Théâtre de l' eil

A HEART IN WINTER

Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION

A Heart in Winter/Le cœur en hiver is inspired by *The Snow Queen*, a fairy tale by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen. But what exactly is a fairy tale? What elements are typically found in fairy tales? And who was Hans Christian Andersen? This guide contains answers to these questions and much more!

To begin with, we provide a **brief history** of Théâtre de l'Œil, followed by a **special section on the show's main creative team,** including information on their respective approaches, roles and challenges.

You'll also find various games and activities that you can try before or after the show, as you prefer.

We have also listed **various conceptual themes** that the show touches on. You can study these themes in greater depth with children of various age groups, depending on their needs and abilities.

Needless to say, this guide is geared towards helping you get the most out of the work we have created; it is not meant to be a tedious academic exercise! The theatre, particularly the way in which it is presented in this guide, is primarily intended to be a source of **pleasure and poetic insight**. We truly hope that you will enjoy watching our play as much as we enjoyed creating it for you.

Enjoy the show!

Théâtre de l'œil

Promoting the art of puppetry has been Théâtre de l'Œil's "raison d'être" since 1973. As a company focused on research and new productions, the spirit of innovation which it embodies is expressed in its productions for young audiences, in its capacity to promote them, and in its professional training activities.

To seek contact with young spectators through passion and intelligence, to propose and instill the appreciation of a variety of worlds by relying on the force of theatrical images, to tell stories which find resonance in the imagination of children, making them laugh, dream and reflect, are the objectives of the company.

2020 – Furioso
2019 – Les saisons du poulain / Ballad of the Wild Horses
2018 – Marco bleu / Blue Marco
2015 – Le cœur en hiver / A Heart in Winter
2012 – Corbeau / Raven
2010 – Sur 3 pattes / 3-Legged Tale
2007 – Ah, la vache ! / Holy Cow !
2005 – La Cité des Loups
2002 – La Félicité / Dear Fizzy
1999 – Le jardin de Babel
1997 – Le Porteur / The Star Keeper
1995 – Zoé perd son temps
1994 – Un secret de Polichinelle
1993 – Qui a peur de Loulou ?
1991 – Jules Tempête
1990 – Un Autre Monde / A New World
1988 – Bonne fête Willy
1986 – Cœur à Cœur
1986 – Chouinard et compagnie 2
1984 – Le Soldat et la Mort
1984 – Chouinard et compagnie 1
1982 – Ombrelle, tu dors
1981 – Les grandes vacances
1979 – À dos de soleil / Follow the Sun
1979 – Regarde pour voir / Look and See
1977 – Le toutatous
1976 – Tohu-Bohu
1974 – Une fable au chou
1973 – Les mésaventures de la perdrix blanche

Photo : L. Gniwesch

A few words from André Laliberté, founder and former Artistic Director

When we asked Catherine Vidal to submit a proposal for a show at Théâtre de l'Œil, she decided to revisit her childhood, in particular her favourite fairy tale, Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*. Despite its relevance, the storyline was somewhat old-fashioned, so Catherine's collaborator Étienne Lepage was asked to update it. He began by getting rid of the story's moralizing tone but retained its various twists and turns. He also decided to give the main characters (Gerda and Kay) the gift of free will. Both Gerda and Kay speak of the courage they need to make choices and build lives of their own. Other key elements of the story remain, including the winter setting, the notion of fraternal love and little Gerda's courageous quest.

Étienne Lepage, Script

Étienne Lepage is a dramatist, scriptwriter, translator and cross-disciplinary artist. His creative endeavours have been featured in venues across North America and Europe. Through their stunning richness and stylistic diversity, his works have served to showcase his enormous creativity. He has collaborated on several occasions with director Catherine Vidal. Étienne regards himself as someone who trusts in children's intelligence and their ability to come to terms with life's problems in a meaningful way.

Photo : L. Desrochers

A tale revisited by Étienne Lepage

When invited by André Laliberté to submit a project for her puppet theatre directorial debut, Catherine Vidal suggested *The Snow Queen*, a cherished story that evokes fond childhood memories. Because the original story's style was out-dated and its moralizing message called for a re-write, Étienne Lepage came aboard to work his magic.

Although he has kept many of the adventures from the original story as well as several characters encountered on Gerda's journey, the playwright created the narrator role and wrote new dialogue. His sharp pen transformed Gerda into a bright and determined little girl, guided by her emotions and able to make important choices.

"My Gerda isn't naïve like Andersen's character who spends much of her time hollering and crying," says Lepage." I wanted her to be strong, intelligent and guided by her emotions, yet capable of reasoning and of making choices. She understands that life can be difficult, while Kay remains in denial and escapism. As such, he is "frozen". And yet, beauty and pain are different aspects of the same thing, like a rose and its thorns."

