

Spring 4-25-2021

Daphne Wilkins Final M.A. Portfolio

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FINAL MA PORTFOLIO

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of
Bowling Green State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the field of English

26 April 2021

Dr. Ethan Jordan, First Reader
Kimberly Kaye Spallinger, Second Reader

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Analytical Narrative

When I began my work on my Master's Degree, I did it because I wanted to become more knowledgeable in my field. English is a broad field, and I know that it's a field that I can never completely master. That fact is one of the reasons I love the field so much: there is always more to learn, and I enjoy being engaged in the process of learning. Even though I am in a classroom every day as part of my job, I miss being a student and participating in peer discussions. Students look to me as their teacher, a guide that knows all the correct answers; however, the dynamic with my students can never be the same as it is with my peers. Another motivation that drives me is my desire to pass on my love of literature, rhetoric, and composition to younger generations. Students can always tell if a teacher is truly interested in what is being taught, and the students in my classroom know that I truly care about what I am teaching them.

I know that BGSU has an online degree targeted specifically for teaching, but I enrolled in the individualized plan of study so that I could personalize my degree and not be hampered by as many requirements regarding course selection. This strategy allowed me to choose which English classes to take and when to take them. The classes that I have chosen to take demonstrate my interests and the common themes that run through my interests and the work that I have produced during my time at BGSU. These themes and interests center around literary theory, rhetorical studies, and the teaching of composition. I always tell my students on the first day of school that my class is a reading and writing class. Looking back at my time here at BGSU, I see that is also true of my studies here. It's all about reading, writing, and the academic studies that surround those two activities. The tie that binds all of my pieces together in this portfolio is that they all demonstrate my love of learning and teaching.

One of the requirements for this portfolio is that at least one of my chosen essays shows evidence of substantive research. I believe two of the essays I have chosen for this portfolio will meet that requirement. The first of these is an essay I wrote for ENG 6800: Young Adult Literature. The essay, titled “Making an Impact on High-Risk Students through Young Adult Literature” is a persuasive piece aimed at convincing the administration at my current school of the importance of making certain books available that are written by and about racial and social minorities and high-risk groups. This topic is something that was discussed briefly in my ENG 6800 class and caught my attention. When it came time to choose a topic for my research paper, I knew that this was a topic I wanted to research and learn more about.

As a teacher of American and British literature, I am well aware that the majority of works found in the literary canon were written by white men of European descent. Today’s youth have trouble relating to many of the works that make up the literary canon as it has been traditionally taught. While I do think that the works that currently make up the canon are important, I have seen firsthand how teaching these works exclusively can alienate young people from marginalized groups. My essay explains who these marginalized groups are and investigates how purposeful selection of books can reach young adults who might not otherwise be interested in reading. This essay ties in with my overall theme because it is written with the intent of improving the learning environment at my current school of employment.

My original draft of the essay takes the reader from an explanation of the problem to a proposed solution, recommending certain books in the process. Parts of the essay had large chunks of material from single sources, similar to a literature review or annotated bibliography. Upon reading over that essay months later and receiving feedback from peer reviewers and my instructor, my revision plan started to take shape. My revised version of the essay shows

renewed focus on the marginalized groups, making a connection between research from different parts of the country and the demographics at my own school of employment. Since my original version of the essay is structured similarly to a literature review, I decided to restructure the essay to more clearly explain the specific marginalized groups and how each group's needs can be addressed with specific recommended texts. The final version of the essay still reads as a persuasive research essay targeted at my local school but restructured into a logical format that is easier to follow. I attempted to spread out the information from single sources over the body of the essay and resituate those chunks of text into more appropriate sections of the essay.

The second essay for my portfolio is also a research essay, but this time my research focuses on literary theory. My final assignment for ENG 6070 with Dr. Erin Labbie was to write a critical analysis of a literary work incorporating at least three sources from *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, our textbook for the aforementioned class. Two literary theories that have always been most interesting to me are psychological analysis and post-colonialism. When thinking about combining these two theories for a longer research paper, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad was my obvious choice. Even though I knew that there would be an abundance of literature already written on the topic, my challenge was to create an essay using only the original works of theorists and to avoid quoting any literary critics who have already written about the novella.

I successfully completed the assignment using only sources from *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Although I was satisfied with the essay meeting the specific requirements for that class, I knew that it could be better if I added commentary from published literary critics to back up my own analysis of the novella. Finding comments from literary scholars that agree with my own analysis of the work gives credibility to my skills in literary

analysis and makes the essay an overall stronger piece. This essay connects to the bigger picture of my portfolio because it demonstrates how my interest in literature connects to issues in the real world. I taught this novella to my British literature students this year for the second time. My authorship of this essay has helped me to better convey to my students the importance of appreciating literature for its historical significance, outside the realm of the commonly taught interpretations of the story. At face value, Conrad's novel appears to be a clear-cut example of racist literature, but my essay demonstrates that there are other interpretations of Conrad's story that are worthy of examination. My essay claims that although Conrad's essay appears racist on the surface, the true meaning of the novel demonstrates that Conrad was sympathetic toward the African natives and did not approve of the European excursions into Africa.

Critical analysis of literature is a theme that appears throughout my portfolio. Another example of this theme is my third piece, a lesson plan on Sophocles' classic play, *Antigone*. The lesson plan comes from ENG 6090, a course on the teaching of literature. *Antigone* was one of the works we studied during the class, and it was my first time reading it. I took this class during the summer of 2020, and many of the issues discussed in the class centered around current events, such as the pandemic and the unrest surrounding the death of George Floyd. I applied the theme of the social contract and civil disobedience to the play to help my students see how older literature can be examined using themes from current events and that classic literature is essentially timeless when viewed through the correct lens. The lesson also includes an analysis of the effectiveness of rhetoric used by characters in the play. The lesson plan asks students to make connections between Antigone's refusal to obey Creon with current protests going on in our own society. The lesson also demonstrates my love for the study of rhetoric by asking students to rhetorically analyze speeches given by the characters Antigone, Creon, and Haemon.

My revision of the lesson plan converts it from a simple piece that was designed for practical use in my classroom into a well-rounded piece more fitting for an academic portfolio. I have made several changes to the format of the lesson, corrected some errors, and added material on the topic of the social contract to my rationale essay in order to add to the credibility of the lesson. This lesson plan demonstrates my dedication to learning alongside my own students and being able to tie current events and the interests of high-risk groups into the teaching of classic literature.

My final portfolio work is another lesson plan, this time focusing more specifically on the relationship between literature and rhetoric. The lesson plan, *Women's Rights and Racism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, comes from a course I took during my first semester at BGSU. The course and the lesson plan both focus on women's rhetoric from the period starting at The Civil War and ending with The Nineteenth Amendment. Drawing on my interest in rhetoric and the requirement to teach rhetoric in my American literature class, I constructed the lesson plan to include speeches from two important women's rights activists and one prominent female author from the same period. Students are asked to read two short stories by Kate Chopin and make connections between Chopin's fictional stories and real-life speeches given by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth. The unit addresses both racism and women's rights by examining Chopin's stories through the lens of the rhetoric used by Stanton and Truth. This lesson plan was also initially written not only as my culminating assignment for one of my classes, but it was also intended for practical use in my classroom. The lesson plan also includes a composition requirement, as most of my lesson plans do. Since both of Chopin's stories feature female characters that come to a bad end due to dependence on their husbands, the writing assignment asks students to rewrite the endings of the stories based on the assumption

that the female characters had been empowered by hearing a speech from either Stanton or Truth. Based on suggestions from my portfolio instructor and peer reviewers, this lesson plan was also updated with a longer rationale essay to include commentary and analysis from literary critics to echo and confirm my own analysis of the rhetorical value of the works included in the lesson plan. This lesson plan demonstrates that a lesson in rhetoric need not focus solely on the rhetoric of white men, but that rhetorical strategies are used effectively by minorities and women as well.

