

Multi-Cultural Literature

essential understandings:

Multicultural literature is often used to explore and define identity. The act of reading allows a person to travel outside their own experiences. Understanding the culture, values, and perspectives of someone from a different background or generation serves to educate, foster empathy, and promote social justice. Developing our understanding of the factors that shape peoples' identities are the focus of this unit. This unit explores **individual vs collective identity, and the struggles to bridge gaps between different generations of immigrants.**

“...Stanford professor of English **Paula Moya** believes... ‘literature shapes the very frameworks we use to approach the world, including our attitudes toward race, class, and gender. Literary scholars can help us understand this process. They can also give us the tools we need to access literature written by people whose lives are very different from ours, and whose experiences and attitudes are far from our own. By bridging understanding among diverse groups, the study of literature can have powerful implications for social justice.’”



“My aunt haunts me – her ghost drawn to me because now, after fifty years of neglect, I alone devote pages of paper to her, though not origami-ed into houses and clothes.” MHK

overview

In *The Woman Warrior* Maxine Hong Kingston explores personal and collective identity. She uses storytelling as a vehicle to make sense of her own identity and how it was formed, tracing the influence of family, culture, religion and other social institutions. She uses multiple narrators and points of view to show the pieces that go into one's whole idea of self. Through exploring her Chinese and American heritage, she is able to see the differences in cultural values, and is able to make peace with who she is, even if it isn't always the same as what those around desire of her.

guiding questions:

How is identity created? What is the difference between individual and collective identity? How does your generation, family, culture, and values impact your identity?

lessons

- Unit introduction
- Theme overview
- The role of women in Chinese culture
- Ghost stories in Chinese culture
- The autobiography
- Characterization/Character development
- Story setting
- Gender roles
- Acceptance of women in power
- Intergenerational conflict
- Author's purpose
- Sequencing stories-White Tigers example
- Symbolism
- Narrator's Mother as a Shaman-characterization continued
- Author vs Narrator-Multiple perspectives
- Education in identity formation
- "New Women"
- Ghosts
- Reality vs Ideal-Comparing the narrator's version of an ideal daughter with the narrator in reality-exploring generational expectations
- POV-Moon Orchid's first perspectives on America
- Gender and possibilities
- Relationships-Moon Orchid and her husband and her sister
- Challenges for Chinese immigrants
- Importance of Moon Orchid
- Childhood experiences and POV-narrator
- Importance of storytelling as a unifying theme in the novel
- Inner conflicts
- Marriage

- Communism

group work

PROJECT 1-DUE 3/22-23 Teacher for a day-Students will act as the classroom teacher and develop a detailed lesson they will present (15 minutes with key information and vocab for students to copy into their notes) to the class on one of the following subjects:

1. Communism, with a specific focus on China/Chairman Mao.
2. Karl Marx, his work, teachings and influence.
3. Immigration generation-explain the differences between newcomers that have immigrated to a new country, and their children and grandchildren.
4. Chinese culture-overview the values apparent in Chinese culture both historically and in the present day. Include information on food, values, religion, etc.
5. Gender roles in China and America-present information relating to the expectations of the different sexes in Chinese and American culture.
6. Ghost stories-What is the role of ghost stories in society? Why do they exist and why are they important?

PROJECT 2- DUE 5/3-4 Students, in their groups, must chose and complete one of the following:

1. Rewrite, prepare (including set/costume/art), and act out your own version of a ghost story.
2. Create a multi-media presentation on a literary technique AND a literary element found in *The Woman Warrior*, and present it to the class.
3. In “White Tigers” the story of Fa Mu Lan is told. She is a super hero to a little girl who certainly seems to need one. As a group, write and illustrate your own tale of a super hero based on your own cultural identities, or a mix of your cultural identities. Write a one paragraph summary of the cultural identities that inform your character.
4. Collage-use photos to create a collage of what you think the narrator looks like. Surround the narrator with objects that you feel represent her personality. Be prepared to explain your choices and our overall picture with the class.
5. Dress like a woman warrior-Create an outfit that you feel represents a woman warrior the way the narrator describes woman warriors.
6. Family tree-Using what you have learned throughout the novel, create a family tree that shows how the narrator is related to the other family members she describes.
7. Build your own ghost-Create a physical representation of one of the ghosts from one of the stories. Be creative and use whatever materials you can find around the house. After constructing your ghost, write a short explanation of why you chose to make it look the way you have created it, and how the ghost’s visualization compares with it’s description in the story.

8. Jeopardy!-Create a Jeopardy! board using information from the novel and have students compete one another. Keep score to see which team wins.

individual work

- Daily notes on lessons-Daily notes are a summary of the most important information from each lesson, individual writing assignments (Do Now, Answering the AIM, creative short writing, etc), 5 vocabulary words with definitions from the day's lesson/reading/activities, and short group activities these are **Due at the end of each lesson**
- Write a 5-7 paragraph essay that uses evidence from the text (quotes) on one of the following topics. **FIRST PERSON POV IS NOT ALLOWED. Use a FORMAL < ACADEMIC TONE. Include at least 2 quotes with analysis. Due 5/10-11**

Essay Topics (choose 1):

Throughout the novel, the narrator and her mother have dynamic interactions with one another and an intense relationship. Use the following questions as a guide to craft an essay that describes the narrator's relationship with her mother throughout the novel. Your essay should have a thesis statement describing their relationship. Use the guiding questions to help craft support for your thesis. Part 1) Compare and contrast the narrator and her mother. Note their similarities and differences, and give examples to support your claims. Part 2) Choose one way in which the narrator's mother strongly influences the narrator in the novel. Describe the influence, give at least one example of it and explain how it affects the narrator. Part 3) With whom do you sympathize while reading the novel, the narrator or her mother? Explain and support your choice.

