

A Multicultural Fairy Tale for Teacher Educators

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Abstract

The purpose of this narrative research is to examine cultural diversity among teacher candidates. A secondary purpose is to offer a pedagogical tool for teacher educators to use with their teacher candidates to help them develop a critical consciousness in their encounters with diverse students and their reflections on their own cultural identities. Data consists of interviews with three teacher candidates to examine their cultural beliefs and values. The data is transformed into a multicultural fairy tale. Each of the three characters in the fairy tale meet as they flee their homes and families to avoid discrimination based on their hair color. They forge friendships during their fantastic adventure to a new land. The characters transform prejudice and discrimination in their homelands to a worldview of tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Included in this paper is set of review questions addressing prejudice, discrimination, and culture. These questions may be used to promote rich conversations addressing equity and social justice in the lives of the fairy tale characters as well as the lives of teacher candidates and their students.

Introduction

How can teacher educators promote multicultural literacy in ways that are relevant and meaningful to teacher candidates? This paper explores one method to promote multicultural education through creative storytelling. In this case, the story consists of a fairy tale called *The Red, Yellow, and Blue Haired Women*. It is a multicultural fairy tale created from a narrative study involving three graduate students enrolled in a teacher preparation program. The fairy tale genre is chosen as a means of analyzing and interpreting multicultural education in teacher education.

An overarching goal of this paper is to give teachers ideas on how they might incorporate multicultural fairy tales in their own work with students as teachers promote greater understanding of culture or develop what Gay and Kirkland describes as a “critical cultural consciousness” (2003, p. 181). This critical consciousness can initiate an understanding of the thinking, actions, and motivations of others as well as help teacher educators and teacher candidates advance anti-bias curricula. Prospective elementary and secondary language arts teachers may wish to incorporate multicultural fairy tales in their own lessons to help K-12 students become critically conscious of their own cultures and those of others. This understanding can then be applied to more adaptive instruction based on the learning styles and needs of students.

Purpose & Significance

The purpose of this research is threefold. One is to examine the construction of culture and diversity within the prior experiences of racially and ethnically diverse female teacher candidates preparing for K-12 classroom teaching. Two is to transform autobiographical stories and interview transcripts into a fairy tale that illuminates multicultural beliefs and pedagogical

practices aimed at generating greater equity and social justice in K-12 classrooms. And three is to present research findings in the form of a fairy tale rather than traditional expository modes of discourse usually found in social science research literature.

Fairy tales and cultures have had a long-standing symbiotic relationship (Zipes, 2011). Drawing on the fantasy and fairy tales of authors such as George MacDonald (2011) and the Brothers Grimm (Pullman, 2012), reconstructed and invented fairy tales may not only be used to identify cultural values and norms (Yenika-Agbaw, 2010) and employ culturally sensitive teaching practices (Sturges & Locke, 2009) but also serve in identifying power structures in ideological texts (Kelley, 2007) that may be used to promote empathy and respect among teacher candidates.

This study is significant to the field of multicultural education since it represents the identities of three teacher candidates of Filipino, Chinese, and African American ethnicities. Cultural themes based on the participants' values, beliefs, and interests were derived from the resulting interview text. The innovation attempted here is in the construction of a fairy tale premised on the research participants' cultural perspectives that emerged in the interview text.

Objectives & Methods

This paper is designed for teacher educators interested in creating and using fairy tales to promote critical cultural consciousness with teacher candidates and their K-12 learners. The fairy tale is based on research findings from a qualitative study of three graduate students in a teacher education program. Fairy tales can be used in teacher preparation and professional development to convey cultural values and norms. Culture and diversity themes in a fairy tale can serve as points of reflection and discussion with teacher candidates. Sample discussion questions focusing

on prejudice, discrimination, and culture that may be used in conjunction with the fairy are found in the Appendix.

Research methods consist of two sets of 45 minute semi-structured interviews with each of the three teacher candidates who volunteered to participate in the study. Interview guides focused on predetermined diversity topics yet allowed participants to speak openly about other issues that they felt were significant to their own multicultural identities. The interview is a fundamental narrative research tool since it allows participants to voice their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs from their own perspectives (Riessman, 2008). The interviews were recorded and transcribed to text. The second interview served to review and expand themes emerging from the first interview. Next, fairy tale characters, setting, and plot were created to communicate themes emerging from the interview data. The multicultural fairy tale, presented here, was member checked by the participants to validate findings (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006).