Catherine Vidal, Stage Direction

Originally an acting major, Catherine Vidal is now focused on directing, drawing on her clear-cut vision and predilection for hard-hitting dialogue. In 2008, her theatrical adaptation of Agota Kristof's Le *grand cahier* brought her public as well as critical acclaim, which was reconfirmed when she received the 2013 Critics Award for her staging of David Harrower's *Des couteaux dans les poules*. She regularly works alongside senior acting students at various theatre schools.
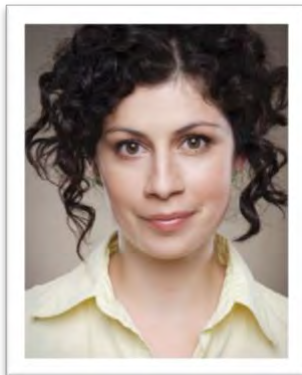

Photo : M.-C. Hamel

A clear and fluid mise en scène

Catherine Vidal's stage direction focuses on flow and the rotating set allows the story to transition from one scene to the next as if turning the pages of a storybook. In an interesting play with perspective, puppeteer-actors Karine Sauvé and Pierre-Louis Renaud bear an uncanny resemblance to their Gerda and Kay puppets characters.

Nicolas Germain-Marchand and Estelle Richard, who performed in five other Théâtre de l'Œil productions, play all the other characters and narrate the tale, as well.

The stage director is backed by a solid team and can count on a little help from experienced puppeteer Stéphane Heine, who also assisted André Laliberté on *Raven*. "When it comes to puppets, the technical requirements are always very specialized," says Catherine Vidal. "I direct puppets much like I direct actors, except that puppets can never react on the spot. The actor must transfer the movement to the puppet. This requires that every gesture, every movement be choreographed."

Richard Lacroix, Puppet and Set Design
Richard Lacroix signed the sets, the props and sometimes the costumes of a large number of shows. Recognized as a designer with a rich and surprising imagination, he collected several prices and mentions for his work. Besides his designs for theater and contemporary dance, Richard Lacroix worked in cinema, museums exhibitions and puppets show. A book was published (at *L'instant même*) on its creation process of Théâtre de l'Œil's production *Corbeau.* In addition to being one of the show's scriptwriters, he has designed the set and props for *The Star Keeper*.

Photo : Théâtre de l' Œil

On a rotating set

The scenography, puppets and accessories are the fruit of Richard Lacroix's creative imagination. Richard has been with the company since... ouch! It's been so long we've come to simply say he's been with us "forever". His creations deliver many surprises: characters that turn into puppet theatre structures, a dress that unfolds into a garden in full bloom...

"Sometimes a scene will start off with actors, then conclude with puppets," says Richard Lacroix. "We wanted to find a way to make scenic elements appear and disappear and that's why we came up with the idea of a rotating set, a dynamic element of the performance space. It isn't an innovation in itself, but it's the perfect configuration for this show. The narrators rotate the set like they would turn the pages in a storybook. And it's quite the challenge to figure out what to hide from the audience and what to show!"

Illustration : Richard Lacroix

THE SHOW
Before
It's best to take the time to prepare students before attending a performance. It's also best that they be familiarized with the type of show they will be seeing (dance, circus, puppetry...), the company that created it (p. 3), and the inspiration and intentions that motivated its creators (p. 3 to 5). You may also want to get a better understanding of the story by reading the summary below and by getting to know a few of the characters (p. 7).

After
After the show, it can be interesting to look back and reflect on what we saw. It's always a good thing to let children express their opinion on a show, but classroom activities can help them go so much further! You can invite them, for example, to tell the story in their own words or describe one of the characters, or even ask them to talk about the role music plays in the story... You will find suggestions for activities after the show in the following pages (p. 11, 12, 15, 16, 18 and 20).

Before or After: Themes and activities to go a little further/dig a little deeper
A Heart in Winter is inspired by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*. In this study guide, we chose to focus on the themes that are central to show: classic fairy tales (p. 9), the sets and puppets (p. 13), a few Northern / Arctic countries (Denmark, Greenland, Canada) (p. 16) as well as Let's Get Philosophical: Free will, Optimism, Pessimism, Existentialism (p. 19). These topics can be integrated into your classroom activities either as an introduction to the show or to inform the discussion afterwards.

THE STORY

A Heart in Winter tells the story of a little girl called Gerda as she searches for her lost friend. Her journey is fraught with adventures and pitfalls that challenge her determination. When she finally finds her friend Kay in the Snow Queen's palace, his heart is cold, placated by the icy spell that has frozen his joys as well as his sorrows. Will Gerda manage to melt his frozen heart?

