILGAMESH termina de comer.)

GILGAMESH
Utanapishtim, Señora, quiero agradecerles su hospitalidad; me la pasé bien con ustedes, a pesar de mi tristeza. Ahora tengo que seguir mi búsqueda. No estaré en paz hasta que sepa el secreto de la inmortalidad. Una vez más, gracias por todo.

(GILGAMESH hace una reverencia, inclinándose hacia los inmortales, luego da la vuelta a buscar a URSHANABI.)

GILGAMESH
¡Urshanab! ¡Urshanab!

UTANAPISHTIM
Gilgamesh, espera.

(GILGAMESH se detiene.)

GILGAMESH
Sí, Utanapishtim, dime.
UTANAPISHTIM
Gilgamesh, veniste hasta acá, te cansaste, y te esforzaste para saber el secreto de la inmortalidad. Bueno, aunque sólo los dioses tienen el poder de dárteola, te puedo contar de una misteriosa hierba que te puede ayudar. Hay una planta mágica que crece en el fondo del Océano Cósmico. Quien la tome, y quien la coma volverá a ser joven. Los ancianos la buscan y la premian mucho, porque al comerla, rejuvenecen. Todos quieren la hierba de la juventud.

GILGAMESH
(Emocionado) Utanapishtim, por eso vine, y eso es un consuelo: si no puedo escapar la muerte, con esa hierba, por lo menos puedo vivir una vida más larga ¿cómo te lo puedo pagar?

UTANAPISHTIM
Espera. Déjame te explico algo más: esa planta tiene raíces espinosas, y el tallo es cubierto con púas como de rosal. Ten cuidado para que no te cortes, y cuida la planta bien. No la comas hasta que regreses a Uruk.

GILGAMESH
Te lo agredezco, de veras, mil gracias. Voy a buscar esa hierba. Aunque no me dé la inmortalidad, por lo menos puedo ser joven de nuevo. ¡Voy a tomar tantas hojas de esa planta como pueda, hasta que vuelva a ser niño!

(Corre hasta salir del escenario. UTANAPISHTIM y su ESPOSA se quedan despidiéndose de él. Se apagan las luces.)
(Se prenden las luces. GILGAMESH y URSHANABI están elevados sobre el escenario en el barco en el que llegaron a la tierra de UTANAPISHTIM.)

NARRADOR
Gilgamesh, sin pensar ni un instante en los peligros del Océano Cósmico, siguió las instrucciones de Utanapishtim. Pronto vería por qué decían que las aguas del Océano Cósmico eran las aguas de la muerte.

GILGAMESH
Urshanabí, me parece que aquí es el lugar donde me dijo Utanapístim que la hierba crece.

URSHANABI
Sí, señor, ha de ser así.

GILGAMESH
(Del fondo del barco, saca unas cuerdas y dos piedras grandes.) Ayúdame a atarme estas piedras a los pies para que hunda rápidamente hasta el fondo del mar.

(URSHANABI ata las piedras con las cuerdas a los pies de GILGAMESH.)

GILGAMESH
Bueno, ahora me lanzo, y creo que encontraré lo que busco. (Abraza las piedras, y se lanza sobre el agua.)

URSHANABI
(Asustado) ¡Va a hundir muerto hasta el fondo! Nadie toca las aguas del Océano Cósmico y sale vivo.

(El peso de las piedras lo hace hundir al fondo del océano, en el centro del platóforma, donde ve de inmediato la hierba espinosa. Arranca una ramita de la hierba, pero las espinas lo cortan, dejando heridas abiertas que sangran. Hace una mueca por el dolor. Saca un cuchillo, corta las cuerdas, y sin el peso de las piedras, sube a la superficie con la hierba y el cuchillo.)

GILGAMESH
¡Por fin, el secreto de la vida es mío! (Hace una mueca de nuevo por las espinas.) Ay, pero, ¿qué espinosa es! ¡Caramba! Por favor, ayúdame, Urshanabí.

(GILGAMESH pasa primero la hierba y el cuchillo a URSHANABI. Luego GILGAMESH sube al mismo, con la ayuda de URSHANABI.)
URSHANABÍ
(Se esfuerza con el peso de GILGAMESH.) Ahhh... (Descansan en el barco, y GILGAMESH, cuida su herida.) Por cierto, lo cortaron las espinas.

GILGAMESH
Sí, pero, ¿qué importa? Un poco de sangre es el precio que pago por la juventud. Cuando coma de esta hierba, ni me voy acordar del espinazo. (Se hinca.) Ay...

URSHANABÍ
¿A dónde lo llevo ahora?

GILGAMESH
Hasta mi lado del Océano Cósmico, vamos a Uruk de las grandes murallas. Pido, Urshanabí que me acompañes en el camino. Es muy difícil viajar solo.

URSHANABÍ
Sí señor, lo acompañó hasta Uruk de las grandes murallas.

(Salen los dos y se apagan las luces.)
Gilgamesh, Rey de Uruk
Acto 3
Escena 7

(GILGAMESH y URSHANBI están en el camino a Uruk. No llevan bultos: sólo sus túnicas y chanclas. GILGAMESH lleva su espada en una mano, y la preciosa hierba de la juventud en la otra. Se detienen para hablar.)

GILGAMESH
(Respira profundamente y exhala.) Urshanabí, te cuento que me parece el regreso a mi casa más largo que el viaje a la tierra de Utanapishtim.

URSHANABI
La verdad, no conozco este camino, ni conozco tu ciudad. Pero sí, ha sido un viaje bastante largo.

GILGAMESH
Vamos a descansar al lado del manantial allá. Se escucha el agua correr, y se siente todo fresco. Además, todavía tengo las manos muy manchadas de sangre por las espinas de esta planta.

(Pasan al manantial. GILGAMESH se pone en cunclillas, y se lava las manos, dejando la hierba a un lado.)

GILGAMESH
Ay, qué rico se siente lavarme las manos...

(En esto sale una SERPIENTE, que rápidamente toma en la boca la hierba, y se desliza antes de que GILGAMESH pueda atraparla. URSHANABI está tranquilo y parado atrás, mientras GILGAMESH se desespera.)

GILGAMESH
(Se siente y llora.) ¡Ay de mí! Veo que de veras todo mi trabajo ha sido por nada. Mira, di hasta la sangre de estas manos, ¿y para qué? Nada ha sido para mi bien; pues la culebra se ha llevado mi felicidad, quitando de mí la hierba de la juventud. Ahora veo que voy a ser viejo, y que algún día moriré. Lo único que puedo hacer ahora es regresarme a casa, y así dejaré este lugar.

(Entra el NARRADOR.)