Fairy Tale

The Red, Yellow, and Blue Haired Women

A long time ago in three separate lands lived three young women of about the same age. Each young woman had gorgeous hair and exquisite hair accessories. The first woman, Zola, had wavy shoulder length red hair and a diamond hair clip shaped like a butterfly. Besides Zola's red hair, the sparkling diamond clip was her most cherished possession. The second young woman, Bik, had straight waist length yellow hair. She used a jade comb to take out tangles and keep her hair silky smooth. Besides Bik's yellow hair, the intriguing jade comb was her greatest treasure. The third young woman, Tala, had curly mid length blue hair that was braided into plaits that she held in place with two golden owl shaped hair pins. Besides her blue hair, these mesmerizing pins were the most valuable things Tala owned.

Zola lived in a land where a green haired queen had a law that all red hair women between the ages of 15 and 25 must spend their days emptying and scrubbing the castle privies often on their hands and knees, and for their daily labors they were given a half a loaf of bread and a potato. The queen and her court of green haired ladies, knights, and nobles felt this law was just because it gave a necessary, albeit, unpleasant job to the redheads who everyone knew were incapable of doing much else. The redheads were the original inhabitants of the land long before the green hairs moved in.

Bik lived in a land where a queen with orange hair ruled that all yellow haired women between 15 and 25 must spend their days spinning thread in the castle tower. For their daily ration, they received cheese and crackers. Young women with yellow hair were indentured servants brought to this queen's land, often against their will, to spin thread for fabrics worn by her majesty and her court.

Tala lived in a land where a queen with purple hair enforced a law that all blue haired women between 15 and 25 were required to spend their days forging iron in the castle dungeon. They were paid with a cabbage and a few carrots for their daily labors. Blue hair was considered a curse and a contagion like a disease.

The Escape

One summer day, in her 16th year, Zola, the red haired woman, concluded that she could no longer spend another day emptying and scrubbing the smelly castle privies. She would run away and return on her 26th birthday when she could pursue her own occupation. In the early morning hours when everyone was asleep, Zola climbed through her opened bedroom window into a pitch dark night. Quietly, stealthily, Zola tiptoed down worn paths and roads among the cottages and fields until she came to the outermost gate of the land. The guard at the gate and

even the dogs at her feet were in a deep sleep as Zola slipped by without making a sound. She fled into the forest that lay beyond. Doing her best to follow a path was difficult because it was so dark. After what seemed like a very long time, the sky in front of Zola began to glow and it was soon morning. She continued walking until arriving at a crossroad at midday. At the crossroad, Zola rested behind some bushes.

After a while, Zola saw a strange sight, a young woman with straight yellow hair approached the very same crossroads from the south. This was Bik. Zola had never seen anyone with yellow hair, so she called the yellow haired woman over to her. When they met, Zola and Bik smiled with amazement at the different color of each other's hair. Zola learned that Bik had run away because she did not want to spend her days locked in the castle tower spinning wool for little pay.

Soon another woman, Tala, with curly blue hair approached the same crossroad from the west. Tala had run away to avoid forging steel in the hot and smoky castle dungeon. She carried a knapsack with cabbage and carrots. Out of curiosity, Zola and Bik called the blue haired woman over to them. Zola and Bik had never seen anyone with blue hair and likewise Tala had never seen anyone with red or yellow hair. Together, Zola, Bik, and Tala were delighted meeting one another. They shared their food and spoke about their recent escapes. When they were sufficiently rested and fed, they got up, and hurried down the path leading north to places where none of them had ever been or even imagined.

Back home, the green, orange, and purple haired queens discovered that the castle privies were very messy, the wool in the castle tower lay in bundles unspun, and the iron ingots in the castle dungeon was not being forged. After a few days, the queens became alarmed and went looking for the young women who had run away.

At the time when the queens had discovered the women missing, Zola, Bik, and Tala were fleeing through the forest. As they hurried along, they talked about their love for their mothers and their disgust for their queens. It had been sad but necessary to leave their homes, but each felt the need to avoid the unfair hair color laws. Why couldn't their queens treat others like they, themselves, would like to be treated? The young women wanted the queens to live by the Golden Rule just like they tried to do. Zola spoke about her love of nature and how as a young girl she had learned not to tease or make fun of others because she knew how bad it felt to be singled out because of her hair color. Bik explained how difficult it was for others to get to know her family, but once the family got to know that someone could be trusted, the family would accept them as a friend. Tala talked about her displeasure with cheaters at school and even in the dungeon because cheaters could never be trusted.