A Heart in Winter questions how we react to life's hardships. It is a touching and vibrant show with many complex and surprising twists, just like life itself.

Photos : Michel Pinault

CAST OF CHARACTERS

In Étienne Lepage's version, the narrator was a fully-fledged character. During the staging of our play, the narrator's duties were subsequently shared among the puppeteers, who take turns narrating the action. For that reason, the narrator has no specific costume or physical traits.

Similarly, the Snow Queen remains invisible to the audience. Her aura of mystery gives her a certain power: even though we are free to imagine her as we wish, the fact remains that she ends up casting a spell over Kay!

GRANDMOTHER
She is the only one to have already met the Snow Queen…

GERDA
Brave and determined, she is the best friend of Kay.

KAY
At first cheerful, then suddenly unfortunate, he is the best friend of Gerda.

THE SORCERESS
A little bit strange old lady…

THE QUEEN
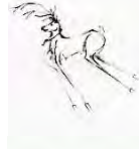*She is authoritarian but generous.*

THE LITTLE KING
He is welcomed in the castle to hold company to the Queen.

THE ROBBER'S DAUGHTER
She demands love at the forefront of the knife.

THE REINDEER
He knows the way towards Kalaallit, because he was born there.

THE OLD INUIT WOMAN
Wise person who indicates the road to be followed without making it easier.

Illustrations : Richard Lacroix

THEMES AND ACTIVITIES

CLASSIC FAIRY TALES

Classic fairy tales are short stories derived from traditional oral storytelling. They usually begin with the introductory phrase "Once upon a time…" The characters are often designated by their specific functions or characteristics (e.g. the Prince, Puss in Boots, Cyclops, etc.), rather than by their given names. Most of the time, fairy tales serve to illustrate a moral with an educational purpose, e.g. "If Little Red Riding Hood hadn't strayed from the path, she wouldn't have met the wolf."

The versions of the classic fairy tales that we have come to know are primarily derived from compilations by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, who dedicated their lives to collecting French and German oral folktales and recording them for posterity.

Charles Perrault (1628-1703) published collections of French folktales. He compiled these stories in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (translated as *Tales and Stories of the Past with Morals*) or *Contes de ma mère l'Oye* (translated as *Tales of Mother Goose*), published in 1697. Perrault thus helped create a new literary genre: the fairy tale. He also innovated by including a moral at the end of each story; presumably this was not the standard practice in the original folktales.

> **PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES INCLUDE** LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, CINDERELLA, SLEEPING BEAUTY, PUSS IN BOOTS, HOP-O'-MY-THUMB, BLUEBEARD AND DONKEYSKIN.

The Brothers Grimm (Wilhelm [1786-1859] and Jacob [1785-1863]) collected and compiled German folktales. The first volume of *Children's and Household Tales* was first published in 1812; the second followed in 1815. Various versions (simplified, expanded, annotated, illustrated, translated, etc.) appeared during their lifetimes. The Brothers Grimm are also known for their German dictionary.

> **GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES INCLUDE** RAPUNZEL, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, CINDERELLA, SLEEPING BEAUTY, THE TOWN MUSICIANS OF BREMEN, THE BRAVE LITTLE TAILOR, TOM THUMB AND SNOW WHITE.

WHO WROTE CINDERELLA: CHARLES PERRAULT OR THE BROTHERS GRIMM? Since they are derived from popular culture (folktales), some fairy tales that were eventually written down were known in several different countries. These tales often travelled around with their "tellers," including navy/army personnel. A number of fairy tales are common to both Charle Perrault (who heard them in France) and the Brothers Grimm (who heard them in Germany). For example, in Perrault's gorier version of *Little Red Riding Hood*, both the little girl and the grandmother end up being eaten by the wolf; in the Grimms' more recent version, a hunter frees them from the animal's belly. In Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*, the princess wakes up all by herself; in the Grimms' version, she is awakened by the prince's kiss. In Perrault's version of *Cinderella*, the slipper is made of glass, a fantastical element (the French novelist Honoré de Balzac claimed more logically that it was made out of "vair," a type of fur).

CLASSICS, DESPITE NEVER BEING PUBLISHED

Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) wrote *The Snow Queen*, the fairy tale that inspired *A Heart in Winter*. Andersen's stories are regarded as classics since he collected and compiled a number of folktales from his home country, Denmark. However, historians maintain that he drew a good deal of inspiration from his own life and travels, and drew on his own imagination to create some brand new tales. His first collection, *Fairy Tales Told for Children,* appeared in 1835. He subsequently published an annual pamphlet with several new stories. Although his family was poor, Andersen had the good fortune to have various protectors who encouraged him to pursue his studies; in the end, he became popular during his lifetime. As he grew wealthy from sales of his books, he became part of "high society" and indulged his love of travel. *The Ugly Duckling* is said to be a transposition of his own life story.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES INCLUDE THE LITTLE MERMAID, THE UGLY DUCKLING, THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL, THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA AND THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

Fairy tale vocabulary :

The **author** is the person who writes the tale.