NARRADOR
Gilgamesh había visto la realidad de que, por más valientes que sean, tarde o temprano a todos los humanos les toca la muerte, y que a él le esperaba el mismo destino. En estas cosas pensaba durante el resto del camino hacia Uruk, pero cuando la vio en el distante horizonte, se alegró por la ciudad que había construido con grandes edificios y murallas.
GILGAMESH
(Señala con el dedo.) Mira Urshanabí, las murallas de Uruk: es una ciudad grande y fuerte, construida con miles de ladrillos. Desde acá se pueden ver sus templos.

NARRADOR
La vista de la ciudad le recordó que aunque no podía vivir para siempre, el resto del mundo y generaciones futuras se acordarían de él como fundador de una ciudad tan impresionante. El mundo nunca olvidaría a Gilgamesh y Enkidú, ni su amistad y las increíbles aventuras que pasaron juntos.

(Telón)

FIN
APPENDIX B

GILGAMESH, KING OF URUK: A PLAY BASED ON
THE ANCIENT BABYLONIAN WORK,
THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH
Gilgamesh, King of Uruk

A play based on the ancient Babylonian work,

_The Epic of Gilgamesh_

Ezekiel Glenn Stear
Redlands, California,
Rights pending, 2005
Characters:
Narrator
King Gilgamesh
Soldiers (two)
Anu, God of the Sky
Woman 1
Woman 2
People in the market place of Uruk
Aruru, Creator God
Ninurta, Creator Goddess
Enkidu
Trapper
Trapper's Son
Shamhat
Shamash, Sun God
Humbaba
Ishtar, Goddess of Love
Bull of Heaven
Scorpion-Man
Siduri
Urshanabi
Utanapishtim
Enlil, Lord of the Heavens
Enugui, God of all canals
Ea, God of Civilization
People of the city of Shurupak
Adad, God of storms
Utanapishtim's wife
Serpent
Inside the walls of the city of Uruk, people meet in the market to buy, sell and trade. The actors pantomime the action of the market while the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR
(Dressed as a shepherd and carrying a staff, he stands in center stage where he speaks to the audience in a loud and dramatic voice.) From the beginning of history, there has been no king as great as the mighty Gilgamesh of Uruk. This is the story of his friendship with Enkidu, of their adventures and daring deeds together. It is also the story of how King Gilgamesh, after suffering many trials, journeyed to the land of Utanapishtim, where he learned of the Great Flood and of the secret of immortality.

From the moment of his birth, Gilgamesh's destiny was set. The gods knew this, so they gave him the strongest body ever created. (Lowering his voice, he speaks more intensely) He was such a strong warrior that no one could control or tame him. Not a single person doubted that his destiny in life was to be the King of Uruk.

While the NARRATOR speaks the lights are raised and the people in the market continue to barter, and exchange goods in silence. Above the people, GILGAMESH is seated on his throne with his arms crossed and an arrogant, terrible look on his face.

No one could beat him, and many good fathers lost their sons to the wrath of Gilgamesh. Many said that he fought like a bull or a wild buffalo.

Suddenly, two soldiers jump out from their hiding place behind the throne and try to spring a surprise attack on Gilgamesh. The king fights them off with two skillful punches. Gilgamesh is victorious and the two soldiers run away bent over with pain.

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh was a merciless tyrant who was cruel both to his enemies and his own people. Whenever any man dared to question his authority, the king threw him in jail. And if that was not enough, he was terribly rude to women.

Two women walk in front of the throne and GILGAMESH throws his head back and laughs loudly. He points at them and continues laughing. The two lower their heads and show the audience their sad faces.
NARRATOR
There was no man who could match his strength and since he was so hard and mean everyone in the kingdom feared him.

The lights of the market go down as the scenery and props are removed. The women that GILGAMESH made fun of and the soldiers he hurt gather in front of the altar of ANU the Sky God. While WOMAN ONE prays, GILGAMESH exits and his throne is removed. The gods ANU, ARURU, and the goddess NINURTA take his place on stage.

WOMAN ONE
(With pain in her voice) Oh, Anu, God of the Sky, we ask for justice. King Gilgamesh is cruel and merciless to us, and we see no way of stopping him. Please send someone strong enough to save us from his wrath!

NARRATOR
The people prayed to the gods begging them for justice and asking them to do something to control Gilgamesh. Anu, the great God of the Sky, heard the people’s cries, and spoke with the Creator, Aruru:

ANU
Aruru, you made this man Gilgamesh. Look at the disaster he has caused. Now make another man just as strong or even stronger, so that he can control this proud king and bring peace to Uruk.

ARURU
Yes. This I shall do with the help of Ninurta, the Goddess of Creation.

He holds out his hand to NINURTA who follows him to center stage, where there is a ball of clay.

NARRATOR
Together Aruru and Ninurta formed a man out of the clay. Ninurta put on the finishing touches, covering him from head to toe with fur the color of barley.

NINURTA continues working until she is satisfied. Then the new man emerges. During the process of the creation of ENKIDU, ANU stands above them all with his arms folded and a smile on his face.

NARRATOR
This new creation – half man, half animal – lived on the plains running wild, eating whatever he could find, and drinking water from rivers like a beast. He was savage and strong and could beat anyone, even Gilgamesh the King of Uruk. Anu was pleased with what Ninurta and Aruru had made and said:

ANU
His name is Enkidu.

(Lights down)
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Act 1
Scene 2

Center stage: in a forest near Uruk a trapper and his son talk about Enkidu.

TRAPPER
In all of my years, I have never seen anything like this Enkidu. He’s ferocious and kills his prey like a wolf, and yet he is light, quick and skillful. He drinks water from the lake like a deer. When I saw him, I froze in terror. I could not move. Then he looked up at me. He could have killed me, but he just walked off into the woods. (He is obviously frightened.)

TRAPPER’S SON
I know that you know this forest like the back of your hand, and that you have trapped thousands of animals. So, if this one scares even you, it must be savage and dangerous.

TRAPPER
(Thinking of how he could protect his family and the people of Uruk, he gives advice to his son.) There could only be one way to trap this beast. Go to the city and bring back a beautiful woman. Let’s hope that when he sees her, he will fall in love and stop living like an animal so that he can marry her.

TRAPPER’S SON
Yes, father, this is a great plan. Let’s hope that Enkidu will go into the city and live like a civilized man.

The TRAPPER’S SON goes offstage to the city to find a beautiful maiden to use as bait to trap ENKIDU. While he waits in center stage, the TRAPPER talks to himself.

TRAPPER
Yes... I have seen women tame even the most savage men. I hope that the same is true in this case. I have to do something to get rid of him. He keeps stealing the animals that I trap.

The TRAPPER’S SON returns and brings with him the young lady SHAMHAT. They take her to the edge of the lake where they find that Enkidu is about to drink water. The instant that he sees her, he falls in love. He suddenly becomes timid and harmless, with an expression on his face like a lost puppy.