The overarching themes of my portfolio demonstrate not only my interests in reading, writing, but also my interest in teaching students that there is a place in the field of language arts for all races, genders, cultures, and ideologies. My portfolio as a whole demonstrates my interests in literary theory and rhetoric, while showcasing the best of the work I have produced while working on my degree. The works in this portfolio show integral pieces of what is important to me in both teaching and learning. Even though I chose the individualized path for my degree, every class that I have taken while at BGSU has helped me to be a better teacher. My past students have benefited, and my future students will continue to benefit from the knowledge I have gained from my coursework at BGSU, and even though my time as a student is coming to an end, I will continue to learn and grow as an educator because of my experiences during my enrollment at BGSU.

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Professor Rickard Rebellino

ENG 6800 YA Literature

22 July 2020

Making an Impact on High-Risk Students through Young Adult Literature

Choosing novels to use for instruction in the classroom can be a daunting task for the high school literature teacher. There are many aspects to consider when choosing a novel, from state standards to writing instruction goals, Lexile levels, required reading lists, and the struggle to avoid books that are often challenged in the classroom, but many teachers also take into account how a purposeful selection of texts can positively affect student emotional growth, civic involvement, and acceptance of peers from differing racial, cultural, and financial backgrounds. Literature teachers at North Murray High School (NMHS) in Murray County, Georgia are no different. In order to achieve these goals, more books must be purchased for the school library in order to meet the student demand and the need for books that are more inclusive of cultures and lifestyles outside the mainstream majority of white America.

Context

Teachers at NMHS have to consider the special challenges associated with their unique demographics. Students in the Murray County School System are 83% economically disadvantaged. In addition, NMHS has a student population that is 26% Hispanic (GADOE). To add to these challenges, only 19% of students from NMHS who took the SAT or ACT during the 2018-2019 school year scored at the readiness level (GADOE). According to statistics provided to the GADOE by the University System of Georgia (USG), 72% of the graduates from NMHS

who entered college for the first time had to take a remedial English course before taking 1101, Georgia's version of first-year composition. This figure excludes students who took 1101 as a dual-enrollment course during high school; however, these statistics are sobering for the ELA teachers at NMHS who want to believe that their hard work is making a difference in student lives.

A variety of causes contribute to these statistics, many of them related to the student demographics and the social culture of the community, but many of these issues are not restricted to our small community. Similar problems are faced by educators across the country in a wide variety of locales. Education is not always the top priority for some families, and this can lead to poor performance in school. Student interest in reading and literature has dwindled in recent decades, with some students at NMHS claiming to have never read a full-length novel in its entirety from beginning to end. Students do not read because they do not see a purpose in reading, nor do they believe that reading books will position them for better futures. Some studies claim, and many people believe, that the aspirations and goals of minorities and marginalized groups are lower, effectively leading these affected youths to not try as hard in school because they have lowered expectations for themselves and their futures (Kintrea et al. 670-671).

Lowered academic expectations can also lead to apathy in the areas of social responsibility and civic duties. Educators can assist in these areas by choosing YA novels that will help teach about social responsibility and encourage civic participation while developing moral character and compassion for others. According to author Steven Wolk, "living in a democracy poses specific obligations for reading" (665). Wolk argues that today's young people are disengaged, disinterested, and ignorant to the world around them. Low voter turnout among

young adults is only one symptom of the problem. In Wolk's article, "Reading for a Better World: Teaching for Social Responsibility with Young Adult Literature," Wolk refers to a set of surveys conducted to determine the civic knowledge of young adults. The surveys demonstrate that 18-29 year-olds cannot name the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, do not know the name of the leader of Russia, do not know how many American troops have been killed in Iraq, and they are more likely to be able to name "The Three Stooges" than to be able to name the three branches of U.S. government (667). This lack of civic and social understanding is an additional reason that the book selections at NMHS must be improved.

At-Risk Groups

In addition to the academic issues highlighted by the *GADOE CCRPI Reporting System*, NMHS's student body is made up of several at-risk groups. A significant number of the students come from families where no one has a college degree, and many of the parents and guardians lack a high school diploma. The surrounding community, with a thriving manufacturing industry and farming community, has been a magnet for immigrants, legal and undocumented, as well as migrant workers. The children of these workers attend the county schools and contribute to the county's growing Hispanic population. Students who do not speak English with their parents at home struggle with learning the language, but they also struggle with fitting in socially. They are too embarrassed by their heavy accents to practice reading aloud in front of peers, and they are often disinterested in the reading material because they are unable or unwilling to relate to the characters in the stories.

NMHS is also home to LGBTQ students and a variety of marginalized social groups who do not fit into the mainstream because of lifestyle or living situation. Results from a 2009

nationwide survey reveal that “97% of LGBTQs regularly heard homophobic remarks, 89% of LGBTQ teens felt severe social isolation, and LGBTQ adolescents accounted for 30% of teen suicides” (Hazlett 207). Research involved with this survey also supported the claim that “continued exclusion marginalizes” these students, can cause significant struggles with academic success, and affects long-term self-esteem, which can ultimately destroy their potential (Hazlett 209). NMHS has also seen, in recent years, instances of bullying and the rare instance of teen suicide. Unfortunately, our rural community is not immune to the social problems that exist nationwide.

Improvement of Book Selections

Through careful selection of novels in the Young Adult reading genre, educators in the ELA department at NMHS can make a difference in the lives of all of our students. The facilitation of student reading programs and novel studies must begin with the introduction of book collections into NMHS classrooms. A research study focusing on the availability of school libraries and media centers revealed that schools with higher levels of poverty have fewer full-time staff members, are closed more days of the school year, and receive smaller quantities of new books and materials per school year (Pribesh and Gavigan). NMHS is no exception to those statistics. One reason for the lack of student reading materials is because the school is only ten years old, and the media specialist receives only a limited amount each year to buy new books. Teachers struggle with making library check-outs mandatory for students because of the limited number of books and poor variety of books to choose from. Students going into the media center to check out a book often leave empty handed reporting that all the good books are checked out or that the selection is otherwise poor. ELA teachers at NMHS try to solve this problem by

attempting to supplement the media center's selection by creating their own mini-libraries within individual teacher classrooms.

With limited school funds available for purchase of library books and limited personal funds available for purchase of classroom novels, the media specialist and teachers at NMHS have to be resourceful and selective in choosing the best books to purchase. Reluctant readers are not likely to be drawn into the classic stories from the literary canon. High-interest books and titles aimed at specific demographics are necessary to meet the demand and appeal to the students. It is vitally important to choose books that NMHS students will want to read, books that they can make connections with, books that can serve as windows into other worlds.