Throughout the afternoon, Zola, Bik, and Tala walked on—beneath towering pines, over hills and dales, through flowery meadows next to sparkling streams. The further they traveled, the safer and more relaxed they felt. They never encountered another soul throughout the day. As evening approached, they grew hopeful that they might find shelter for the night or they would have to improvise a shelter from tree boughs and pine needles.

The Cottage

Just as the first star appeared above the tree canopy, the women came upon a small clearing containing a thatch cottage with an open door and smoke rising from a stone chimney. They were exhausted and hungry, so they approached the cottage doorway cautiously and called in—"hello, anyone home?" There came no reply. Zola shrugged and with only a moment's hesitation stepped inside. There was a smoldering fire beneath a simmering kettle of lamb stew

on the hearth. Three loaves of fresh bread were on a wooden table with three wooden chairs around it. Three thick woolen blankets hung on the walls.

Zola, Bik, and Tala wasted no time preparing dinner. They could pay for the meal later by doing chores for the owner when she returned to the cottage. Zola opened a cupboard near the table and found bowls, cups, and utensils. She set the table and lit candles since the light entering the doorway was fading quickly. Bik found an empty pail and went out to a well behind the cottage. She collected water for drinking and washing. Near the well there here was an apple tree with branches weighted down with red fruit. Bik picked apples and took them inside along with a pail of fresh water. Tala found a basket of celery, onions, and carrots which she promptly rinsed, diced, and added to the simmering stew. Next, she added wood to the fire and soon the stew was ready for eating.

The three young women sat at the table to enjoy the delicious stew, bread, cheese, and apples. Zola gave thanks to the lamb. Bik made sure made sure that everyone had enough to eat, and Tala explained how far they had travelled that day based on her calculations.

As the women ate, they talked about how even though they had different hair color, in many other ways they were quite similar. After having finished their meal and washing the dishes, they sat at the table and talked about the day's journey. Then, Zola spoke about her diamond hair clip and showed it for the others to see up close. The diamonds on the handle were in the shape of a butterfly that sparkled in the candlelight. Zola's mother had given her this hair clip to reward her for tending the family garden back home. Bik passed her jade hair comb to Tala and explained that her mother had given it to her for being independent yet helpful to everyone in the family including her grandmother and nieces. Tala showed the others her golden hair pins. Zola and Bik marveled at the owl face on the head of each hairpin. Tala's mother had

given the hairpins to remind Tala that she was strong and wise. Zola, Bik, and Tala learned that the hair clip, comb, and pins were family heirlooms passed down from their mothers who had received them from their mothers who had, in turn, received them from their mothers. These family treasures were theirs now and someday they would likely pass them on to their heirs.

Bik added wood to the fire and they continued talking about their mothers back home. Zola said her mother lived with another woman and how warm and loving both of her mothers had been. Bik said that her mother lived with her father and how her mother put the needs of the family above all else. Tala said her mother lived with neither a woman nor a man and how her mother, and older sisters, studied hard at the academy to find good jobs raising sheep. The three women concluded that regardless of who lived at home, all of their mothers were caring and compassionate yet at the same time self-reliant and hard working. Each of the young women wanted to please their mothers and establish their own independence while at the same time contributing to the well-being of their families.

As the night wore on, the three young women grew tired and prepared for sleep. But first, one-by-one they carried a lit candle to the outhouse privy some distance beyond the cottage. After all were back in the cottage, they took the woollen blankets from the walls and lay down in front of the fireplace near one another. They continued talking as the fire crackled beneath their feet. They decided that it would not be right for any of them to live in the lands of the other two as long as the jealous queens enforced the discriminatory hair laws. They knew they would likely be away for ten or more years before they could return just as their mothers had done years before. They said they would find a good place to live together in a land that would let them seek out their own livelihoods and happiness.

Zola wanted to grow corn and wheat and raise chickens, goats, and a few dairy cows. Bik wanted to oversee the construction of roads, bridges, and canals, and Tala wanted to teach philosophy at the academy. If they could only find a land that would accept them all regardless of their hair color, they could remain there and work and save their silver pennies until it was time to return home. As their voices quieted, Bik added a few logs to the fire and returned to her blanket. Soon, each in turn drifted to sleep with firelight flickering on the ceiling.