The **narrator** is the person who tells the tale.

The **characters** (whether real or fictional) are the individuals who experience the events and adventures described in the tale.

The standard **opening phrase** ("Once upon a time", etc.) situates the action in a time that is far away enough for the reader to accept the story's more fantastical or magical elements.

The **aim of the fairy tale** reflects the author's own objectives. The author may be attempting to amuse, produce an emotional response or make readers reflect on certain things.

The **magical or fantastical aspects** are things that cannot be explained logically (e.g. fairies, ogres, mermaids, magic wands, seven-league boots).

The **coming-of-age tale (or rite of passage)** is a story in which the hero goes through various trials or tribulations that make him (or her) change and grow.

Narrative framework :

The **initial situation** describes the setting, historical period, main character(s) and their status.

The **disruptive element (or complicating factor)** serves to upset the initial situation and triggers the subsequent course of events (action/plot).

The **adventure** plays out in the **twists and turns** of the plot.

The **resolution** brings the adventure to an end, thus allowing the hero to obtain what he or she was seeking.

The **final outcome** establishes a new equilibrium. In the vast majority of fairy tales, the final outcome is a "happy ending".

Activities relating to the show and to fairy tales

Looking back and reflecting on the show

After reviewing the fairy tale vocabulary and the narrative framework with the students, have them answer the following questions:

1. Who is the **author** of *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Étienne Lepage.

2. Who is the **narrator** of *A Heart in Winter?*
>   The puppeteers.

3. Who are the **characters** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Gerda, Kay, the Magician, the Queen and the Little King, the Old Inuit Woman, etc.

4. Was there a **standard opening phrase** at the beginning of *A Heart in Winter?*
>   No.

5. In your opinion, what was the **objective** of *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Emphasize the importance of friendship, courage and perseverance. Demonstrate that we have to put our hearts into following our path in life while making our own choices and staying on track despite the setbacks we may face along the way. Can you think of any other themes? It's quite possible!

6. Were there any **magical or fantastical elements** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Yes, the Snow Queen causes everything to freeze; characters such as the River, the Rosebush and the Crows speak; the Magician's hairbrush that makes people forget things, etc.

7. In your opinion, is *A Heart in Winter* a "**rite of passage**"?
>   Yes, Gerda sets off on a quest and encounters various obstacles that make her grow and become independent by the end.

8. What is the **initial situation** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Gerda and Kay are friends and neighbours. They are poor but they have fun together, and they take great pleasure in the little things in life.

9. What is the **disruptive element** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Kay's disappearance after he meets the Snow Queen.

10. What are the **adventures** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Gerda sets off in search of her friend and meets various characters along the way (the River, the Magician, the Rosebush, the Queen and the Little King, the Crows, etc.). Each character is there to either help Gerda or hold her back during her quest (rite of passage).

11.   What is the **resolution** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Gerda finds Kay in the ice castle.

12. What is the **final outcome** in *A Heart in Winter?*
>   Each character makes a personal choice. Kay is fine with his frozen heart: he may not feel any pain or heartbreak, but neither does he feel any joy. Even though Kay will not be with her to enjoy her company, Gerda decides to go back home to experience the joys of springtime.

Discussions about the show
Discuss as a class or organize a debate about the choices the characters make (i.e. remaining with the Snow Queen or going back home).

Why does Kay decide to stay?
What does he gain from that?
Why does Gerda decide to leave?
What does she gain from that?
What would have Gerda's trials and tribulations have been if the show had been called *A Heart in Summer?* Or if the action had taken place in the desert rather than in a cold climate?

Individually, in small groups or as a class, **write a short story or prose poem** inspired by the narrative style. The key to success is repetition! To get things started, the students could try replacing "**poor**" and "**love**" in the following excerpt with other words.