Insight into the Importance of Book Selection

Rudine Sims Bishop pioneered an understanding of how readers identify with book characters in her well-known and often cited article, "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors." The right book can appeal to a reader's imagination and offer "views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange" (Bishop 1). A window can also become a mirror in order to offer the reader a reflection of self, some aspect of a character or a story where the reader sees himself taking the character's place and living the story through the character's eyes. The sliding glass door is an extension of the window where the reader steps through the window and takes part in a new and exciting world. Bishop states, "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, ... they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part." Teachers at NMHS want to believe that "some book, some story, some poem can speak to each individual child ... and help to change that child's life" (Bishop). For this reason, it is imperative that teachers are able to provide books

written by and about minorities and books that can engage multicultural readers who are reluctant and even resistant to losing themselves in a book.

Hispanic and Latino students at NMHS also need to see themselves reflected in a book, and Teachers are currently researching books to purchase which may meet this need. The article “Border Crossings: Undocumented Migration Between Mexico and the United States in Contemporary Young Adult Literature” by Amy Cummins discusses eleven YA books written between 1981-2011 that contain young adult characters who have illegally crossed the border from Mexico into the United States. Due to the prevalence of undocumented youth in the tri-state area of Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, this is an issue of relevance among youth in this area. Youth who were born in Mexico need to be able to read books about characters they can connect with on this basic level. Some of the novels listed are *The Crossing*, by Gary Paulsen; *Under the Same Sky*, by Cynthia DeFelice; and *Return to Sender*, by Julia Alvarez.

The importance of including these novels in classroom reading is not only for the Latino students as prospective readers, but also for white youth to have access to stories about teens from other cultures in order to build empathy and understanding. Empathy needs to be fostered and nurtured in the white majority, and the introduction of Hispanic stories can aid in this area. Wolk claims that “‘Multicultural education’ is often limited to teaching about different cultures’ food, fashion, and holidays” (669). Learning about other cultures should involve more than surface details. Wolk states that “the growing body of young adult literature with multicultural themes opens up bold opportunities to engage students in exploring issues of culture and prejudice” (669). School libraries should include books that are representative of multicultural characters and multicultural lifestyles. Only then can student readers experience a more authentic version of cultures outside the mainstream.

Michael Cart's article, "In Search of Empathy," best explains the problem and the proposed solution. His article focuses on empathy between groups and the need for more YA novels that feature minorities as main characters. His claim is that more YA novels on the country's book shelves and in classrooms will increase empathy between young people of different races, cultures, lifestyles, religions, and sexual orientations. Cart offers statistics comparing the population of minority youth in the United States with the amount of literature written about minority youth. The overwhelming majority of young adult literature is still being written about white, mainstream teens. Cart refers to information from the Associated Press that states, "racial and ethnic minorities now make up more than half the children being born in the U.S." (1). He also addresses the growing number of bi-racial couples and bi-racial babies being born, and asks the question of how these children of multiple races will be represented in future literature (Cart 1). The author states in his conclusion, "'we' need to read books about 'them,' and 'they' need to read books about 'us.' In that way, maybe, just maybe, we will discover that we are all simply 'we'" (1). The truth is that minority groups are being forced to read literature about white people because of the lack of literature about minorities. The education system needs more books available pertaining to minority groups, and educators need to make sure these books make it into the hands of not only the minority youth, but the white youth as well.

The development of empathy in adolescents is tied to socioemotional understanding. In "Reading and the Development of Social Understanding: Implications for the Literacy Classroom," Kozak and Recchia explore the relationship between reading and socioemotional understanding. The recent research of these authors brings to light new information in the area of empathy development in student readers. The authors present evidence that early reading choices can affect a child's ability to recognize the feelings of other people. The reason why this occurs

is believed to be because readers get inside the minds of the characters in the stories, and this makes them more likely and more able to investigate the motivations and feelings of people in real-life. The authors explain that “the more characters a reader gets to know and the more experiences with the inner workings of other human characters a reader has, skills related to social understanding are exercised by proxy” (Kozak and Recchia 570). These proxy skills then carry over into the readers’ real-life relationships and social interactions. Kozak and Recchia also discuss choosing the correct texts that will help develop social understanding as the authors state, “feeling highly transported by a fictional text is uniquely linked to increases in empathy” (571). For this reason, fiction novels are preferable to non-fiction because of the complex character development that is found in fiction, which is more likely to affect the emotions of readers. Socioemotional growth occurs when the reader becomes invested in the characters and the characters’ emotions. The authors suggest allowing students to choose from a pre-screened booklist instead of forcing students to read a teacher selected book. Students are more motivated to read when they are allowed to choose their own reading material. Teachers should carefully assemble a book collection for students to choose from that includes characters from a variety of races, cultures, and national origins, as well as works written about other groups who are outside the mainstream demographic. Through the careful selection of book offerings, teachers can foster the development of empathy between students from different backgrounds and lifestyles.

The development of empathy in young children often leads to the development of friendships between members of different cultural and racial groups. Teachers recognize that friendships between students of differing races are beneficial in multiple ways. Reducing the self-segregation of students from different races and cultures reduces the tension and hostility that can sometimes develop between groups of students. According to a study by Rude and

Herda, “interracial friendships are believed to provide minority race individuals with greater access to the resources and opportunities of the dominant group. They may serve as a form of social capital on which racial minorities can draw to attain upward mobility in educational and occupational arenas historically dominated by whites” (585). However, in order for the friendships to be beneficial for minorities, the friendships have to survive over time. In order to survive over time, friends have to develop deeper emotional ties that come from shared experiences and the building of trust (Rude and Herda 588). Teachers can have a supporting role in the establishment of these friendships by providing opportunities for empathy and understanding of other cultures in the classroom.

Recommended Books

All American Boys is a great novel to demonstrate empathy between students of different races in the high school environment. This novel by Jason Reynolds and Brenden Kiely tells the story of a black teen who is brutally beaten by a police officer and his white classmate who witnesses the beating. The book alternates between the narrators to tell both sides of what happened. Critic Molly Hagan states, “the book builds on the understanding that Rashad, a boy who will never be the same, is part of a much larger story and movement. By adopting a twin narrative, Reynolds and Kiely suggest that people of all races have a role to play in it” (Hagan 2). The novel not only tells the story from both sides, but the reader goes on a journey with Quinn, the witness, which involves hard choices between loyalty to friends and standing up for what is right. This book is a great avenue to open up discussion about empathy and the development of friendships between people of different cultures, races, and backgrounds.

With the Fire on High by Elizabeth Acevedo is one example of YA literature that features minority youth as the main characters. The book features both African American and Hispanic culture while also including the topics of teen motherhood, non-nuclear family structure, peer pressure, and teen drinking. All of these issues are relevant to students at NMHS. The main character in the novel, Emoni, has aspirations of becoming a professional chef after high school, and since NMHS has a culinary career pathway program, students in the culinary program may also find this book of interest. Seniors can find a connection with Emoni as well, since she spends the majority of the book trying to figure out what she is going to do after high school. This is a common situation for high school seniors who feel anxiety about leaving high school and being successful as adults. A review of the book states that “Acevedo has a way of making this hyper-specific, fictional, teenage experience feel like an allegory of your own life. You'll find pieces of yourself embedded in her characters” (Beim-Esche). Minority students should have no problem identifying with the characters and seeing themselves in the story.