Later that night, Zola awoke. She peered up from beneath her blanket as the thatch ceiling melted away to reveal a starry sky. Zola gazed at the stars and quickly noticed that the brightest stars were in a silhouette of a huge butterfly. The bewildering sight dazzled and pleased her. Zola studied the butterfly when to her amazement its wings began to flutter. After a few erratic wing beats, the star butterfly began a zigzag flight across the heavens. It first passed red Arcturus and along The Plough constellation before coming to rest near the North Star. Just when Zola thought that the sky could not get much odder, the star butterfly faded until it was indistinguishable from the other points of light in the sky. What might this celestial butterfly mean? Could it relate to her journey to find a new land and a new life? Zola soon grew tired of thinking on it and fell asleep.

Bik had a fitful sleep that night. She dreamed of being forgotten in her parent's cottage back home. All traces of her past had disappeared. Her bed was gone. Her clothes were gone. Her parents spoke to one another without mentioning her name once. This induced a fright that jolted Bik to consciousness where she was standing in a field of red flowers. However, it wasn't simply the petals that were red. The stems, leaves, and all parts of the plants were red. All of the plants in the fields were as red as rubies. In contrast, the sky was lazuli blue. Bik turned and saw an exposed hillside behind her. The dirt was yellow. When she kicked the ground, she noticed

that not only was the exposed hill yellow, but all of the dirt beneath her feet was as yellow as sulfur. This was a strange land indeed. Questions filled her mind, then Bik saw three figures far off.

Bik began walking towards the figures then quickened her pace to a trot and she began to run. “Hello” she shouted approaching the three figures. From their dress, it was obvious that the figures were queens with silver hair. Each queen held outstretched arms with hands locked with the other two queens. They formed a triangle facing inwards with their heads lowered as if in prayer. They wore fur trimmed robes embroidered with green, orange, and purple forget-me-knots and decorated with gold, silver, diamonds, and pearls in the outline of royal crests. Bik wanted to speak with the queens so she called to them, but they said nothing. She pleaded and still no response. Then Bik begged, dropping to her knees, but the three queens remained deathly still and silent. Bik began crying and crawled desperately beneath their outstretched arms into the center of the triad. Turning her head to look up, terror struck her. The queens had smooth alabaster faces.

It was quiet and still in the cottage as the women slept. Without notice, Tala’s sleep was interrupted by a “*hoo, hoo, hoo*” that came from above the cottage roof. After a pause, the sound continued: “*hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo*” but this time the call went on and on and began to get on Tala’s nerves. She got up without waking her companions. After tossing on her dress, scarf, and shoes, she hurried across the cottage floor, opened the door, and entered the moonlight. Tala took a few steps from the cottage and glanced back to see the outline of an owl with two large protruding feathers on its head. The owl rested on the cottage roof. The owl rotated its head and peered at Tala.

Neither Tala nor the owl flinched. Then to Bik's amazement, the owl transformed into a bright golden lantern that rose from the roof and slowly descended and hovered in front of her. Tala's first instinct was to run, but she stood firm--more curious than frightened. After a moment, the light became brighter and completely enveloped her.

In an instant, Tala went from seeing the glow to becoming immersed in it. She was transported to a round golden room. As Tala's eyes adjusted to the brightness, an owl face appeared in front of her. The owl turned its orange rimmed pupils to a golden bench that rose up from the floor. Tala stepped gingerly across the floor unsure of whether it would support her weight. She approached the bench and sat down. The owl nodded its head in approval, and began speaking to the woman without moving its beak. It advised Tala to keep traveling north with her companions and not stay at the cottage for more than two nights. The owl told her that she and her companions could find a way to change the hair color laws. Then the owl receded until it could not be distinguished from the light. The glow faded, and Tala found herself seated at the table in the cottage looking into the fireplace. Confused and slightly bewildered, she added a few logs to the fire and returned to her blanket and quickly fell back asleep.

Just as dawn broke, Zola, Bik, and Tala were awake and glad that the cold morning light would help them forget their dreams. Within minutes, they hung their blankets on the wall. At the table, they found eggs, milk, bread, potatoes, and an apple pie. A bowl of nuts and a jar of honey were atop the cupboard. They looked at one another wondering who had set out the food and determined that it must have been the cottage owner who had seen them sleeping and took pity on them. Other than the food on the table everything in the cottage was just as it had been the night before.