Excerpt from Étienne Lepage's *A Heart in Winter*:

> *Gerda and Kay are two children who are poor, because they are poor and they have nothing. That's why they're poor and their names are Gerda and Kay.*
>
> *They're poor but that's not a reason, and that's why they play and love one another as only children can by playing games they can play. When Kay says he loves flowers, Gerda thinks I love flowers too; and when Gerda says she loves to hear the birds singing, Kay thinks the same thing. Together Gerda and Kay love so many things, that they don't know what they don't love. Or when they don't love something, they don't waste time worrying about it. Better still when they don't love something, they figure out how to love it, which is a very great gift.*

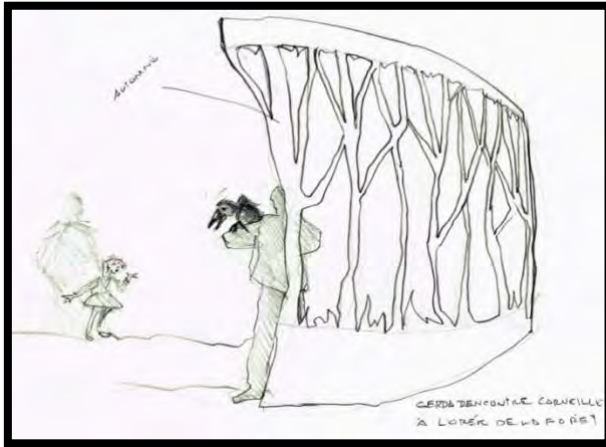## Suggestions for activities relating to fairy tales
Variations on classic fairy tales (try this before or after seeing the show)
Individually, in small groups or as a class, come up with new stories inspired by classic fairy tales. You should keep some original elements in place so the reader can recognize the fairy tale, while modifying others to create a sense of distance. You could change the characters' personalities (e.g. the good people might become bad), together with the setting, time period, language, etc. In general, variations on fairy tales are designed to amuse readers, particularly when they realize that certain changes have been made. To gain a better appreciation of this type of fairy tale or to write one of your own, you should be thoroughly familiar with the original story. You can also combine several fairy tales together!

THEME

SETS AND PUPPETS

Unlike the medium of cinematography, in which cameras are used to capture images in various places or even different countries, a theatrical play is staged in a single hall or performance space. That means that different strategies must be used to depict various locations, seasons, etc. But how can these

aspects be represented? There are several options: in the case of *A Heart in Winter*, the set designer and director decided to use a **revolving stage** (like a turntable) as well as *castelet* **characters**. The puppets' clothing can also be used to indicate the location or time of the year. If one character is wearing mittens, that mean it's wintertime; if another is wearing pyjamas, then it's nighttime!

Illustrations : Richard Lacroix

Revolving stage

A circular or revolving stage is set on top of the main stage. The space on the revolving stage is divided in two, with a stationary section in the middle and a moveable ring around it. While one scene is being performed on the central section or outer ring, the sets and puppets for the next scene can be prepared on another portion of the stage concealed by a black curtain. Since the stage revolves, it can simply be rotated so the new sets and characters become visible to the audience. In *A Heart in Winter*, not only the puppets are manipulated but also the sets.

Castelet characters

Another way to dive quickly into a new place or season is to use what we call *castelet* **characters**. These set elements are worn as costumes by the puppeteers and represent specific places or characters (or both). In the illustration on the left, the puppeteer is wearing a hat and a halberd (indicating the character) and is carrying a screen that looks like a tower (indicating the castle). This concept is somewhat akin to "sandwich board" people who advertise different businesses as they walk down the street.

Bundesarchiv,
Bild 102-13204 / CC-BY-SA

Castelet

Castelet is the french word that represents the specific area in which the puppets are manipulated; traditionally, it was used to conceal the puppeteers from the audience's view. It originally designated the area where the puppeteers manipulated hand puppets, like the traditional *Punch and Judy* stand alone booth. Nowadays, it represents the performance area for puppets in general and does not necessarily hide the puppeteers from view.

The Puppets

In addition to being a writer, Hans Christian Andersen was fond of puppets. He cut out pieces of paper (shaped like snowflakes, strings of characters, etc.) that he used while telling stories to children he knew. This technique is quite similar to the cutouts used in shadow theatre, which is also a type of puppet theatre.

In its productions, Théâtre de l'Œil prefers to use a wide range of puppets, each with its own dramatic potential. Puppets manipulated using wires or strings, along with Japanese-style Bunraku puppets, which are highly articulated and mobile, are very good for imitating human beings or animals. Hand puppets can be feisty and playful (just as lively as the hands moving them!), while rod puppets are usually more stationary. The designers at Théâtre de l'Œil are very creative, so they like to invent hybrids, such as the combination rod/hand puppets used for the birds in *A Heart in Winter* and the body puppets used to represent the Grandmother and the Old Inuit Woman.

Not one, not two, not three but four Gerdas!
Since it's difficult and time-consuming to dress or undress a puppet, we prefer to create several versions of the same character. For that reason, there are four Gerdas: one is fully dressed while another is wearing undergarments (75 cm tall); there are also two tiny Gerdas (only 15 cm tall), one dressed and the other wearing undergarments. The smaller scale produces a change of perspective, in addition to a distancing effect; as such, it gives the audience a broader perspective of the various scenes. In contrast, the scenes in which the larger-sized puppets are used seem closer to us and thus create a more intimate feeling.