In Steven Wolk’s article "Reading for a Better World: Teaching for Social Responsibility with Young Adult Literature," he points out that “using young adult literature is one of the most meaningful and enjoyable ways for students to inquire into social responsibility because we can situate this content in the wonderful stories of good books” (667).

The following are other books recommended by Wolk:

Books to support caring and empathy:

- *The Goats*, by Brock Cole
- *Whirligig*, by Paul Fleischman
- *Stuck in Neutral*, by Terry Trueman

The books listed above offer characters who are physically disabled, social outcasts, and one character who is suffering guilt because of the consequences of his own poor decisions.

Books that address social problems and social justice:

- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
- *Buried Onions*, by Gary Soto
- *Make Lemonade*, by Virginia Wolff

The books listed above contain main characters that are Native American, Mexican immigrants, and teen parents. All of these characters are examples of how people can be marginalized by society and the government because of flaws in the country's justice system.

Conclusion

North Murray ELA teachers need to be prepared to help equip students with the empathy and compassion needed to thrive in a multicultural world while also helping minority students find where they fit in the bigger picture. Through the implementation of a reading program that utilizes books specifically chosen for this purpose, white students, minority students, and LGBTQ students can close the gaps between them with understanding and acceptance. By providing high interest books suited to the specific demographic in Murray County, teachers can also renew the love of reading in North Murray High School's students. Renewing the love of reading will result in increased reading abilities in the student body. Students with better reading abilities will be better prepared to read the required materials in all subject areas, as well as being better prepared for state-mandated tests and college entrance exams.

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Daphne Wilkins

Dr. Labbie

ENG 6070

9 December 2019

Conrad's Dark View of Imperialism

Many novels have been written for the purpose of romanticizing or criticizing the imperial endeavors of European countries, but none is more well-known than Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*. Through the lens of a frame narrative, Conrad's narrator tells the story of his adventure working as a steam boat captain for a trading company specializing in the ivory trade. Because of his depiction of the African natives and their culture, Conrad's novel has been one of the most criticized and controversial works of the twentieth century. According to Russell, "A significant strand of Conrad criticism indicts not only Conrad, but his characters such as Kurtz and Marlow, for their alleged racism" (133). But not all critics agree. Many critics, such as Russell, claim that Conrad was indeed sympathetic to the plight of the African natives. Despite the racially charged and demeaning depiction of the African natives, Conrad paints a vivid picture of the brutality and corruption of imperialistic excursions into Africa and his overall disdain for the colonial and imperial activities of European countries.

Unlike many works of fiction, Conrad's dark tale is loosely based on events that occurred in his own life. Almost a decade before penning the story, Conrad served as the captain of a steam boat on the Congo River. Many of the events recounted by Marlow, the narrator, are similar to events that Conrad experienced first-hand during his time working for a Belgian trading company. For instance, Conrad was faced with a steamboat in need of repair when he arrived to take charge of his duties. Later, he oversaw the mission to travel deep into the African continent to retrieve an ailing agent who died on the return journey (Conrad 3). Conrad had

several years to reflect on his feelings about his experiences as well as the repercussions of the events and the psychological effects on all involved in his experiences in Africa. He demonstrates to the reader how insanity can overtake men who remain too long outside the structured order of civilization. Conrad uses the juxtaposition of civilization and barbarism to convey his condemnation of imperialism that emphasizes the exploitation of the natives and demonstrates the negative psychological effects on men who embrace the unrestrictive environment and become consumed with greed and savagery. The psychological mysteries combined with the imperial narrative continue to fascinate students of literary theory over a hundred years after its publication. Literary critics and scholars will continue to analyze the psychology and debate the intent behind Conrad's narrative for many years to come.

Conrad's strategy of setting up a series of opposing images begins in the first chapter when he opens his frame narrative with an unnamed narrator sitting on the deck of a sailboat named the *Nellie* on the Thames River in London, England. The cruising yawl stands in opposition to the later mentioned steam boat making its journey up the unnamed river presumed to be the Congo in Africa. The juxtaposition of the two rivers continues to build as the narrator describes the traffic on the calm, civilized river. Marlow takes over as the storyteller when he says "And this also, has been one of the dark places of the earth" (Conrad 6). The description of the ancient Thames of two thousand years in the past follows his comment and foreshadows the story Marlow tells of his adventure on the African river later in the narrative.

Marlow's depiction of ancient England being tamed by the Romans serves as a forerunner of how Marlow later describes his experiences in Africa complete with wild men and the "mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest" (Conrad 7). Conrad makes a comparison between England of the past and Africa of the present. The images he describes of

the first Roman conquerors traveling up the Thames parallel the actions of the Europeans journeying deep into the African continent seeking riches through the exploitation of the natives. According to Kaplan, “The narrative stipulates that what it arbitrarily equates with darkness is in fact universal—an ineradicable core of evil in all human beings, whatever their culture of origin” (333). This initial dark image of the savagery of ancient man foreshadows the violent tendencies of the modern Mr. Kurtz later in the story.

The description given by Marlow of the African river was that it was like “traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world” (Conrad 34). The uncanny feeling is exemplified when Marlow refers to the African landscape and its people as “prehistoric earth” and “prehistoric man” (36). The repeated references to the “beginnings of the world” in combination with the idea that the travelers are constantly being watched from the jungle give the reader an eerie and foreboding feeling of impending doom (34). Freud describes this psychological phenomenon and fear of the uncanny as “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (825). The nostalgia of ancient times and fear of the unknown is buried deep within the human psyche according to Freud. Conrad continues to use uncanny images with the juxtaposition of “the shackled form of a conquered monster” and “a thing monstrous and free” to draw another comparison between civilized Europe and uncivilized Africa (Conrad 36). In civilized Europe, men had conquered their dark impulses, but in Africa, those impulses were allowed to come out and run free, as evidenced by Kurtz’s murder and mutilation of the natives who challenged his authority over them.

The comparison between Africa and Europe is also one of the reasons Conrad has been the recipient of so much criticism. African author Chinua Achebe states, “*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as ‘the other world,’ the antithesis of Europe and therefore of

civilization” (1614). Achebe believes that Conrad’s attitude is symptomatic of Western psychology’s continued attempts to “set up Africa as a foil to Europe” in order to hail European civilization’s superiority over the supposed barbarism of third world countries (1613). Despite Achebe’s criticism of Conrad, he begrudgingly hypothesizes that perhaps the point of Conrad’s story is to “ridicule Europe’s civilizing mission in Africa” (1618). Achebe agrees after all with the belief that Conrad has a negative opinion of European meddling on the African continent.