The women began preparing breakfast. Zola gathered the cookware and set out eating utensils. Bik took the pail to the well. Tala refreshed the fire then went out for more wood. Within an hour, the women were seated around the table eating breakfast and talking about what they should pack for their upcoming travel. They considered telling one another about their odd dreams but it did not seem like the right time. Just as they finished breakfast and were preparing to leave the cottage, the rain began.

The women ran out to the woodpile to retrieve as much wood as they could stack next to the fireplace. As the morning passed, the gray sky grew dimmer and the rain settled in to a cold steady shower. This would make traveling difficult if not dangerous, so the women decided to stay in the cottage to wait for the rain to let up.

After cleaning and putting away the breakfast dishes and sweeping out the cottage, the women sat at the table and listened to water dripping off the cottage roof. Zola removed her diamond clip from her hair and began telling the others about the star butterfly that she had seen in her dream. "It seemed so real" she exclaimed. The others listened closely and explained that they too had had strange and realistic dreams. Bik recounted how she had met three silver haired queens in a land of red plants, blue sky, and yellow dirt. These queens had smooth white faces. Upon hearing this, all of them grimaced. As the rain continued, Tala told the others about the golden owl that had spoken to her about how they might be able to change the hair color laws back home.

Rain continued the rest of the morning and into the afternoon so the women decided that it would be best to stay in the cottage a second night. With heavy clouds pressing low overhead, dusk came early and the women retired in the hopes of getting an early start the next day. With

the fire burning brightly, they set out their makeshift beds as they had done the night before and settled in for a restful and uninterrupted sleep.

Zola was the first to wake in the morning to the sounds of voices outside the cottage. She nudged her companions awake. Bik and Tala yawned, wiping the sleep from their eyes just as three familiar figures came through the doorway. The women propped themselves up with their elbows and focused on three silver haired woman wearing white robes moving across the cottage. The silver haired women appeared to be conversing but made no sounds, and they didn't appear to see them on the floor. The silver haired women sat at the table while still appearing to be engaged in animated dialogue. One of the silver haired women had a diamond butterfly clip in her hair with many of the diamonds missing. The second carried a jade hair comb that was missing a few teeth but elegant nonetheless. The third had a single golden hair pin in the shape of an owl. Zola, Bik, and Tala tried to speak with the visitors, but the silver haired women didn't hear them or even seem to notice them. Then as unexpectedly as they arrived, they got up from the table and left. Their images were last seen entering the forest on the road heading south.

The Journey

Zola, Bik, and Tala decided to leave the cottage before there were more strange visitors. They hung the wool blankets on the walls, packed food in rucksacks, filled goat skins with water, and headed out. When they reached the trail that had brought them to the cottage they turned north.

After walking all morning the two track road narrowed to a thin trail that was hard to follow at times. At midday, the women came to a small stream in the forest and stopped to rest. As they were talking and rinsing their arms and faces with the cool stream water, behind them came a thin green haired woman carrying a baby in her arms. Based on her tattered clothing, she

must have been desperately poor. The woman was sobbing softly to herself beneath a veil that covered her face. Zola was alarmed because the green hairs had always looked down upon her and her family. Bik asked the woman with the baby where she was going and what they might do to help, but the stranger only hesitated momentarily and kept walking. After she had passed them and had traveled some 30 paces down the path, Zola shouted: "Wait!" With that, she jumped up and ran to catch up with the green haired woman. They both stopped and looked at one another. It was obvious, that the green haired woman had no way to feed the baby much less herself. In a spontaneous and generous act that surprised them both, Zola removed the diamond butterfly clip from her hair and placed it gently in the green hair of the other woman. The green haired woman was in awe that this sparkling diamond hair clip had been given to her. The green haired woman bowed her head low in appreciation then turned and continued down the path.

Zola, Bik, and Tala rested a bit longer then continued along the intermittent path to a clearing and in the distance they spied a mountain. They were hoping to make it to the top of the mountain before nightfall so they quickened their pace. Upon arriving at the base of the mountain, they noticed that the slope was steep and covered in mistletoe and dwarf spruce that would make walking difficult. The young women followed a winding, overgrown switchback route up the side of the mountain.