Bunraku puppets: These very large Japanese-style puppets (up to 1.5 m tall) are usually manipulated by three puppeteers who remain visible to the audience. The master puppeteer operates the head (the eyes and eyebrows are often moveable), in addition to the right hand. Another puppeteer operates the left hand while the third moves the lower limbs. The contemporary principle of visible manipulation (i.e. the audience can see the puppeteers) is partly inspired by this type of puppetry.

In *A Heart in Winter*…

The main characters, Gerda and Kay, are Bunraku-inspired puppets measuring approximately 75 cm in height. Their movements are expressive and natural because they are manipulated in proximity to the puppeteers' own bodies. This type of puppet is the best for reproducing human movements since there are no rods or strings separating it from the puppeteer.

Hand puppets: Probably the best known of the various types, hand puppets often come to mind when we talk about puppets. These puppets are livelier and more direct because they're worn like a glove. But the freedom of motion only looks easy: the puppeteer needs a good sense of rhythm and precision, together with the arm strength to manipulate a hand puppet.

In *A Heart in Winter*…

The Little King and the Queen are hand puppets. Hand puppets are also used for a number of the minor characters because they're easy to make and the manipulation is livelier. In addition, the *castelet* characters are used to conceal the puppeteers' bodies like a traditional *castelet* structure while including more characters on stage. As well as having a puppet in each hand, the puppeteer becomes a character in his own right.

Rod puppets: These are supported from underneath using a central rod or stick connected to the puppet's head; other rods are used to move the limbs. The ancestor of the rod puppet was known as a "marotte," which only had the central rod and was comparable to a court jester's stick.

Mouth puppets: These are hand puppets in which the hand can be inserted as far as the mouth, which is moveable.

In *A Heart in Winter*…

Because the birds have to fly through the air, they are hybrid mouth/rod puppets, which is quite logical! The bird can "fly" perched on the end of the puppeteer's arm; the puppeteer makes it "speak" by opening or closing his or her hand, which rests inside the bird's head. The rods are used to make the wings beat, thus evoking the idea of flying.

Flat puppets: Flat puppets are inspired by two-dimensional shadow puppets. Flat puppets may be a coloured or uncoloured cutout and could be made out of cardboard, plastic or wood. They are shown directly to the audience without using a screen or a light.

In *A Heart in Winter*…

Some of the robbers in the show (as well as their setting) are flat puppets. They are carved into a screen that serves both as the set (tree branches) and as the shadows of the robbers, who can still move through a central pivot point. But are they part of the set or are they puppets? Actually, they are halfway between the two!

Activities relating to the set and puppets
Questions & answers

1. Which two characters in the play are Bunraku puppets?
>   Gerda and Kay.

2. How many different puppets are used to represent Gerda? Why?
>   There are four Gerdas! Two are large-sized (75 cm) while the other two are quite tiny (15 cm). For each size, there is a dressed and an undressed version. This change of scale is used to create a feeling of being near to the stage or farther away, depending on the staging. Having different versions of the same puppet also makes it easier to switch scenes quickly because having to dress or undress a puppet between two lines of dialogue is difficult and time-consuming!

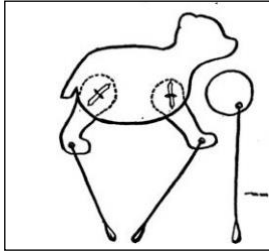**3. Two characters are represented using hand puppets. Which ones?**
>   The Little King and the Queen.

4. Which characters are represented by rod puppets in the show? Name two of them.
>   The Crows and the Reindeer.

Fun with shadow theatre

Shadow theatre: This fascinating technique is one of the simplest to use because the materials are affordable and easy to find.

Screen: Hang a sheet over a frame or in a doorway; you can also attach one to two broom handles suspended from the ceiling. Next, install a bright light near the top of the screen, at a distance of about 30 cm, and away you go! You can also project shadows onto a wall instead of using a screen or sheet.

Cutout figures: These figures (or silhouettes) can be cut out of pieces of fairly strong cardboard. The pieces can then be attached together using paper clips. If you want coloured shadows, make holes in the cutouts and insert translucent materials, such as tissue paper, thin cloth, mica or coloured acetate. Shadow figures can also be produced using your fingers.

The cutouts can be manipulated using small rods attached to them; that way, they can be held perpendicularly between the light source and the screen. With this technique, you can quickly create a large number of characters and easily make multiple background sets.

You could also use an overhead projector and manipulate the cutouts on top of the lens housing. Alternatively, the device could be used to project a set onto a background as the cutouts are manipulated in front of the screen.