Conrad makes it clear that his narrator’s interest in traveling up that river had to do with neither greed nor the idea of civilizing the so-called savages. Marlow’s interest was in the adventure of it all. He tells of how he saw a map of Africa as a child and became fascinated with the river that looked like a snake. His childlike psychological state contributes to the uncanny descriptions and the air of mystery surrounding much of his narration. Freud confirms that anxieties about uncanniness are developed during early childhood (825). Marlow’s innocent and nonchalant attitude toward the mission of his employer also puts him at odds with his companions during most of the story. He finally meets a fellow adventurous spirit in the Russian fellow near the end of his journey. Marlow and the Russian are the only men in the story who do not fall victim to the darkness of human greed. Their adventurous spirits and lack of lofty intentions act as a barrier against the lack of control and loss of sanity that overtakes many of the white men in the story.

Marlow’s attitude toward imperialism seems to mirror Conrad’s at multiple times during the story. According to Nayak, “Conrad’s text exposes the violent and mercenary nature of imperialism” (31). Conrad seems to speak through Marlow when he writes, “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from [others], is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much” (Conrad 7). This reaction from Marlow comes as commentary during the retelling

of his adventure and can be assumed to be something he learned during his time in Africa. Marlow is portrayed as having pity for the natives and making attempts to avoid witnessing the mistreatment of them that occurs throughout his tale. He makes note of the variety of excuses given for their mistreatment by the labels used to describe them. First, he notes that they are referred to as *enemies* in an explanation of why a ship is shooting at a native village (Conrad 14). After he gets to his first destination, he comes into contact with a chained group of natives referred to as *criminals*. He indicates that he knows they are not *criminals* by saying “the outraged law had come to them, like the bursting shells” had come to the *enemies* in the village on the coast (16). Fanon, a post-colonial theorist, explains that “this cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of [the natives’] national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power” (1440). These people had not traveled to a foreign country and been found guilty of violating unknown laws; the foreign laws had come to them, and they were expected to obey what they could not understand. Kaplan points out that “the map of Africa, divided and colored by the greedy claims of European nations; the inscription upon the land of roads and railroads; the delivery of mail from to European intruders; the keeping of accounts to tally the loot; the written recommendations of outsiders to legitimize the coercion of natives;” all of these things show how the law of the white man was brought to Africa and imposed on the natives against their will (Kaplan 330). Marlow sees the natives as victims of the white man’s laws and continues to see them victimized by Kurtz in the last leg of his adventure.

The labeling of the natives continues throughout the narrative. The natives that are captured and forced into labor are referred to at various times by Marlow as *workers*, *helpers*, and *carriers*. His feelings on the excuses for their treatment culminate in the third chapter when he witnesses a half-dozen native heads mounted on sticks in front of Kurtz’s station. According

to the Russian fellow, “These heads were the heads of rebels” (Conrad 58). Marlow responds by saying, “What would be the next definition I was to hear? There had been enemies, criminals, workers, -- and these were rebels. Those rebellious heads looked very subdued to me on their sticks” (58-59). Conrad’s meaning is that Marlow cannot fathom anything these men could have done to deserve the treatment they received. Marlow sees them in a realistic way as uncivilized natives without modern weapons and recognizes that Kurtz clearly had the upper hand with them. Not only are they victims of Kurtz’s insanity, their mutilated corpses signify a complete disregard for human decency.

Marlow’s most obvious act of pity and sympathy occurs when he accidentally stumbles into what he later refers to as “the grove of death” (Conrad 19). Following his first encounter with the chained group of criminal natives, Marlow attempts to avoid further interaction with them by seeking shade under a nearby grove of trees. Conrad writes, “Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees... in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair... This was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die” (17). Marlow’s reaction is described as “horror-struck” (18). He looks down at the man nearest him and observes how “slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up” (17). Marlow responds by giving the dying man the only sustenance he has in his possession, a biscuit that was given to him by the captain of the ship he arrived on. At that point in Marlow’s journey, he “fully perceives and sympathizes with the suffering of these natives” (Russell 138).

Following his experience with the dying native, Marlow exits the grove and immediately runs into another man, the Company’s chief accountant. The accountant is described as “amazing, a miracle, and a sort of vision” (Conrad 18). It is obvious that Conrad placed the accountant at this particular juncture in the narrative for a specific reason. The accountant is

described as being dressed immaculately in mostly white clothing with not even a hair out of place. He looks as if he could have walked straight out of an office in London. Beyond the binary opposition of this vision in white against the canopy of darkness in the grove nearby, the accountant plays an important role in more than merely drawing attention to the “otherness” of the natives. The accountant is symbolic of the profit being made from working the natives to death. Although he does not act in a greedy manner himself, he is representative of the greed that had overrun the entire operation. He was in charge of all of the financial transactions, and he knew more than anyone else exactly how much profit was coming from the exploitation of the natives and their culture.

Propaganda in Europe attempted to make the populace believe that the presence of the white man in Africa was for the purpose of civilizing the natives. Marlow refers to “rot let loose in print” that his aunt believed as truth (Conrad 13). She talked to Marlow of “weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways” (13). Marlow told her, much to her disdain, that The Company, his employer, was in Africa for profit, but that conversation occurred before Marlow realized exactly what was involved in making that profit. He learned after his arrival that The Company was in the business of trading junk goods to the natives in return for that “precious trickle of ivory” (18). Fanon explains that because “colonial domination is total and tends to oversimplify,” it disrupts the normal order of things in native life and native culture (1441). The imperialists in this story disrupted the native culture by enslaving workers while manipulating others to turn a profit by trading shoddy goods for valuable ivory. They manipulated the natives’ ignorance on the value of the goods being exchanged. They further disrupted the culture by punishing anyone who refused to submit to their authority. According to Fanon, “every effort is made [by colonizers and imperialists] to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his

culture” (1440). The goal of subjugating the natives to colonial rule is further achieved by proving dominance and superiority. Mr. Kurtz took this idea to the extreme with his suggestion that natives saw white men as deities, and that idea gave white men even more power to rule over the natives and exploit them financially.

With Mr. Kurtz on his deathbed near the end of the story, Marlow learns that Kurtz had another goal besides finding ivory for The Company. He also had been tasked by the “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs” to write a report for guidance on their future endeavors (Conrad 50). Kurtz writes in the report that “we whites... must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings – we approach them with a might as of a deity” (50). Kurtz continues the argument by stressing how much power this idea gives to the whites over the natives. He writes the report under the guise that he would be using that power for good, but the point is that unlimited power usually leads to corruption, as can be seen by what eventually happens to Kurtz. One can only assume that Kurtz’s position of power with the natives came about gradually. Being alone in the jungle with the natives for so long undoubtedly had an effect on his psyche that changed his perception of self. Hegel theorizes that “self-consciousness exists only in being acknowledged” (541). Kurtz was able to set up a master-slave relationship with the natives after going through the psychological process of certifying himself as the “essential [superior] being” in the situation (Hegel 541). The natives hurried this process by being in awe of his firework display, and Kurtz motivated the process with his perceived reputation as a charming prodigy. Marlow explains that Kurtz was the natives’ “spoiled and pampered favorite” (Conrad 48). The Russian tells Marlow that the native chiefs approach Kurtz on all fours, and “he had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance in his honor” (51). Kurtz used the master-slave relationship to set

himself up as a deity to the natives. The groups of natives that were camped around Kurtz's station obviously did not want him to leave, and Kurtz did not want to leave them either. Conrad does not specify exactly why Kurtz had been so adamant about staying at his station even though he had no supplies and was very ill. However, the reader can surmise that his motivations were influenced by his relationship with the group of natives around the station and their worship of him.