About half way to the summit, a middle aged woman with disheveled orange hair came stumbling down the mountain toward them. Her thick knotted hair partially covered her face and eyes. She wore a mask that covered the lower half of her face. Zola asked the orange haired woman to stop so they could help her, but she kept walking and stumbling down the steep path. Bik remained silent because she didn't trust anyone with orange hair. After seeing the struggling orange haired woman and encouraged by what she had seen earlier that day, Bik stepped in front

of the oncoming woman and begged her to stop--which she did. Then, Bik pulled her jade comb from her knapsack and began removing the knots from the orange woman's hair. After combing her hair for some time, the orange haired woman could finally see without hair blocking her view. Just as she was about to continue down the mountain, Bik handed her jade comb to the orange haired woman as a gift. The orange haired woman marveled at the jade comb. She smiled a smile that reached her eyes then continued down the mountain, but now she stepped safely because she could see where she was going.

The three women continued climbing the mountain. The sun was beginning its descent towards the western horizon as they reached the summit. The top of the mountain was actually a narrow crater rim. They looked down from the rim, and saw a white castle in the valley below. They descended into the crater to learn more.

As the women approached the castle, they noticed that the entry gate and door were open. They entered the castle which seemed abandoned. The women walked through the castle looking for someone who could explain where they were. They searched the great hall, kitchen, queen's chamber, minstrel's gallery, throne room, privies, and dungeon, but no one could be found. Finally, after they thought that they had been over every inch of the castle, they found a heavy door that looked like a wall panel in the back of the storeroom behind the kitchen. The three put their shoulders against the door and pushed it open. Behind the door was a stone spiral staircase. The woman climbed the winding steps until arriving at a landing with a waist high door. They pried the small door open and stooped to enter a small round room with a single slim opening in the stone wall. Sunlight poured through the opening filling the room with golden light. In the center of the room was a bench and a iron chest directly in front of it. The chest was locked, and contained a slot on the top. Next to the slot in gold inlay was the following riddle:

A trio came to play;

they played all of their cards, save a pair on this day.

Generations are bound;

by one last round of untarnished loss and home found.

The women sat on the bench turning the riddle over in their minds.

Zola said: “the message could be directed to them since they could be the trio, but they hadn’t played cards. Could it be another trio?”

Bik wondered aloud if the cards stood for something other than cards.

Tala followed: “the cards are something we own—like our hair clip, comb, and pins. But, I don’t know what ‘save a pair’ means.”

“That could be the golden owl hair pins since they come in a pair and you still have them,” exclaimed Zola.

“Right!” cried Bik.

“Untarnished could mean gold since gold doesn’t tarnish,” said Tala. She went on: “one of my golden owl hair pins needs to be put in the chest ... to find home.”

Tala slowly removed one of the gold pins from her hair and considered how much it meant to her and her mother. She held the hair pin in front of her and hesitated. Then glancing at Zola and Bik, her hand lowered the pin over the metal box and inserted it into the slot. Tala closed her eyes, and released the pin. There was a long pause then came a high pitched clang as the pin struck something solid far beneath the tower. Suddenly, the tower began shaking and the stones walls began rattling.

The three women leaped up and ran out of the room through the low doorway and flew down the staircase that was now shifting violently under their feet. When they reached the

bottom of the staircase, they continued running through the storeroom, the kitchen, the great hall, and the entryway toward the castle entrance. They could see the crater in the distance through the open doorway just as the entryway fell blocking their escape. The castle walls buckled causing the entire structure to collapse in a thunderous roar. Without hope of getting out, the three young women looked at one another desperately and locked hands. If they were to die, they would die together. The castle crashed to the ground sending up a great cloud of dust.

Home

The three women disappeared; however, they did not perish. The falling debris spared them but the dust covered them from head to toe. Their faces and hair were as white as alabaster.

Upon opening their eyes, they were incredulous that they were in a place that felt like home. But rather than being in three distinct lands, they were in Minerva. They wore white clothing and stood before their queens who were cloaked in royal robes covered with embroidered forget-me-nots. These were the green, purple, and orange haired queens who had come together to make special proclamations to all residents of Minerva.

The three queens raised their arms high into the air to quiet the crowd so they could speak to the royal courts and everyone crowding the square and the streets and storefronts. The immense crowd hushed as the green haired queen stepped forward proclaiming:

“Let it be known that when I was dressed as a pauper with a small child in my arms, the one who showed me the greatest kindness and generosity was not someone with green hair. No, it was the red haired young woman, Zola, you see before you.”

The queen gestured with her outstretched arm pointing to Zola and went on: “This woman gave me this diamond butterfly hair clip which was her only valuable possession so that my child and I might not starve.”