SHAMHAT
(Standing close to him) Enkidu, you’re so handsome with your lion’s mane. Look how strong you are!
She sits down next to him and waits for him to say something.

ENKIDU
Booooootyfoool gerrl !!! So purdy... I likeeey!!!

SHAMHAT
(Flirtatious but demanding) Look, if you want to be with me, you're going to have to learn a few things. The first thing that you need to do is wash this stinking fur of yours...

ENKIDU
(He groans.)

The two continue to talk silently, and the NARRATOR enters.

NARRATOR
Enkidu soon realized that in order to get near Shamhat and marry her, he would have to make some serious changes. Love conquered Enkidu. He took a bath and cut his hair. Because of Shamhat's beauty, Enkidu left the forest and let himself be led to the city. By the time he entered Uruk, he was ready to live like everyone else there.

The two enter the doors of Uruk and the lights drop.
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Act 1
Scene 3

In the main square of Uruk, ENKIDU and SHAMHAT walk through the crowded market. GILGAMESH sits on his throne looking at everyone with his usual arrogance.

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh, who was always looking for a good fight, had already heard about Enkidu. Everyone said that he was as strong as Gilgamesh... maybe even stronger. Gilgamesh was not afraid of anyone, and looked forward to fighting him.

GILGAMESH steps down from his throne and into the square. He crosses his arms and looks straight at ENKIDU. There are two soldiers with him.

GILGAMESH
Enkidu, you may look like some kind of fierce animal, but more than once I've killed wolves and lions in the forest with my bare hands. I'm not afraid at all to fight you, especially since you're always with your (teasing like a little boy) giiirlfriend.

The two soldiers and GILGAMESH laugh, while the crowd becomes nervous, seeing that another fight is about to happen. ENKIDU growls savagely as the two face off and prepare to fight.

From opposite ends of the stage the two run towards center stage where they collide. GILGAMESH wrestles ENKIDU to the floor, but ENKIDU suddenly slips out of his hold and pushes GILGAMESH down.

WOMAN ONE
(Amazed) Look how strong they are!

NARRATOR
They were both proud, and they were both angry because of the rumors they had heard about each other. They hated one other. They fought and wrestled in the dust. They would have fought all afternoon, but Gilgamesh felt too weak. He was going to give up and admit that Enkidu was stronger.

ENKIDU has the advantage. He holds GILGAMESH by the throat, choking him; but at the last minute he has compassion on the king and releases his throat.

ENKIDU
It's no wonder they say you are the strongest man in Mesopotamia. I respect you because of your strength and admit that I can't win against you. There is
no other king like you, so hold your head up high. Let's stop fighting, Gilgamesh, and be friends!

GILGAMESH

(Exhausted and struggling to catch his breath) Enkidu, I should tell you how strong you are. You match my strength. We should be friends, since together we are twice as strong. I know that in every adventure that we have, we will be victorious.

The crowd claps and cheers. ENKIDU helps GILGAMESH up and the two shake hands as a sign of their new friendship.

The lights drop.
Inside the Palace of Uruk, GILGAMESH and ENKIDU recline and rest while waited upon by servants who offer them plates of food.

GILGAMESH
Even since we've become friends, life has been easy and fun. Look at how nice we've got it. We're doing great. Life is great! Aren't you happy here in the city?

Enkidu is not happy. He wants to cry, but he hides his feelings from GILGAMESH.

ENKIDU
(Miserably) Yeah, life is great! Ever since I've gotten here, I've been feeling fine.

GILGAMESH
(Oblivious to Enkidu's tone) Alright, good to hear it! Let's have some more food. Bring more grapes for Enkidu. He's my best friend, so I want to make sure he's comfortable.

ENKIDU can no longer control himself and breaks down crying and whimpering loudly. GILGAMESH is surprised.

GILGAMESH
Enkidu, what's wrong? Was it something I said?

ENKIDU
No, it's not your fault. When I told you I was happy here, it was a lie. I'm not happy at all (lifts his head up and howls like a wolf). I mean, we stay here every day eating, drinking and relaxing. Compared to the way I used to be, I'm lazy and weak. My arms have lost their strength and I'm weak from living in the city.

GILGAMESH
(Comforting) Well, I guess when the good life and the luxuries of the city sap the strength from us, it's time to look for a new adventure.

ENKIDU
Yes, but where can we find one? Before I came to the city, I roamed the whole countryside and I didn't find anything exciting.

GILGAMESH
But you've only seen the forest and the plains next to the city. The world is full of adventures, and we only have to go a little farther away from Uruk to find
them. Many people have told me of a ferocious and evil monster named Humbaba who lives in an enormous forest of cedar trees. Together we can kill him and save all the people of the forest.

ENKIDU
(Afraid) You don't mean the terrible monster Humbaba. I've also heard of him. Gilgamesh, it doesn't matter how brave you are. Humbaba is horrible: his mouth is a blazing fire, and his breath is deadly. But that's not the only reason to be afraid of him. The thing is that he never sleeps. Besides that, he sees and hears everything that happens in the forest.

GILGAMESH
(With his mind made up) Enkidu, I thought that you were braver than this. Where is the mighty Enkidu? Come on, we're going to the forest to kill Humbaba. If you won't go, I'll go by myself.

NARRATOR
Since Enkidu was such a good friend to Gilgamesh, he could not stand by and watch the king go off by himself to fight Humbaba in the forest of cedars. He gave in and decided to go with Gilgamesh, in spite of the danger.

While the NARRATOR speaks, the company acts in silence.

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh sent for the best swords, shields and axes for the great battle against Humbaba. Next, they said farewell to the people of Uruk and asked for the protection of Shamash, the sun god.

GILGAMESH
Onward to the great forest of cedar trees and to our fight with Humbaba! The road to the forest is long, and it will take us six days to get there. Let us ask Shamash the sun god to help us by protecting us on the way and giving us the strength to beat Humababa.

Lights down
ENKIDU
Well, my friend, it looks like we've arrived at the forest of cedars. Before I lived in the city, I came near here a lot, even though I never actually went inside the forest. The cedars are enormous trees that smell sweet and dusty, but there's danger in that forest. Still I know that together we are brave and strong enough for the battle ahead.

A mysterious voice comes out of nowhere.

VOICE
Gilgamesh!

GILGAMESH
Yes, Enkidu, what's up?

ENKIDU
I don't know. I didn't say anything.

VOICE
Gilgamesh!

GILGAMESH
Yes, Enkidu, I'm right here. What do you need?

ENKIDU
Nothing... I mean, really, it wasn't me.

GILGAMESH does not believe ENKIDU and is bothered.

VOICE
Gilgamesh and Enkidu, it's me, Shamash, the god of the sun.

GILGAMESH
(With reverence) Oh, Shamash, may I ask you a question? Why did you scare us like that?