Illustrations :
101 Hand Puppets: A Beginner's Guide
to puppeteering, Richard Cummings

THEME
NORTHERN AND ARCTIC COUNTRIES: DENMARK, GREENLAND, CANADA

In *A Heart in Winter* …

Little Gerda has to travel to Kalaallit, the land of the Snow Queen, to find her friend Kay.

Did you know that…

Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenlandic for "land of the Kalaallit" or the Inuit) is another name for Greenland, a Danish-owned archipelago in the North Atlantic Ocean just east of North America. It's the world's largest island; 85% of its surface is covered with ice.

Although the various peoples of the Arctic have lived there for thousands of years, the European colonization of Greenland (with Iceland used as the starting point) is attributed to Norway's Erik the Red in the year 986. Denmark claimed the territory in the 18th century when Norway came under its control. Is that what inspired Hans Christian Andersen (who was Danish) to locate the Snow Queen's palace in Greenland?

An ice sheet covers nearly all of Greenland's surface. At its deepest point, it measures 3,000 metres (3 km). No one lives on the ice sheet, and only scientific expeditions travel there. Greenland's towns and villages are all located on the coast, which is covered with **tundra**. There are very few roads connecting the villages. Boats, helicopters and airplanes are the most common means of travel!

Greenland's flag indicates the key roles played by sun, ice and ocean. The upper part of the flag represents the sun rising over the ice, while the lower part represents an iceberg in the ocean. It could also be interpreted as representing day and night since Greenlanders must live through the **polar night** in winter before they can enjoy the **midnight sun** in summer.

Tundra is a type of single-layer vegetation (vegetable formation along the ground) made up of grasses, sedges, lichens, mosses and shrubs found in cold, polar and mountainous areas.
http://www.hww.ca/en/wild-spaces/arctic-tundra.html

Polar night lasts from 24 hours to 6 months, depending on latitude. During that period, the sun does not rise in the polar circles, that is, between September and March in the Arctic and between March and September in the Antarctic. That means 24 hours of darkness each and every day!
https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/polar-night.html

The **midnight sun** (or polar day) lasts from 24 hours to 6 months, depending on latitude. During that period, the sun does not set in the Arctic Circle (June) or the Antarctic Circle (December). A soft light glows above the horizon all night long. Some people go about their business as if it were daytime!
https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/midnight-sun.html

Glacier or iceberg? A glacier is a thick layer of ice attached to the land, whereas an iceberg is a piece of glacier that has broken off and floats freely in the water. Only 10% of an iceberg is visible, which means that 90% of its mass is found beneath the water; as a result, it's hard to tell what it's shaped like. The Titanic sank after colliding with an iceberg.
https://www.nsidc.org/cryosphere/glaciers/questions/what.html

The birth of icebergs: Yes, it's true: Greenland and other glaciers give birth to icebergs! The term "calving" usually refers to a calf being born, but it is also used to describe the moment when a piece of glacier splits off to form an iceberg".
http://www.icebergfinder.com/iceberg-facts.aspx

Canada was supposedly visited by the Nordic peoples, who also came from Iceland around the year 1000. Newfoundland is said to have been colonized by the Viking Leif Erikson, son of Erik the Red.

L'Anse aux Meadows contains vestiges of the Vikings' short-lived colonization of Newfoundland, including remnants of wood-framed turf moss buildings erected more than 500 years before Christopher Columbus arrived in America. Objects found at the site match those made by the Norwegians around the same time period.

Activities relating to the north / arctic countries
Quiz about the northern / arctic countries

1. What is the connection between Greenland and Hans Christian Andersen?
Denmark! The author of *The Snow Queen* was Danish. Greenland became a Danish colony in 1814.

2. What do Canada, Denmark and Greenland have in common?
Snow, icebergs, flora (plants such as lichens, fireweed, mosses, cloudberries), **fauna** (wildlife such as seals, gulls, ducks, whales, reindeer/caribou), etc. All three countries are members of the **Arctic Council**.

3. What does the expression "It's only the tip of the iceberg" mean?
It means that only a **portion** of something is visible (e.g. a problem or some other aspect or reality).

4. Name the capital cities of Canada, Denmark and Greenland? (in-class research)
Ottawa, Copenhagen and Nuuk.

5. What spectacular natural phenomenon can be seen in the skies of the Far North?
The aurora borealis or the Northern Lights.

6. Where are the Arctic and Antarctic located? At the North or the South Pole?
The North Pole is in the Arctic, while the South Pole is in the Antarctic.