The idea of the white man as a deity was introduced earlier in the story when Marlow was discussing his predecessor, Fresleven. Fresleven had been killed by a native after an argument about a trade involving two black hens. When Marlow travels to collect Fresleven's remains, Conrad writes that "the supernatural being had not been touched" (10). The village at the location of Fresleven's death was completely abandoned because the natives were so afraid of the repercussions of killing him. Fresleven is the first man in Marlow's narrative that he describes as being changed by his time in Africa. Prior to his violent behavior in the hen transaction, Fresleven was known to be "the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs," but Marlow also mentions that he "had been a couple of years already out there" (Conrad 9). This is the first hint in Marlow's retelling of his adventure that refers to the absence of civilization having an effect on a person's psychological state. The doctor who examines Marlow before he sets out for Africa measures his head and asks him if he has any madness in his family. He also tells Marlow that the changes to a man "take place inside" and advises him to "avoid irritation" and keep calm as much as possible (12). In addition to the doctor's warning, Marlow is also told of a Dane who hanged himself because "the country was too much for him," but Marlow soon discovers that there are more to the psychological effects of isolation than anger problems and suicidal tendencies (15).

Marlow learns that one of the problems with isolation from civilization and removal from an ordered society is that some men will take advantage of the lack of oversight from law enforcers. Marlow overhears a conversation between the Manager and his uncle about killing someone, and the uncle says, “anything can be done in this country” (Conrad 33). Later, Marlow is told a story by the Russian about how Kurtz threatened to shoot him because he “had a fancy for it” and there was nothing to stop him from doing so (56). Marlow makes his case to his listeners that the loss of civilization and lack of societal expectations leads to loss of accountability, no fear of punishment, and eventually to a person’s loss of humanity (49). Conrad writes, “these little things make all the difference” in reference to the trappings of civilization. He continues, “when they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength” when you are “assaulted by the powers of darkness” (49). He ends by saying that some people are able to withstand the temptations of darkness, but some are not.

The absence of accountability for Kurtz encouraged his darker impulses and allowed him to be controlled by his baser instincts, such as greed. Kurtz’s reputation before his isolation at the inner station depicted him as “a prodigy” and an “emissary of pity” (Conrad 25). Unfortunately, his reputation and his obligations to the “International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs” did not stop him from participating in his own savage actions. Kaplan claims that Kurtz’s “belief in the idea of humanizing... leads to the most ruthless exploitation and most appalling idolatry of all, as Kurt turns himself, the emissary... into an object of worship” (Kaplan 325). A psychological analysis of Kurtz’s character reveals that he may have been initially motivated to collect large, profitable amounts of ivory in order to accumulate enough money to marry his Intended. Later in the story, when Marlow meets Kurtz’s Intended, Marlow learns that Kurtz had been “a pauper all his life” and that the Intended’s family disapproved of

him because he “wasn’t rich enough” (Conrad 75). Marlow infers that it was “poverty that drove [Kurtz] out there” (75). Marlow also learns that Kurtz may have intentionally built an exaggerated version of his interest in civilizing the natives in order to set himself up in a profitable position within The Company. While Kurtz was on his deathbed, Marlow comments that “the shade of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham” (68). During one of their conversations when Kurtz appeared to be in his right mind, Kurtz talked about gaining recognition by his superiors for his abilities by showing “the right motives” (68). Marlow interprets this revelation as a confession that Kurtz’s civilizing mission may have been nothing more than a scam to make himself appear noble to his employers.

Marlow’s discovery of the heads mounted on posts outside Kurtz’s station was the beginning of his disillusionment with Kurtz. Marlow had spent the entire narrative explaining how much Kurtz was adored and admired by most everyone he met. With the exception of the Manager, who was jealous of Kurtz, no one had anything bad to say about him. The uncanniness of Kurtz’s character had been built up by the adoring and mysterious references to him that permeated Marlow’s journey to meet Kurtz. Freud explains this element of the uncanny as “when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes” (835). Marlow had an image in his mind of who Kurtz was and wondered if he would ever actually get to meet the real man. His first glimpse of Kurtz only added to Marlow’s uncanny feelings because Kurtz appeared as a ghostly silhouette barely clinging to life. Conrad writes, “the eyes of that apparition shining darkly far in its bony head that nodded with grotesque jerks” (59). Immediately thereafter, Kurtz’s sheet falls from his body and reveals his skeletal body lying on the stretcher. Freud’s further definition of the uncanny is

“something which ought to have remained hidden, but has come to light” (833). The falling away of Kurtz’s sheet represents the falling away of the noble assumptions about his character and the complete revelation of the ugliness within him. After Kurtz is situated on the boat for the return journey, Marlow states that “both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of that soul satiated with primitive emotions” (Conrad 68). Kurtz’s illness had the uncanny effect of madness as he struggled with the primitive instincts brought to life by his isolation and long-term absence from civilization. Kurtz both loved and hated the primitive feelings he had awakened.

Kurtz’s death is a final message from the author about his feelings toward European excursions into Africa. Kurtz is the epitome of the worst-case scenario of what can happen to a civilized person who has selfish motives and is too long removed from the structured authority of civilization. Kurtz demonstrates how even the most civilized person can commit heinous crimes when all fear of punishment is removed and when unlimited power is realized. He is also representative of the effect of European imperialism on the African continent. His character demonstrates the lofty ideals of those who believed they could help the natives by civilizing them, but he ended up destroying native culture and causing more harm than good. Looking at *Heart of Darkness* from a psychological perspective illustrates how Conrad portrays the loss of human civility that occurs when man is removed from the confines of civilization.

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ENG 6090 Teaching Literature

19 July 2020

Lesson Plan: Teaching Argument and The Social Contract Using Sophocles' Antigone

This unit will cover the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) listed below.

ELAGSE11-12RL1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELAGSE11-12RI2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE11-12RL3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

ELAGSE11-12RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

ELAGSE11-12RL5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

ELAGSE11-12RL6: Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

ELAGSE11-12W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit will focus on Greek tragedy, specifically *Antigone*, written by Sophocles in approximately the year 441 BC. Students will learn about Greek theatre and the life of Sophocles. We will also review select elements of Greek mythology which are relevant to the story and the Oedipus myth prior to reading the main selection. We will also review argumentative elements from a previous unit on rhetoric in order to analyze speeches in the play. Our main focus for assessing comprehension of the material will be an essay at the completion of the unit. New material (in addition to the literary selection) will include study of the “Social Contract Theory.” Students will be expected to make connections between metaphorical events in the play and events that occur in real-life in order to gain a greater appreciation for the ways in which classic literature can remain relevant for hundreds, or in this case thousands, of years. Skills to be practiced in this unit include but are not limited to reading comprehension, speaking, text analysis, inferencing, argument analysis, rhetorical analysis, literary analysis, and application skills to include writing an essay that draws comparisons between literature and real life.

RATIONALE

This unit arises out of the need for educators, especially literature teachers, to make use of classic literature and demonstrate to students the importance of studying classic literature and the benefits of such study. The benefits of reading and studying classic literature will not be discussed here in their entirety but will be briefly analyzed inasmuch as is relevant to this unit. The choice of the text, *Antigone*, will demonstrate connections between this text and the study of Greek theatre, Greek mythology, structure of argument, rhetoric, politics, philosophy, social justice, and civil disobedience.