The role of women in Chinese culture is a strong theme in the novel. Choose two of the following options to respond to. 1) What are some of the narrator's major concerns about how women are treated in Chinese culture? Describe at least three. 2) According to the narrator, is the role of a Chinese woman in America the same or different from the role of a Chinese woman in China? Explain why or why not. 3) Do you think the narrator is a traditional woman with respect to the Chinese culture? Explain why or why not.

This novel has several autobiographical elements, but we never learn if the narrator and the author are the same person. Part 1) After learning about autobiographies in class, do you view

this novel as an autobiography? Explain why or why not using at least three examples from the text to support your position. Part 2) Do you think the author and the narrator are the same? Explain why or why not.

Beyond the title of the novel, the concept of a woman warrior is repeated throughout the book. Part 1) Explain the literal meaning behind the term "woman warrior" and where you are first introduced to it in the novel. Part 2) Describe at least three examples in which the narrator may be viewed as a woman warrior. Part 3) Explain the figurative meaning behind the term "woman warrior" and how it may be interpreted to reflect a woman in the narrator's setting.

Throughout the novel, the narrator comes into conflict with many different characters. Choose two of these conflicts and describe them in detail, answering the following questions: 1) With whom does the narrator have the conflict? 2) What is the conflict about? 3) How is the conflict resolved? 4) What does the narrator learn from the conflict/how does it relate to her story as a whole?

A significant portion of this novel deals with storytelling and ghost stories, many of which are told by the narrator's mother. Choose and answer two of the following questions. 1) Do you think the narrator's mother's stories are mostly true? Explain why or why not using specific examples. 2) Why does the narrator's mother tell these stories? Do you think she achieves her purpose in telling them? 3) Which of these stories is your favorite? Explain why or why not. The story you choose must be one the narrator's mother tells, and must not be one you use to answer the other question you choose.

Moon Orchid and Brave Orchid reunite after spending many years on different continents. Explain how the sisters feel about one another using examples. Part 1) What does Moon Orchid think about Brave Orchid's new life in America? Part 2) How does Brave Orchid try to help Moon Orchid adjust to America? Part 3) Do you think the sisters get along? Explain why or why not.

Moon Orchid's character plays a significant role in the novel, specifically in the section "At the Western Palace." Answer the following questions about her character and role in the story. Part 1) Do you think Moon Orchid is happier in America than she was in China? Explain why or why not. Part 2) Why do you think the narrator includes Moon Orchid's story in the novel? Part 3) What type of impact do you think Moon Orchid's story had on the narrator? What might the narrator have learned from watching her aunt?

Throughout the novel, there are many ghosts, imaginary beings and legendary characters in the narrator's mother's stories and the narrator's accounts of different stories. Choose three of these creatures and answer the following questions about each. 1) What story is this character a part of? What role does it have in the story? 2) What might the character symbolize? 3) How does the inclusion of this character impact the story? 4) How does the narrator feel about this character? Do you think the narrator believes it is real or imaginary?

The idea of women in power often comes into conflict with the Chinese ideals of women's roles in society in the novel. Part 1) Why do you think stories such as the one told in "White Tigers" teach girls to become heroines even though it is not socially acceptable? Part 2) Describe at least two examples from the novel where a woman is in power. Contrast these examples with at least two examples from the novel where a woman's power is being suppressed.

In "White Tigers" the narrator explains a story about a girl who trains to become a woman warrior. Part 1) Compare and contrast the narrator and the protagonist of the story. Part 2) Do you think the narrator admires or despises the protagonist of the story? Explain your answer using examples from the text.

In "Shaman," the narrator's mother goes to medical school. Use these questions as a guide to describe her experience there. Your essay should include a thesis statement that explains how medical school affected the narrator's mother's life path. Use the guiding questions to help craft your thesis support. 1) Who are the "new women" the narrator's mother meets? How does she view them? 2) How does the narrator's mother change after going to medical school? What does she learn there? 3) How is the narrator's mother treated when she returns from medical school? Why is she treated in this way?

Several times throughout the novel, the narrator feels that she is not valued as much as a child born in China. How do these instances affect the narrator's self worth? Describe at least one of these instances, explain the narrator's reaction to it and how it affects her personality using examples from the novel.

In "Shaman," the narrator says, "Before we can leave our parents, they stuff our heads like the suitcases which they jam-pack with homemade underwear." Part 1) Explain the context of this quote. What is the narrator responding to when she makes this comment? Part 2) Explain the

meaning of this quote. What is the narrator trying to say? Part 3) How does this quote relate to the narrator's life as a whole?

A large part of the novel describes the narrator's childhood. Part 1) Explain at least two of the secrets the narrator has to keep during her childhood. How do you think these secrets affected the narrator's personal and social life? Part 2) Why do you think the Chinese American children are warned about immigration growing up? Explain what fears immigrants had during the time period of the novel's setting, and how these fears relate to the events of the novel as a whole.

assessments Due 5/14-15

A Socratic Dialogue on the following topic:

How do family, religion and culture impact the story's theme?

Students will come to the dialogue with two additional questions for the dialogue, and two pieces of evidence from the text to support their claims on the theme. These must be written down and turned in.

readings

[The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts](#)

links

<http://gjs.appstate.edu/social-justice-and-human-rights/what-social-justice>

<http://gender.stanford.edu/news/2013/why-literature-matters-social-justice>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if6RmoT5roI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoYJCuOih0>