Visit some of Greenland's most beautiful attractions from the comfort of your classroom thanks to these panoramic photos on Google Maps:
http://www.google.com/maps/streetview/#greenland-highlights

LET'S GET PHILOSOPHICAL: FREE WILL, OPTIMISM, PESSIMISM, EXISTENTIALISM

In *A Heart in Winter …*

Gerda and Kay have very different approaches to life and its trials and tribulations.

OPTIMISM is a state of mind in which an individual perceives the world **in positive terms**. **Gerda** is an optimist: she goes about her quest with confidence.

Three great Greek philosophers from Antiquity addressed the topic of optimism. They were **Aristotle** (-384 to -322), Aristotle's teacher **Plato** (-428/-427 to -348/-347) and Plato's teacher **Socrates** (-470/-469 to -399). Aristotle also said, "The beginning seems to be more than half of the whole."

PESSIMISM is a state of mind in which an individual perceives life **in negative terms**. This describes the way **Kay** thinks after he meets the Snow Queen.

The German philosopher **Arthur Schopenhauer** (1788-1860) is regarded as the father of pessimism. In his writings, he pitted the will of God against the concepts of human desire, intuition and reason. His vision of a meaningless world was a precursor to existentialism; he also had some influence on Nietzsche. Schopenhauer wrote, "The happies people are those who live their lives without excessive pain." That sentence is a good summary of Kay's attitude.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was a Danish writer, theologian and philosopher. He is also regarded as a precursor to existentialism. He maintained that each person has an individual existence that cannot be reduced to membership in a group or a family: "The individual's duty is to follow his own calling."

EXISTENTIALISM maintains that human beings create their own existence through their actions, which should not be determined by external doctrines or moral precepts. Each individual is responsible for his or her actions and destiny. Nietzsche and Kierkegaard were precursors to the existential philosophers, but it was Jean-Paul Sartre who became the leading figure of contemporary existentialism in France in the 1940s and 1950s.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a German philosopher and poet. He developed an existential philosophy in which the central concepts were life, instinct and the meaning of human existence. Nietzsche said, "That which doesn't kill us, makes us stronger." This aphorism could be applied to Gerda.

FREE WILL emphasizes the human ability to act and think freely as an individual, as opposed to determinism or fatalism, which maintain that human will is determined by external "forces" such as fate or God.

Philosophical reflections

1. If you had to compare Gerda to a season, which one would she be? Why?

2. With which season do you associate Kay? Why?

GLASS HALF EMPTY   GLASS HALF FULL
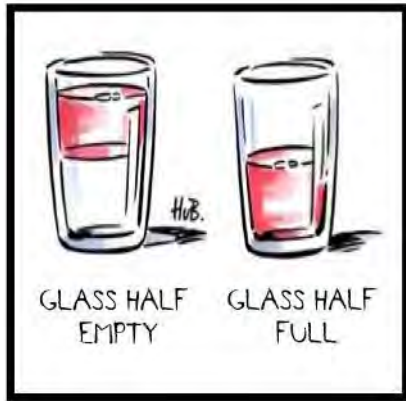
Perception experiment

To illustrate the opposition between optimism and pessimism, the example of a glass of water that is half-full (optimistic view) or half-empty (pessimistic view) is a classic. To get to know your students better, try this experiment in class!

IT WILL ALWAYS PLEASE US TO HEAR FROM YOU!
DO NOT HESITATE TO SEND US YOUR DRAWINGS, COMMENTS, SUMMARIES...
OR ANY OTHER WORK REALIZED IN CLASS WITH THE STUDENTS.

Théâtre de l'œil

Script	Étienne Lepage
Stage Direction	Catherine Vidal
Puppet and Set Design	Richard Lacroix
Sound Design	Francis Rossignol
Lighting	Alexandre Pilon-Guay
Artistic Consultant	André Laliberté
Puppet Consultant	Stéphane Heine
Original Cast	Estelle Richard or Maude Desrosiers-Lauzon
	Karine Sauvé or Philomène Lévesque Rainville
	Nicolas Germain-Marchand
	Pierre-Louis Renaud
Stage Manager	Gilles Perron
Sceneshifter	Catherine Germain or Mélanie Whissell
Workshop Supervisor	Richard Lacroix
Production Team	Ève-Lyne Dallaire, Éliane Fayad, Judianne Godbout, Loïc Lacroix Hoy, Denise Irles, Jocelyne Losier, Fany Mc Crae, Noémi Paquette, Gilles Perron, Christine Plouffe, Véronique Poirier, Angela Rassenti
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Photo	Michel Pinault

Le Théâtre de l'Œil would like to thank Eveline Payette, Cultural Mediation and School Outreach Officer at L'Arrière Scène (Belœil, QC). Her advice was valuable in putting together this Study Guide and in producing the "Making of" video for the show.