This unit will be taught to 12th grade students enrolled in a course titled “British Literature.” While this particular piece is not British in origin, the course allows some latitude for the inclusion of works from around the world when used in conjunction with teaching the required state standards. The background knowledge needed for this course is a combination of review of previously learned material along with some new information. The lesson is built upon prior knowledge of the structure of argument, knowledge of rhetorical analysis to include rhetorical fallacies, and knowledge learned in a preceding course concerning the basics of Greek mythology. The introduction of new material consists of the philosophy of the social contract theory, the Oedipus myth, and the idea of applying canonical literature to modern day events such as politics, social justice, and civil disobedience.

The students will learn about the philosophical theory of the social contract. Social contract theory is important to analyze this play because the student readers must understand Creon’s obligation as the new leader of Thebes to establish and maintain order. Students will discuss and analyze the structure of the government in Thebes and Creon’s obligations to make laws and make sure that his laws are followed. Students will discuss what benefits the citizens

received in exchange for recognizing Creon's authority and following his leadership. This will lead into a discussion of Antigone's choice of civil disobedience when she did not agree with Creon's government decree. Students will discuss whether Creon's pardon of Antigone's actions could have led to anarchy and his loss of control over the citizens of Thebes and whether there was any real threat to Creon's power according to the social contract theory.

By the time my students have reached 12th grade, they will have been studying the structure of argument for several years. They will have analyzed the arguments of others and constructed their own argument essays and given argumentative presentations in class, even participating in argumentative debates. They will be fully versed in the terminology of claims, counterclaims, evidence, and support. They will have studied the rhetorical triangle and have learned how to recognize and use logos, pathos, and ethos. They will have learned about a variety of rhetorical fallacies such as either/or fallacies, the slippery slope, and others. My intention is not to repeat these lessons, but to use this prior knowledge to look at argumentation from a different perspective using the text *Antigone*.

In traditional teaching of argument, students are not graded on whether they convinced the audience to see things in a new light or whether they were successful in changing opinions held by audience members. Student argument essays are graded on whether they follow the teacher's instructions on how to construct the essay, having the proper number of claims backed up by documented evidence, and addressing the counter claims sufficiently and with proper documentation. Because of the way argument construction is taught in high school, "it is all too easy for students to see arguments as simply cynical exercises that never really intend to persuade another but that operate only as guises from which to attack opponents and defend positions that are not seriously open to question" (Kastely 222). Students know that real-life

arguments outside the classroom look nothing like an argumentative essay. This knowledge leads them to believe that the lessons learned in school about argumentation do not matter in the real world. Students know that in order to receive an “A” on an argumentative essay, all they have to do is adhere to the correct form, but making an “A” on the assignment has nothing to do with how many people were convinced by the argument.

In this lesson, students will analyze the argumentative statements and speeches of Antigone, Creon, Haemon, and Tiresias. Students will identify the structure, claims, and rhetorical techniques of these main players. In addition, students will analyze and discuss the effectiveness of each character’s arguments. Students will look at the form, but they will be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of the argument based on the response of the characters’ respective opponents and not on whether the speakers used the appropriate forms and rhetorical strategies. According to Kastely, “What makes *Antigone* a productive [text for study] is that it explores the failure of civic discourse” (224). Students will recognize that even though all of these players had much to say, and many reasons for their actions, the breakdown of communication and failure to be open to discussion is what ultimately led to the tragic events and breakdown of order in the play.

Ideally, the discussion of the rhetoric of various characters in the play should reveal that the tragedy occurred because Creon and Antigone were both closed to engaging in a true argumentative debate. Neither of them was willing to hear what the other had to say. As the teacher, I will guide students toward this revelation and hope that they can discover it on their own without my having to tell them outright. Kastely explains that an “essential [element of] argument is the capacity to admit [someone with differing opinions] into one’s world, to acknowledge a discourse that is other than one’s own” (230). This will lead to a discussion of

how a person must be willing to listen, in addition to being able to explain his or her own position, when engaging in a real-life argument. In order to successfully participate in an argument, a person must be willing to reexamine his or her own beliefs and values.

The culminating assignment for this unit will be for students to write an essay applying lessons learned in this unit to a real-life situation. Students will participate in brainstorming and group discussion sessions in order to generate as many original ideas as possible for the essays. Some teacher-suggested topics to explore will include discussion of the following essential questions:

- How did the public respond to the stay-at-home orders resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic?
- How did the public respond to advice from the CDC regarding mask-wearing?
- How do these orders affect different groups of people, both positively and negatively?
- Are people more likely to respect the safety of others or be concerned about personal freedom?

Students may also choose to analyze an instance of perceived abuse by government officials, for instance the mistreatment and death of George Floyd in Minnesota. As the teacher, I will encourage students to research this type of incident and look at how the public and the governing bodies (both local and federal) have responded to these incidents, and particularly how the government has responded to public outcry and civil disobedience. Students will draw parallels between these events and Antigone's outrage at Creon's decree that Polynices would not be given proper burial. Students may also bring up instances of conflict between religious beliefs and political directives, or the separation of church and state with corresponding conflicts over differing values between religious groups and government edicts. An accompanying discussion

may also be had about Ismene's unwillingness to disobey laws even when she knew the law was unjust. Students may recognize Ismene's attitude, or fear of the government, in people who stand by and do nothing while injustices occur. My hope here is to encourage an authentic debate amongst the students on when it is or is not okay to engage in civil disobedience and where the separation exists between civil disobedience and anarchy. This discussion about the power of the government will circle back to the pre-reading videos for a look a look at how social contract theory is demonstrated in the relationship between Creon and his subjects. Creon's obligation is to maintain order, while his subjects are expected to follow his rules in exchange for his fair governing practices.

Another topic for analysis could be to look at Creon as an example of how not to run a government. Cowell-Meyers points out that "as an instruction book for leaders, *Antigone* is more of a study of what *not* to do" (347). A student essay could analyze Creon's errors in being inflexible and refusing to take advice from others and make comparisons with modern political leaders who refuse to negotiate and make compromises with those who hold differing beliefs and values than their own.

DAILY LESSONS – (50-minute classes)

DAYS 1-2 – Students will complete a research assignment and create a slideshow that covers the background information for *Antigone*. Topics to be covered are the history of Greek theatre, the Greek amphitheater (includes photos), performers in Greek theatre, the chorus, masks, structure of Greek theatre, Aristotle’s view of tragedy, biography of Sophocles, and the myth/background info of Oedipus, including the family tree of Oedipus, and how it relates to the plot of *Antigone*.

DAYS 3-4 – Students will watch three YouTube videos on the topic of “Social Contract Theory” followed by discussion and a comprehension analysis quiz. Next, students will be assigned into heterogeneous ability groups to analyze and discuss social contracts as applicable to real-life. Each group will be responsible for identifying three forms of social contract that they engage in on a daily basis (examples: waiting in line for lunch in a patient and orderly manner, coming to class when the bell rings, raising a hand to speak, rule-following, etc.)