SHAMASH
Oh, that was only a joke. I'm sorry if I scared you. Gilgamesh, I have heard your prayers and have decided to help you. Humbaba is indeed a terrible monster, and the sooner he is defeated, the better off we will all be. Gilgamesh, have courage. Today is the best day possible to attack Humbaba. He normally wears seven plates of metal armor, but today he was careless and took off six of them. He has left a large part of his body unprotected: it will be easy for you to pierce him with your sword.
GILGAMESH and ENKIDU give thanks to SHAMASH with exaggerated gestures.

GILGAMESH AND ENKIDU
Thank you, oh mighty Shamash, for your help.

SHAMASH
You're welcome.

ENKIDU
Now, let's go into the forest and find that monster Humbaba! No matter how strong he is, two cubs are stronger than one lion if we find him alone.

Carefully, they enter the forest.

GILGAMESH
I don't see any sign of our enemy... Wait, look at the size of those tracks!

ENKIDU
Yes, and it looks like they're fresh. Humbaba must have just come this way.

Upstage a tree shakes.

GILGAMESH
Did you hear that?

ENKIDU
I think it came from over there. (He points toward the tree that shook.)

Suddenly, Humbaba appears. He acts ferocious and roars, but is afraid of the two warriors and runs. The three of them run between the trees. GILGAMESH and ENKIDU chase the monster all the way to the cave where he lives. GILGAMESH takes his sword, approaches HUMBABA, and is about to kill him.

HUMBABA
Oh Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, I beg you not to kill me! If you let me live, I'll be your servant for life and build you a palace of cedars here in the forest.

ENKIDU
Gilgamesh, don't listen. Can't you see he's lying?

GILGAMESH raises his sword and rushes toward HUMBABA. The monster jumps and escapes for a moment.

HUMBABA
Very well, I gave you the opportunity to be friends, but now I see that I can't trust you. Now, listen to this curse I put on you: If I die by your swords, may neither one of you see old age, and may Enkidu die first!
He tries to dodge GILGAMESH and ENKIDU'S swooshing swords; but he cannot escape, and GILGAMESH cuts off his head.

GILGAMESH
Thank you, Enkidu, for what you said. If it hadn't been for you, I might have believed that monster's lies. Well, he won't tell lies anymore. Shamash made us victorious.

ENKIDU
Let's take this monster's head to Uruk, so that everyone will know that the Forest of Cedars is safe.

The two exit victoriously and the lights drop.
The Epic of Gilgamesh  
Act 2  
Scene 3

GILGAMESH has just taken a bath and is alone in his room. He has combed his hair, and he wears a clean tunic. Content with himself, he thinks out loud.

GILGAMESH
Ahh, it sure is great to be the King of Uruk, and it’s great to kill a monster as terrible as Humbaba. The only thing better is to take a bath and relax. Hmm, I wonder what Enkidu is up to.

He is about to leave his room when ISHTAR, the Goddess of Love, appears and speaks to him tenderly.

ISHTAR
Gilgamesh, you are so strong and now you are even more famous for what you have done. (She comes closer and flirts.) That was incredible how you killed Humbaba. No wonder you are the King of all Uruk.

She comes even closer until they are both face to face, nearly touching.

Look, after seeing your bravery, I just had to come and talk with you. In you, I see the man that I have always searched for. Will you marry me, King Gilgamesh?

GILGAMESH quickly draws away from ISHTAR.

GILGAMESH
Ishtar, even if you gave me chariots, horses, and all the riches in the world, I would never marry you. You are like wind that comes into a house and makes everyone cold. You are like a sandal that hurts the foot of anyone who wears it. You always say that you’ll be true to just one man, but look at how you treat them! Why do they call you the Goddess of Love, when you treat men so badly?

ISHTAR tries to look innocent.

GILGAMESH
You can’t fool me Ishtar: I know your tricks! I even heard that one time you turned one of your boyfriends into a toad! I don’t want that to happen to me. No! I will not marry you.

ISHTAR
(Enraged, she cries out in anguish) Gilgamesh, no one can refuse a goddess, and much less me, the most gorgeous of all the goddesses. You’re going to regret this Gilgamesh. No one can defy Ishtar! I will send the Bull of Heaven to
kill the people of Uruk.

*She laughs and exits. GILGAMESH hears yelling coming from the square and runs to see that the BULL OF HEAVEN chasing after and killing people. He spots ENKIDU.*

ENKIDU
Gilgamesh, let's corner this bull and trap it.

GILGAMESH
Good idea, Enkidu.

*They run after the BULL until they trap it. ENKIDU takes it by the horns.*

ENKIDU
Hey! While I've got it under control like this, stab your knife into its brains.

*GILGAMESH plunges the knife between its horns, and the BULL OF HEAVEN falls to the ground dead.*

ENKIDU
Ishtar, look what happens when you mess with my friend. We've killed your bull, and we'll kill any other beast you send our way. Gilgamesh will not marry you. Now go away and leave us in peace.

*The voice of ISHTAR comes from offstage.*

ISHTAR
Enkidu, just like your dear friend, you also will regret insulting me. For what you have said and for what you have done, I'll make you sick. And you'll never recover! *(Malevolent laugh)*

NARRATOR
Sure enough, Enkidu became sick and died from a fever only a few days later. Gilgamesh, who loved him like a brother, ordered that a statue of Enkidu be built. He put the statue of his dear friend in the middle of the main square of Uruk where everyone could see it.

*Lights down*
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Act 3
Scene 1

GILGAMESH sits on the floor in his palace dressed in rags. He mourns the death of ENKIDU sobbing and whining.

GILGAMESH
Why? I don’t understand why death has taken away my best friend, and I don’t know what I’ll do without him. (Pauses and thinks) What’s worse, is that if death can take him from me so easily, that means it could take anyone... even... No, it can’t be true! (Lowers his voice and continues) If even Enkidu can die, that means that someday I’ll die just like him. Even the strongest man alive can’t stand up to death.

Enter NARRATOR

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh of Uruk missed his dear friend and companion and began - for maybe the first time in his life - to fear his own death. The only thing that gave him hope was that the gods had given immortality to one of his ancestors: Utanapishtim. Ever since he was a child his mother had told him about Utanapishtim and his house beyond the Cosmic Ocean where he lived eternally with his wife in the company of the gods. Just thinking about that took away some of his sadness and gave him the strength to continue.

GILGAMESH feels better and stops crying.

GILGAMESH
If what my mother told me is right, then Utanapishtim still lives and knows the secret of immortality. Everyone says that he lives on the other side of the Cosmic Ocean beyond the Mountains of Mashu. Although my heart is heavy with sorrow, I will leave the city and search for the Cosmic Ocean and the house of Utanapishtim. If I can find out the secret of immortality, I won’t have to die like Enkidu.

