

LESSON PLANS

“THE WAGONER’S LAD” BALLAD AND JULIET’S SOLILOQUY

Lesson Overview:

Students read and listen to 3 versions of the ballad “The Wagoner’s Lad” and to Juliet’s soliloquy to analyze: narrator’s point of view and themes

Materials:

- Vocabulary list including: folk music, ballad, narrative, patriarchy, feminism, Elizabethan period, Shakespeare tragedy, soliloquy, tone, theme, cultural norms
- Computers for writing and listening to audio of the ballads; Smartboard for whole class instruction
- “The Wagoner’s Lad” [variations from Harry Smith’s Anthology](#); Doc Watson [lyrics](#) and [video](#); Joan Baez [lyrics](#) and [video](#); The Duhks [lyrics](#) and [video](#)
- “Romeo and Juliet” Act 4 Scene 3 ([page 109](#)) Juliet Soliloquy lines 14-59. Video clip from the Zeffirelli version of the play can also be shown.
- Graphic organizer for notes to compare/contrast narrator’s views on the themes of marriage and family in all of the texts.

Steps:

1. Prereading questions: Relate your own view of marriage with those of Shakespeare’s time. In modern society, who decides who you will marry? What is a parent’s role in their child’s marriage? What is a spouses’ role within a marriage? Explain your answers. (Students will have recently completed Romeo

Author: Kathleen Brown

Grade Level: Ninth, English

Keywords: Ballad, narrative, “The Wagoner’s Lad,” soliloquy, “Romeo and Juliet,” theme, marriage, feminism, family

Standards addressed: [English Language Arts and Literacy Curriculum Frameworks](#) (Massachusetts 2017) (p 108-112 grade 9-10):

- RL1: Cite strong textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it is shaped by specific details.
- RL4: Determine the figurative or connotative meaning of words and phrases; analyze the impact of words with multiple meanings as well as symbols or metaphors that extend throughout a text to shape its meaning.
- RL6: Analyze a case in which a characters’ point of view signals

and Juliet. They will have analyzed the themes of love, marriage, patriarchy, and feminism.)

2. Students share prereading in groups.
3. Vocabulary lesson using words in context in sentences.
4. As a class, students will read lyrics to the “The Wagoner’s Lad” and then listen to each:
 - a. Doc Watson video lyrics below (Recording released 2001)
 - b. Joan Baez lyrics and video (video 1961)
 - c. The Duhks lyrics and video (video 2014)
5. Students will use graphic organizers to note the singer, dates, narrator, tone, point of view, and theme of each of the versions.
6. In groups, students will discuss and make large chart paper notes listing the ways in which the ballads and the soliloquy are similar and different. They will note how the texts reflect a narrator’s attitudes toward marriage and a culture’s attitudes toward women.

Assessment:

- Students will write an essay comparing the Juliet soliloquy to one of the versions of the ballad that they choose. They will prove their thesis using specific evidence from both texts.
- Students will create a Google slide presentation that includes:
 - a. Their essay thesis
 - b. Bullet list of 3 examples of evidence to prove thesis from the soliloquy and 3 from the ballad they chose
 - c. Links to video/audio to support the evidence
- Students will present their slides to the class

Reflection:

In groups or alone, students will reflect on how cultural attitudes about marriage have or have not changed over time. They will also reflect on the role of music in helping people/cultures express important themes and how music can reflect cultural beliefs.

Extension activity: Find a contemporary song that addresses or relates to the themes in “The Wagoner’s Lad.” Bring in the lyrics and highlight 3 lines to share that relate to those themes.

acceptance or rejection of cultural norms of a period or place

- W1b: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis; develop claim supplying evidence for each point
- SL 2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media
- SL4: Present information and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically
- SL5: Make strategic use of digital media (audio, visual, interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings and to add interest

Learning Goals:

- Apply knowledge of the ballad and narrative forms through analysis of several versions of the traditional ballad “The Wagoner’s Lad.” Compare/contrast themes with a soliloquy in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Gain insight into how the ballad and soliloquy forms reflect cultural norms and a narrator’s reaction to those norms



***The Wagoner's Lad* - Joan Baez, 1961**

[Intro – Verse]

Oh, hard is the fortune of all womankind
She's always controlled, she's always confined
Controlled by her parents until she's a wife
A slave to her husband the rest of her life

[Verse]

Oh, I'm just a poor girl my fortune is sad
I've always been courted by the Wagoner's lad
He's courted me daily, by night and by day
And now he is loading and going away

[Verse]

Oh, my parents don't like him because he is poor
They say he's not worthy of entering my door
He works for a living, his money's his own
And if they don't like it they can leave him alone

[Verse]

Oh, your horses are hungry, go feed them some hay
Then sit down here by me as long as you may
My horses ain't hungry, they won't eat your hay
So fare thee well darlin' I'll be on my way

[Verse]

Oh, your wagon needs greasing your whip is to mend
Then sit down here by me as long as you can
My wagon is greasy, my whip's in my hand
So fare thee well darlin', no longer to stand

***The Wagoner's Lad* - traditional, as sung by Doc Watson**

© 2001 Sugar Hill Records

Oh hard is the fortune of all womankind.
They're always controlled and always confined.
Controlled by their parents until they are wives,
And slaves to their husbands the rest of their lives.

Oh, I am a poor girl, my fortune is sad.
I've always been courted by the wagoner's lad.
He courted me daily, by night and by day
And now he is loaded and going away.

Your parents don't like me because I am poor.
They say I'm not worthy of entering your door.
I work for my living, my money's my own,
And folks that don't like me can leave me alone.

Oh, put up your horses and feed them some hay
Come sit down here by me as long as you stay.

My horses ain't hungry they won't eat your hay,
So fare thee well darlin', I'll be on my way.

Oh, your wagon needs greasing, your whip is to mend
Come sit down here beside me as long as you can.

My wagon is greasy, my whips in my hand.
So fare you well darling, no longer to stand.



Romeo and Juliet, Act 4 Scene 3

JULIET

Farewell.—God knows when we shall meet again.
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.
I'll call them back again to comfort me.—
Nurse!—What should she do here?
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.
Come, vial. *She takes out the vial.*
What if this mixture do not work at all?
Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?
*She takes out her knife
and puts it down beside her.*
No, no, this shall forbid it. Lie thou there.
What if it be a poison which the Friar
Subtly hath ministered to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear it is. And yet methinks it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point.
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place—

As in a vault, an ancient receptacle
Where for this many hundred years the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are packed;
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies fest'ring in his shroud; where, as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort—
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad—
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environèd with all these hideous fears,
And madly play with my forefathers' joints,
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,
As with a club, dash out my desp'rate brains?
O look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point! Stay, Tybalt, stay!
Romeo, Romeo, Romeo! Here's drink.
I drink to Thee.

[She drinks and falls upon her bed
within the curtains.]