The queen raised the butterfly clip high over her head and the sunlight sent flashes of sparkling colors in every direction. She marched over to Zola and placed the clip in her wavy red hair. The crowd cheered wildly with approval.

After the scene quieted, the queen continued: "From this day forward, the hair laws are abolished. No longer will the red hairs have to send their young women to clean the castle privies, that is, unless they or anyone else wants to take that job for a fair wage."

Applause and chuckles rippled through the crowd. She went on: "It is time to stop discriminating against those with red hair. Just as we all have faces of rainbow-colored scales, the color of anyone's hair including our new friends from the neighboring lands is something to acknowledge and respect."

Now those in attendance could hardly contain their happiness and goodwill. The royal trumpets sounded and banners waived in the breeze from castle walls and rooftops. The queen had never felt such warmth and affection. Those with red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, white, silver, and black hair shouted madly in support of the queens. Those with no hair hollered with joy too.

In a similar manner, the orange and purple haired queens spoke about the selfless sacrifice of Bik and Tala who likewise sacrificed their treasured hair accessories to help others. The orange haired queen had deliberately tangled her hair before descending Crater Mountain when Bik befriended her and untangling her hair and gave her the intriguing jade comb. The queen with purple hair had placed the steel box with the riddle in the castle tower in Crater Mountain with the hope that someone worthy would sacrifice a cherished possession to break the spell of bigotry that had swept the land.

The orange haired queen declared that the days of indentured servitude were over and that workers, regardless of their hair color would be paid a fair wage for their labors in whatever occupation they pursued. The purple haired queen announced that young women with blue hair would no longer be considered outcasts, and they would no longer be forced to work in the castle foundry forging iron all day unless they wished to do so for a living wage. Blue haired young women were now free to pursue other careers.

With the hair laws had been abolished, Zola, Bik and Tala enjoyed living in Minerva with their families. In time, Zola became a most prosperous farmer. The crops and animals she raised fed scores of families and the rate of illnesses and diseases from malnutrition went down markedly. Zola was well known for growing high quality wheat for making the heartiest bread. She invented a system of using animal manure to fertilize crops that changed the nature of farming for generations. Bik went on to become the queen's engineer for the construction, maintenance, and repair of roads, bridges, canals, and other public structures. She invented a bridge suspended by hemp ropes that was safe and economical. These bridges soon to be called "suspension bridges" were used for generations. Tala went on to become a beloved philosopher at Minerva Academy. She would oversee the development of new schools throughout the land.

Zola, Bik, and Tala frequently found time to visit one another and consult each other on matters dealing with their family and professions. They would have moments of self-doubt but being together gave them the confidence they needed to overcome the problems they encountered in life. In the summers, they returned to the thatch cottage where they had spent their first night together. Each time they travelled there, they would take a bowl of lamb stew and set the table with food and provisions for when their younger selves would visit on their pilgrimage to the abandoned castle in Crater Mountain. They were sure to take their valued hair

accessories with them during these pilgrimages to the cottage. Even though the hair clip, comb, and pin had lost some of their shine, these items became more cherished than ever as they helped change the course of history.

Epilogue

The castle in Crater Mountain had been the original home of the purple queen. She had placed the steel box there for a future date when someone could solve the riddle and break the spell that would help convince her subjects that those with blue hair were to be treated equally. This queen, like the other queens, had become convinced that hair color laws were unjust but the royal courts and the majority of the populace believed in these unfair laws out of tradition and the queens did not have the power to overturn the laws without support.

The steel box in the castle contained the hopes and dreams of all of the under-privileged in all the lands. It had been locked in the tower in the abandoned castle in Crater Mountain until Tala gave away the most valuable thing she owned—one of the mesmerizing golden hair pins. Tala's sacrifice as well as the generosity of Zola and Bik broke the spell that had blinded the inhabitants to their own biases and prejudices. With the spell broken, the inhabitants of Minerva began to treat one another in a just and fair manner regardless of the color of one's hair.

It was through the courage and selflessness of Zola, Bik, and Tala that sparked the repeal of the hair laws. This turning point in equality and justice would be told to children from other lands and other times including a distant blue planet third from its yellow star that could be seen on some nights.