The palace scenery is exchanged for the journey background.

NARRATOR
He walked for many days until he came to the Mountains of Mashu, with their snow-capped peaks. He walked between the mountains, amazed by their height and beauty. Suddenly, a strange creature approached him that was half-man, half-scorpion. He spoke to Gilgamesh:

SCORPION-MAN
Oh, wanderer, why have you taken a path so long, and why have you come here? I am the guardian of the mountains, the servant of Shamash the sun god, and I would like to know the reason for your journey.
GILGAMESH
(Fearful) I am Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, and I am looking for my ancestor Utanapishtim, who never dies and lives beyond the Cosmic Ocean. I want to ask him about life and death, because he knows the secret of immortality.

SCORPION-MAN
There are caves that go through these mountains and lead to the shores of the Cosmic Ocean, but Gilgamesh, no one has explored the caves, and inside it is pitch black. There is no light there. The caves are the only way through the mountains, and the journey lasts for twelve days in complete darkness. Yet, if you truly want to know the secret of immortality, I will take you to the mouth of the caves.

GILGAMESH
Yes, please take me to the caves. There is nothing in the world that I want to know more than the secret of immortality.

The SCORPION-MAN takes him to the mouth of the caves.

SCORPION-MAN
This is the entrance to the way of darkness that leads to the edge of the Cosmic Ocean. I wish you well, and I hope that you find the secret of immortality.

GILGAMESH walks offstage and enters the cave. The NARRATOR recites the following poem, allowing GILGAMESH to speak as needed.

NARRATOR
For all of time, the poets will tell of Gilgamesh's journey through the dark caves of Mashu.

When he had walked

One, two, three, four, five, six, and seven days,
The darkness was dense; there was no light;
He saw nothing in front or behind.

When he had walked

Eight days, he let out a shout.

GILGAMESH cries out in anguish.

NARRATOR
When he had walked

Nine days, a fresh breeze blew in his face, and he was glad.
When he had walked
  Ten days, the end was near, only two days away.
When he had walked
  Eleven days, he felt like the sun just before dawn.
When he had walked
  Twelve days, the light shone once again, and a beautiful forest appeared.
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Act 3
Scene 2

(GILGAMESH comes out of the caves and finds that he is in a beautiful forest. He walks among the trees, enjoying the light and the fresh air.)

GILGAMESH
At last, I can see the light of Shamash! I never thought that I'd get out of those caves, but now I'm free. (He pauses and sees something) What luck! There's a house over there. Maybe someone here knows where the Cosmic Ocean is, and how to get to Utanapishtim's house.

(He arrives to the house and sees the girl SIDURI in her garden. She is distrusting of the strange and dirty traveler. She shuts the heavy garden gate and locks it with a bolt. The bolt makes a loud noise that surprises GILGAMESH.)

GILGAMESH
Hello there. Young lady, what did you see that made you afraid? Why did you shut this gate and lock it just now? Do you know who I am? I am Gilgamesh, the King of Uruk, destroyer of the monster Humbaba and of the Bull of Heaven. I have come all this way across the plains and through the caves of Mashu. I'm on a quest to find the house of Utanapishtim, who lives beyond the Cosmic Ocean.

SIDURI
But sir, if you are Gilgamesh the King of Uruk, and if you are the destroyer of Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven, why is your face so thin and chapped by the heat and cold? You look like you could be a bandit wandering in the forest and looking for someone to rob. I am Siduri, and it is my job to take care of this garden.

GILGAMESH
Yes, I am thin, and my face is chapped by the heat and cold. I have suffered the saddest thing that anyone can suffer. I have lost my best friend Enkidu. Enkidu and I lived together and had many adventures. Everyone knows of our strength and incredible feats. Yet now my friend is in the ground. (He is sad, he sniffs, but decides not to cry) I know that if someone as strong as Enkidu can die at any moment, then I have no way to avoid my own death. That's why I'm looking for Utanapishtim, a distant relative of mine, who lives beyond the Cosmic Ocean. The gods gave him immortality and he alone knows the way to avoid death.

SIDURI
Gilgamesh, there is no road that goes to Utanapishtim's country and no way that mortals can reach it by their own strength. Ever since the beginning of the
world, only Shamash has been able to cross the Cosmic Ocean in his daily trip around the world. The waters of the Cosmic Ocean are deadly and anyone who touches them dies instantly. However, you are correct. Utanapishtim does live on the far shore of the Cosmic Ocean. You must look for his boatman, Urshanabi. He can take you to the other side in his magic boat. But you can’t stay here.

(GILGAMESH is offended by SIDURI’s lack of hospitality. He pretends to be thankful, but is really upset. He is used to being treated like a king, but now no one recognizes him. He speaks sarcastically.)

GILGAMESH
Thank you, Siduri. I’m going to look for Urshanabi and see if he will take me to Utanapishtim’s country. (He takes out his hatchet and points to the ocean.) If you do not to welcome the King of Uruk, perhaps Urshanabi will.

(GILGAMESH walks toward the sea, and the NARRATOR enters.)

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh was frustrated because the girl Siduri did not give him the welcome he thought he deserved. He was still angry when he saw Urshanabi with his boat.

GILGAMESH
You must be Urshanabi! Well, let me tell you something. I’m going to give you a little demonstration of my strength, so that you will see that I am the King of Uruk and that you should take me wherever I want to go.

(With his hatchet he chops the boat’s oars to pieces. Then he knocks off the oar locks.)

URSHANABI
Young man! What are you doing to my boat?

GILGAMESH
I do this because no one around here wants to help me in my quest to find Utanapishtim’s house. Instead of welcoming me and asking me if I needed help, the girl Siduri...

(URSHANABI interrupts.)

URSHANABI
Wait! If you would have told me, I would have taken you to Utanapishtim, but now I can’t. You have wrecked the oars and the oarlocks. There is no way for me to row across the sea. Anyway, if you are indeed Gilgamesh of Uruk, why is your face so thin? Why is your heart so full of sadness? Tell me, why do you wander the Earth with no home?
GILGAMESH
Why does no one believe me? I am Gilgamesh. I lost my best friend Enkidu. Together we fought the monster Humbaba and killed the Bull of Heaven. But even though he was so strong, he died. Death is everyone’s destiny sooner or later. I am afraid of death and I wander the world trying to escape it. My only hope is that Utanapishtim, who is a distant relative of mine, will tell me the secret of immortality so that I will not die like Enkidu.

URSHANABI
With your own hands you broke these oars, and now with your own hands you will make a way for us to cross the Cosmic Ocean. Take again your hatchet, go to the forest, and chop down one hundred twenty trees as tall as ziggurats. Cut off the branches and we’ll use the trunks as poles to push the boat to Utanapishtim’s house. We need that many trunks from trees that tall because every time we push the boat with one of them, we must leave it there. We cannot touch the waters of the Cosmic Ocean since anyone who touches them dies instantly.