Conclusions

The protagonists in the fairy tale model the cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors of the research participants who took part in the study. Their norms and values suggest that they are

self-affirmed in their belief that they can persist to attain their desired occupational goals and that they are resilient to adversity. Additionally, the participants are collaborative as they support one another physically, socially, and emotionally in striving to reach their desired goals. They value family relationships which are symbolically represented in their hair accessories, yet they are willing to donate these items to help the less fortunate and one another. These hair pieces provide a kind of spiritual benevolence that guides and protects them on their journey. The protagonists feel committed to forge a professional career by remaining emotionally connected to their families as they seek change by leaving their lands. Their love for their mothers goes beyond their jewelry as they transfer their familial love to bonds of friendship with one another.

The participants' expressed a belief in the "golden rule" moral imperative to be kind to others as you would like them to be kind to you. Their selflessness in donating their jewelry reflects this belief. Their generosity illustrates caring for others -- even those who are representative of a group that oppress them. Other morals include listening to your own inner voice when it comes to improving your own life and persisting through adversity to obtain desired outcomes.

The women in the fairy tale are independent actors who come together to achieve a common goal of self-determination. They attain solidarity when facing certain death as the castle crumbles around them. These youthful spirits seek a change in their lives, and head out on a journey of collaboration. Near the end of the story, we learn that the women are in a kind of time warp as they provide food and shelter to their younger selves. They teach us that we can have unique identities and love others just as we love ourselves.

Along with this fairy tale, teacher educators are invited to use the discussion questions found in Appendix A to guide rich academic conversations with their candidates. The questions

are focused by topic including: General Review, Prejudice and Discrimination, and Culture. Additional research could report findings in using these questions to promote multicultural understanding and acceptance among teacher candidates.

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Appendix

Sample Discussion Questions

General Review

Warm-up Question: What overall thoughts and feelings did you experience while reading the fairytale?

What struck you as surprising in the fairy tale?

What occurred as you expected in the fairy tale?

How would you describe the characters in the fairy tale?

Who was one of your favorite characters and why?

What is the setting of the fairy tale?

What does the thatch cottage represent? (Response may include factors relating to the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual domains.)

What does the castle in Crater Mountain represent? (Response may include factors relating to the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual domains.)

What do you suppose is the meaning behind the hair colors of the characters?

What morals can be derived from the fairy tale?

If you were to change the ending of this fairy tale after the time when the gold hair pin is dropped into the metal box, what would happen next and why?

In what ways could the morals from this fairy tale be relevant in your life today as a future K-12 teacher?

Prejudice and Discrimination

Warm-up Question: What is the relationship between prejudice and discrimination?

When you began reading the fairy tale, did you assume that the women were your own race and ethnicity? Why did you assume this?

What were your initial thoughts and feelings when you learned that the characters were not of your race and ethnicity? ...were not human?

In what ways did the red, yellow, and blue haired young women suffer from prejudice and discrimination?

In what ways did the green, orange, and purple haired individuals suffer from their own prejudice and discrimination towards the red, yellow, and blue haired young women?

What is the relationship between the suffering caused by prejudice and discrimination by both those with more power and those with less power?

How was the “spell” of prejudice and discrimination overcome?

Compare and contrast how prejudice and discrimination is overcome in the story to how it can be overcome in your social environment today.

What factors led to the unequal power among the characters in the fairy tale? How realistic is this?

What factors led to the underclasses being able to improve their life conditions? How realistic is this?

Relate issues of prejudice and discrimination that you have witnessed in K-12 classrooms.

What can teachers, like you, do to minimize the negative impacts of prejudice and discrimination in the classroom?

Culture

Warm-up Question: What is culture?

What were some of the values of the cultures of those in the various lands (green, orange, purple, Minerva)?

What values did the red, yellow, and blue haired women hold regarding their ability to direct their own lives?

Compare and contrast the cultural conflicts from this fairy tale as they relate to the cultural conflicts in our own society (past and present)?

To what degree were the actions of the women consistent or inconsistent with what might be expected in similar kinds of situations in our culture today?

Who held the power (economic, political, social) in the various lands?

How did those with power use it?

How did those with power share their power?

Can you think of examples when individual acts of kindness and generosity are publically recognized and result in modifying the existing culture?

If you were a teacher in a classroom with the red, yellow, and blue haired young women, or girls, what kinds of important considerations would you make to maximize their learning?

What kinds of cultures values, beliefs, and behaviors are represented in K-12 classrooms that you have been in?

In what ways do the students' and teachers' cultures affect the ways in which they engage and learn in K-12 classrooms? How can teachers use this information to become more effective?