(GILGAMESH raises his hatchet and turns toward the forest.
URSHANABI waits for him. The NARRATOR takes over the stage.)

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh did as Urshanabi told him, and soon the two were in the boat and on their way to Utanapishtim’s house. The Cosmic Ocean is enormous and it took them three days to cross it. The King was comforted when he saw that his quest had not been in vain and that soon he would meet his ancestor and discover the secret of immortality.

(Lights down)
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Act 3
Scene 3

(Lights up. UTANAPISHTIM stands next to the seashore watching the approaching boat.)

UTANAPISHTIM
Could that be my boatman Urshanabi? But why are the oars of his boat broken, and who's that with him? I feel like I know him. (He laughs to himself) But it's been so long since I've been on the other side of the ocean with my people. He does seem familiar, though. (Pauses and thinks) Could that man be some relative of mine?

(Sounds of the boat arriving to the shore are heard: wood knocks against wood, GILGAMESH and URSHANABI splash in the water as they get out of the boat, the boat bottom scrapes as they drag it over the sand. The two walk over to UTANAPISHTIM.)

URSHANABI
Utanapishtim, my lord, we have come from the far side of the Cosmic Ocean, laboring for days to arrive, but we are glad to be here now. Let me introduce you to Gilgamesh, King of Uruk.

UTANAPISHTIM
Since long ago when my wife and I came to live here on this island, no relative of mine has come to visit from the land of humans. The sight of you makes me happy, but please tell me something. If you really are the famous Gilgamesh, why is your face so thin and worn from wandering day and night? Also, why do you look so sad? People talk about the great Gilgamesh, King of Uruk and slayer of monsters, but you are dressed in animal skins like a poor wanderer, not in the fine clothes of a king.

GILGAMESH
Utanapishtim, you, like no one else, will understand why my face is so thin, why I'm dressed in animal skins, and especially why I am so sad. I had a friend who was like a brother to me. Enkidu was his name. He was the strongest man the Earth has ever known. When we first met, I hated him and we fought. During the fight, he had a chance to kill me, but he let me live. From that moment forward we were friends.

UTANAPISHTIM
So, you really are Gilgamesh. Tell me what happened next.

GILGAMESH
Together we had great adventures, like when we killed the monster Humbaba. Or again when we defeated the Bull of Heaven that Ishtar had sent to kill my
people because I would not marry her. But now, Utanapishtim, Enkidu is gone! After we killed that bull, he insulted Ishtar, and she struck him down with a fever that killed him. The death of Enkidu is why I am sad, and it is also the reason for my quest. My only wish is to find the secret of immortality so that I won’t die like Enkidu.

UTANAPISHTIM
(Speaking very seriously) No one has ever seen death, and no one knows his voice, but he is cruel and breaks even the strongest of men. The truth is that the very first man born was already his prisoner. If you want to know about immortality, I can only tell you the little that I know.

(Lights down)
UTANAPISHTIM
Long, long ago, Enlil, the Sky God, was angry. He called together his father Anu, Ninurta, Enugui, the God of the Canals, and Ea, the God of Civilization. They met in the city of Shurupak on the shore of the River Euphrates. There Enlil said:

ENLIL
The noise of the humans is too much for me and I can't stand it any more. It is impossible to sleep.

ANU, NINURTA, ENUGUI and EA
Yes, they are way too noisy.

NINURTA
They don't appreciate all that we have given them.

ENUGUI
They don't clean the canals, and they throw their garbage in the rivers.

ANU
We can't rest because they don't give us a moment of peace. Let us destroy them and their cities, since that's the only way to shut them up. What do you think?

ENLIL, NINURTA, ENUGUI and EA
Yeah, let's teach those humans a lesson!

UTANAPISHTIM
And so it was that the gods decided to destroy the humans. They called Adad, the God of Storms, ordering him to make a rainstorm big enough to flood the whole world. But Ea, the God of Civilization, thought that it was not fair that the people of Shurupak should not know of the disaster that awaited them. I was the only one who heard his message. If I had not heard it, I'm sure I would have died with the rest.

NARRATOR
Ea felt sorry for Utanapishtim and wanted to find some way to help him. He knew that the other gods would be angry if he told Utanapishtim, so he decided to warn the city walls of Shurupak of the coming flood. The city walls would then tell Utanapishtim.
(EA steps forward from the rest of the gods and towards the audience.)

EA
Oh great city walls of Shurupak, listen to me and remember. Tell Utanapishtim to tear down his house and build a ship. (Louder) Out of all the men of Shurupak, Utanapishtim must tear down his house and build a ship!

UTANAPISHTIM
Then he told me exactly how to build that ship. I built it with seven levels and enough space to carry all of the gold and silver I had, along with my family and my servants. He also told me to take along seeds to sow after the rains stopped, and a pair of every kind of animal alive on Earth.

(While UTANAPISHTIM lists all that he put inside of the ship, the Deluge actors cross the stage from left to right, carrying the necessary contents of the ship.)

GILGAMESH
But how did you manage to do all that work? What did the people of Shurupak think of all this?

UTANAPISHTIM
Well, I told them that I was going to put the boat in the River Euphrates so that I could move to another city and take all my things with me. I even paid all of the people who helped me fill the ship with everything that I needed, and no one suspected a thing. No one besides my family and myself knew that the gods were going to flood the world. Thanks to their help, I finished the ship just in time.

(ADAD, the Storm God, enters running with a long blue cape flying behind him. The company of actors follows him carrying banners and ribbons, all of different tones of blue and green to simulate the storm and the flood.)

UTANAPISHTIM
The same afternoon that we finished loading the boat, ADAD came down from the mountains, bringing the rain with him. It rained and poured for six days and seven nights, and the waters covered the whole world. Only my family and I were safe inside our ship.

GILGAMESH
(He stands up because he is excited.) Was the whole Earth really flooded? What happened next?

UTANAPISHTIM
(Motions with his hands for GILGAMESH to calm down and sit again. Once GILGAMESH does this, he continues.) On the morning of the seventh day the rain stopped, the wind died down, and the level of the water began to drop.
(Three actors, each one in turn, enters with the birds UTANAPISHTIM mentions: the first one carries a dove, the second one a swallow, and the third one a crow. They move from the left to the right of the stage.)

UTANAPISHTIM
To see if there was any dry land to be found, I released a dove, and later a swallow. Both of these returned to the ship. But a few days later, I released a crow, and it did not come back. As soon as I saw that, I knew that it had found a place to land.

GILGAMESH
Everything that you tell me is incredible. Where did the boat finally land? After it landed, how did you, your family, and all of those animals get out?

(ISHTAR enters and comes near to where UTANAPISHTIM and GILGAMESH are sitting. She stands next to UTANAPISHTIM and opens her hand, inviting him to follow her.)

UTANAPISHTIM
Ishtar had mercy on us and led us to a mountain where we were able to put the ship down.

(ISHTAR guides UTANAPISHTIM and GILGAMESH to center stage where she leaves them both and exits stage left.)

UTANAPISHTIM
When the water had subsided and there was dry land, I opened the ship's doors so that my family, my servants, and all of the animals we had saved could come out.

(UTANAPISHTIM points to his surroundings, and shows GILGAMESH his house.)

UTANAPISHTIM
After that, the god Ea and the goddess Ishtar brought us here to the shore of the Cosmic Ocean. They gave us this splendid house that you see. They also gave us enough food to last the rest of our lives. But all of these gifts could never compare with the most precious thing that they gave us: immortality. Now, my wife and I are the only two people alive who will never die.

(Lights down)
The Epic of Gilgamesh
Act 3
Scene 5

(GILGAMESH and UTANAPISHTIM stand in center stage with UTANAPISHTIM’S WIFE.)

GILGAMESH
That story was incredible! Not only did you survive the great flood, but the gods gave you immortality. Now I see that it is possible. I don’t have to die like Enkidu. I only have to find a way to gain immortality like you have.

UTANAPISHTIM
You do want immortality. That I can see. But please tell me: which god will do you a favor, and who will give you immortality? (He chuckles.) Those who sleep are like the dead, so they say. (He chuckles.) If you really want immortality, let’s see if you can pass a little test. You need only stay awake for six days and seven nights. If you fall asleep, you lose your chance to find immortality. (He laughs to himself, this time a little louder.)

GILGAMESH
I accept your challenge. I could last for even more than six days and seven nights without falling asleep. But since it’s your challenge, I’ll stay awake for as long as you want me to. (While he is speaking, he becomes drowsy.) Not any old king is willing to challenge death itself (He yawns.)... In fact, not just any old king would go to the end of the Earth to find what (He yawns.)... every human being (He yawns.)... is looking for (He falls asleep.)

UTANAPISHTIM
(To his wife) Look at this man who wants eternal life so much; just like a heavy fog, sleep has covered him. He can’t even stay awake for a few minutes, let alone six days and seven nights! Ha!

UTANAPISHTIM’S WIFE
You shouldn’t treat our guest that way. Why don’t you try to wake him up. That way he can head back to his city with at least a little peace.

UTANAPISHTIM
Human beings are the weakest of all creatures!

(Enter the NARRATOR.)

NARRATOR
Gilgamesh, who had not slept since he had begun his journey, slept like a rock. Utanapishtim and his wife left him in peace, but in the afternoon of the sixth day of his sleep, Utanapishtim woke him up.

(UTNATPISHTIM shakes GILGAMESH gently, but cannot wake him up.)
He shakes him harder until GILGAMESH wakes up and is upset.)

GILGAMESH
Hey! I just fell asleep. What makes you think you can wake me up so soon?

UTANAPISHTIM
You, Gilgamesh, have been asleep for six days and seven nights.

GILGAMESH
No. I don’t believe you.

UTANAPISHTIM
Well, whether you believe me or not, you’ve been asleep there for a week. Look, my wife has cooked for you. Come and eat before it gets cold.

GILGAMESH
(Sad, but grateful for the invitation) Thanks, Utanapishtim.

(GILGAMESH sits and begins to eat. UTANAPISHTIM’S WIFE speaks with her husband.)

UTANAPISHTIM’S WIFE
Utanapishtim. This poor Gilgamesh, a relative of yours, has come from the world of the humans just to see you. He’s worn out from all his work. And you, what will you give him for all his efforts? What will he have to show when he returns to Uruk?

(As she speaks, GILGAMESH finishes his meal.)
GILGAMESH
Utanapishtim. Ma’am. Thank you very much for your hospitality. I’ve had a nice time here with the both of you, even though I’m sad. Now I must continue my quest. I will have no peace until I learn the secret of immortality. Once again, thank you for everything.

(GILGAMESH bows towards the immortals, and then turns around to look for URSHANABI.)

GILGAMESH
Urshanabi! Urshanabi!

UTANAPISHTIM
Gilgamesh, wait.

(GILGAMESH stops where he is.)

GILGAMESH
Yes, Utanapishtim, I’m listening.

UTANAPISHTIM
Gilgamesh, you have come all this way, and you have put so much effort into your quest for immortality. I can tell you only what I know. Only the gods have the power to give it to you. Even so, I can tell you of a mysterious herb that can help you. There is a magic plant that grows all the way at the bottom of the Cosmic Ocean. Anyone who eats it becomes young again. Old men search far and wide for this magic herb of youth, because when they eat it, they become young men.

GILGAMESH
(Excited) Utanapishtim, that’s why I came, and it is a comfort to me that the plant exists. If I can’t escape death, with that herb, I can at least live a much longer life. How can I ever repay you?

UTANAPISHTIM
Wait. Let me explain something else about the plant. It has spiny roots, and it’s stem is covered in thorns, like a rose. Be careful not to cut yourself on it. Also take special care of the plant, and don’t eat it until you get back to Uruk.

GILGAMESH
Thank you so much! I mean it. I’m going to find that magic herb. And even though I can’t have immortality, at least I can be young again. I’m going to eat as much of the plant as I can... until I become a boy once again!

(He exits running. UTANAPISHTIM and his WIFE stay on stage, waving goodbye to him. Lights down)
The Epic of Gilgamesh  
Act 3  
Scene 6  

(Lights up; GILGAMESH and URSHANABI are slightly above the stage in the same boat they took to UTANAPISHTIM's country.)

NARRATOR  
Without even thinking for a minute about the dangers of the Cosmic Ocean, Gilgamesh followed Utanapishtim's instructions. Soon he would see exactly why so many people called the Cosmic Ocean deadly.

GILGAMESH  
Urshanabi, this looks like the place where Utanapishtim said that the plant grows.

URSHANABI  
Yes, I believe you're right.

GILGAMESH  
(From inside the boat he pulls out a length of rope and two large stones.) Help me tie these stones to my feet so that they will pull me quickly to the bottom of the ocean.

(URSHANABI uses the rope to tie the stones to GILGAMESH's feet.)

GILGAMESH  
Well, here we go. I hope that with this dive, I'll find what I am looking for. (He holds the stones close to his chest and dives into the water.)

URSHANABI  
(Frightened) He'll die by the time he reaches the bottom! No one can touch the waters of the Cosmic Ocean and come out alive!

(The weight of the stones pulls GILGAMESH quickly to the bottom of the ocean, center stage, where he immediately sees the thorny plant. He pulls off a small branch of the plant. He cuts himself on the thorns and begins to bleed. His face contorts with pain. He pulls out a knife and cuts the ropes tied to his feet. Without the weight of the stones, he quickly rises to the surface with the plant and his knife.)

GILGAMESH  
At last the secret of life is mine! (Again, his face contorts with pain.) Ow! These thorns are killing me! Please, help me, Urshanabi.

(First GILGAMESH passes the plant and the knife to URSHANABI. Then, he gets up into the boat, with the help of URSHANABI, who groans as he lifts GILGAMESH. The two rest in the boat. GILGAMESH
King Gilgamesh, you went to the bottom of the Cosmic Ocean and you came out alive. How can that be? Why didn't you die? You only cut your hands on that thorny plant.

Yes, but what does that matter? A little blood is the price I pay to be young again. When I eat this sacred herb, I won't even remember that it cut me. (The thorns hurt him again.) Ouch!

URSHANABI
Where shall I take you now?

GILGAMESH
Take me to my side of the Cosmic Ocean, where we will go to Uruk of the high walls. I ask, Urshanabi, that you go with me on the way there. It is very hard to travel alone.

URSHANABI
Yes, your majesty, I will go with you to Uruk.

(The two exit, and the lights go down.)
The Epic of Gilgamesh  
Act 3  
Scene 7  

(GILGAMESH and URSHANABI are on the road to Uruk. They carry no bags: they only wear their tunics and sandals. GILGAMESH carries his sword in one hand, and the precious herb in the other. They stop for a minute to speak.)

GILGAMESH  
(He breathes deeply and exhales.) Urshanabi, the road back home seems like it's even longer than the trip to see Utanapishtim.

URSHANABI  
Well, I've never been to Uruk and this is the first time I've been on this road; but it is true that this has been a long trip.

GILGAMESH  
Why don't we rest for a few minutes next to that spring over there. I can hear the water running, and it looks cool. Anyway, my hands are still all bloody from this thorny plant.

(They walk over to the spring. GILGAMESH squats and washes his hand, leaving the plant to one side.)

GILGAMESH  
Ah, that's better.

(Suddenly, a snake appears and quickly grabs the plant in its mouth. GILGAMESH tries to stop the snake, but it slithers away before he can stop it. URSHANABI stands peacefully upstage. GILGAMESH looses control of his emotions and breaks down.)

GILGAMESH  
(He sits and cries.) Woe is me! All of my work has amounted to nothing! I even gave my own blood, and for what? Everything went wrong. That snake took my happiness away, and took the power of youth from me. Now I know that I will grow old, and that one day I will die. The only thing that I can do now is go home and leave this place.

(The NARRATOR enters.)

NARRATOR  
Gilgamesh saw the reality that no matter how brave a man might be, sooner or later he must die. That is the destiny of all humans, and he was no exception. He thought about these things while he and Urshanabi walked the rest of the way to Uruk. However, when he saw the city on the horizon in the distance, he was happy again. After all, it was the city that he had built with enormous buildings and high walls.
GILGAMESH
(He points with his finger.) Look Urshanabi, the walls of Uruk. My city is large and strong, built with thousands of bricks. Even from here you can see its glorious temples!

NARRATOR
The sight reminded him that even though he could not live forever, the rest of the world and future generations would remember him as the founder of this magnificent city. The world, in fact, would never forget Gilgamesh and Enkidu, or their friendship and the incredible adventures they had together.

(Final curtain.)

THE END
APPENDIX C

INTERNET RESOURCES ON DRAMA FOR EDUCATORS
INTERNET RESOURCES ON DRAMA FOR EDUCATORS

This appendix summarizes an ERIC document (ED469926 2002-11-00) which compiles websites useful to all manner of educator interested in implementing dramatic strategies. Included in the internet review are four sub-headings: Internet-Based Drama Education Resources, Lesson Plans, Professional Associations, and Journals. Additional resources for educators appear in the references section of this thesis.

INTERNET-BASED DRAMA EDUCATION RESOURCES

- Aaron Shepard, a children’s author, has free scripts and director’s guides available at, http://aaronshep.com/rt/
- Lisa Blau, a literacy teacher, has free scripts posted in her memory, http://www.lisablau.com/freescripts.html
- The Drama Teacher’s Resource Room gives articles on costume, stage, set design and lighting. http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/erachi/
- A component of Arts Education and Curriculum Guides of Saskatchewan, The Drama Curriculum Guide offers materials for teachers wishing to design and implement dramatic units for middle school students. http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca./docs/artsed/g6arts_ed/g6rtblae.html

LESSON PLANS

- The Art of Creative Dramatics through the Eyes of a Young Child http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1993/3/93.03.01.x.html
- Drama for Those Who Do Not Like or Understand Drama http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1983/5/83.05.03.x.html
- The Creative Dramatics Cookbook: Recipes for Playmaking http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1990/2/90/.02.01.x.html
- The Family Ontage: Creative Play Production in the Classroom http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1980/3/80.03.07.x.html
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- American Alliance of Theatre and Education (AATE)
  http://www.aate.com/

- Educational Theatre Association (EdTA)
  http://www.edta.org/default_html.asp

- International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ)
  http://www.assitej.org/

- I.D.E.A.: The International Drama/Theatre and Education Association
  http://www.idea-info.org/index/htm

JOURNALS

- Drama Matters
  http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/edtl/llc/

- Research in Drama Education
  http://www/tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/13569783.html
APPENDIX D

WORKSHEETS FROM A DRAMATIC UNIT ON THE EPIC OF

GILGAMESH SIXTH GRADE, DUAL IMMERSION
1) ¿Qué hace mi personaje en esta escena?

2) ¿Por qué hace lo que hace?

3) ¿Qué es lo que siente mi personaje?

Nombre: ________________________________
Número: ________________________________
Fecha: ________________________________

ANÁLISIS DE MI PERSONAJE

Personaje (s): ________________________________

Escena (s): ________________________________

1) ¿Qué hace mi personaje en esta escena?

2) ¿Por qué hace lo que hace?

3) ¿Qué es lo que siente mi personaje?
4) ¿Cómo voy a actuar este estado de ánimo?

Escribe de una vez en tu vida que sentiste lo que siente tu personaje.
Escenas y equipos para La epopeya de Gilgamesh

Somos el equipo número ______

☐ Los integrantes de mi equipo somos...

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Las escenas que vamos a presentar son...

________________________________________

Mi personaje (o personajes)....

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

OFICIOS

Capitán(a) ______________________________
Co-capitán(a) ______________________________
Apuntador(a) ______________________________
Evaluación de Actuación  
*La epopeya de Gilgamesh*

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CALIFICACIÓN: 100

Comentarios del Maestro:

_____________________________________________________________________________

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REFERENCES


AP as an Intervention for Middle School Hispanic Students, (Wint., 2006), Gifted Child Today, 29(1), 39-46.