DAY 5 – Students will read with a partner the first scene, (for my purposes, I am calling the prologue the first scene) the conversation between Antigone and Ismene. Students will answer the discussion questions and generate a preliminary character analysis of each sister based on the conversation between them focusing on the priorities, values, and motives of each sister and each sister’s actions.

DAY 6 – Class will read scene 2 together aloud. Parts will be assigned prior to whole group reading utilizing class volunteers to portray each of the characters. Class will pre-read silently to preview the material for 10 minutes so that the players will have a chance to look over their lines

and ask questions as needed about vocabulary in the selection to be read aloud. After reading, students will get with their seat partner to discuss and analyze the character, values, and motives of Creon and answer the discussion questions for scene 2.

DAY 7 – Scene 3 will be read in class using the same strategy as the previous day. Students will answer and discuss the questions provided for scene 3. Students will analyze the concerns of the soldier, as well as the conversation between Creon, Antigone, and Ismene. Students will discuss Creon’s attitude toward Antigone, Creon’s placing blame on Ismene, Ismene’s changed attitude toward her sister’s actions, and Antigone’s reaction to Ismene attempting to share in her punishment.

DAY 8 – Read Scene 4 – Analysis of this scene will focus on the rhetorical strategies of Haemon and Creon’s (rhetorical) response. Students will work with a heterogeneous group of 3 classmates to complete rhetorical analysis questions to turn in for a daily grade. Students will analyze rhetorical appeals, strategies, and fallacies used by the speakers.

DAY 9 – Scenes 5 & 6 – Students will read these scenes together in groups of 5-6 students. Topics of discussion will include Creon’s refusal to listen to Antigone’s argument and Creon’s reaction to Tiresias’ warnings.

DAY 10 & 11 – Scene 7 – Tragic Flaws and Tragic Heroes - Prep for literature circles and debate – Students will choose a stance and gather supporting evidence to argue who is the tragic hero, and who has tragic flaws, Antigone or Creon? Students will then be divided into two teams.

One team will argue that Antigone was right to do what she did, and that Creon was wrong and should have given in to Antigone. The other team will argue that Creon had supreme authority and that Antigone was wrong to go against her ruler and the social contract.

DAYS 12-15 – Students will divide into heterogeneous ability groups of four. Each group will come up with a combined brainstorming list of modern situations that are similar in idea to Antigone’s situation of challenging the government and the social contract. After each group shares ideas with the whole class, each student will decide on a topic for a 5-paragraph essay. Students will be assigned a 5-paragraph essay in which they will compare a modern situation of their choice to the situation faced by Antigone in the reading selection.

VIDEO LINKS FOR STUDENT VIEWING

Ethics Defined: Social Contract Theory <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UY3aMtMkoEU>

Contractarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #37 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Co6pNvd9mc>

Social Contract Theories <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxLLlxuY3gg>

Discussion Questions for Scene 1:

1. What does Antigone ask Ismene to help her do? *Bury their brother*
2. How does Ismene respond to Antigone's request? *She says no.*
3. How does Ismene justify her response to Antigone? *Ismene is afraid to go against Creon and face the punishment of death.*

Discussion Questions for Scene 2:

1. What news does the Sentinel bring to Creon? *Someone has "buried" Polynices.*
2. What does the Sentinel fear will happen to him for bringing this news? *The messenger (himself) will be blamed and punished for the deed due to Creon's anger at being disobeyed.*
3. Is Creon right or wrong for threatening the Sentinel? Why does Creon hold the Sentinel responsible for the news he carries? *Answers will vary.*

Discussion Questions for Scene 3:

1. How does Creon react to Antigone being brought in as the offender? *He is caught off-guard in disbelief, then becomes steadfast in his commitment to punish her.*
2. How does Antigone answer Creon as to why she disobeyed his orders? *She says that his rules do not overrule those of the gods and the afterlife.*
3. How has Ismene's attitude toward events changed in this scene? *Ismene has decided to stand with her sister and share her punishment.*
4. How does Antigone react to her sister's change of heart? *Antigone declines Ismene's offer to share her death sentence.*

Discussion Questions and Rhetorical Analysis for Scene 4: (These questions will be turned in with written answers.)

1. What rhetorical strategies or fallacies does Creon employ in his greeting to Haemon?
Creon uses a loaded/leading question followed by an either/or fallacy.
2. How does Haemon respond to Creon's greeting statements and questions? *Haemon flatters Creon and tells him what he wants to hear, with strings attached.*
3. How does Creon justify his decision regarding Antigone's fate? *He says that Haemon is doing the right thing by siding with him against Antigone. He says that Antigone deserves her fate for disobeying his laws. He says that all citizens must obey the law whether they agree or not. He believes his word is the law and no one is allowed to question him.*
4. Which part(s) of Creon's speech coincides with the Social Contract Theory? *Creon says that citizens must comply with just edicts as well as unjust ones, whether they agree or not.*
5. Following Creon's speech, Haemon also makes a long statement. Explain his strategies in attempting to convince Creon to reverse his judgement concerning Antigone.
 - a. *Flattery – Appeal to ethics, Creon's credibility*
 - b. *Appeal to logic, the citizens are sympathetic with Antigone.*
 - c. *Analogies about trees bending and a boat sailing with the rope and sail taut. A comparison with Creon's (un)willingness to be flexible in his judgements*
 - d. *He accuses Creon of reacting out of anger and asks him to show mercy (pathos).*
6. How does Creon discredit/rebuke Haemon's argument in favor of showing mercy to Antigone?
 - a. *He says that Haemon is a young man, not as wise as his older self.*

- b. *He says that he cannot show mercy to rebels who go against his authority because it would weaken his credibility as ruler.*
- c. *He says that if he shows mercy to her, he must show mercy to all (slippery slope fallacy).*
- d. *He claims that his edicts are divine and that he speaks on behalf of the gods (that the gods back up his decisions).*

Discussion Question for Scene 5

1. Who is responsible for Antigone's fate? Provide evidence from the text. *Answers will vary. Students may say Antigone, Creon, the gods, or Oedipus.*

Discussion Question for Scene 6

1. What advice/counsel does Tiresias give to Creon? *He says that Creon's decree to leave Polynices unburied has poisoned the community, and the gods are unhappy with Thebes. He advises Creon to bury Polynices and release Antigone. He warns Creon that the consequences of his actions will bring sorrow for Creon and Thebes.*
2. Creon claims to have always listened to the seer and trusted his advice, but how does Creon react to the current advice from Tiresias? *Creon refuses to acknowledge that he has done anything wrong. (stubbornness)*
3. Why does Creon finally relent at the end of Scene 6? *A senator advises him that the seer has never been wrong, and he fears the anger of the gods. Creon begrudgingly agrees to release Antigone and bury Polynices.*

Discussion Questions for Scene 7

1. What news does the messenger bring? *Haemon has killed himself.*
2. What does Eurydice do after hearing this news? *She also commits suicide.*

Final Thoughts – The Tragedy

1. Who is the protagonist of the play? Who is the Antagonist (if there is one)? Why is the play called *Antigone*, and not *Creon*? *Answers will vary.*
2. Which character(s) in this play have tragic flaw(s)? *Creon. Antigone. Answers will vary.*
3. Is there a hero in the play? Why or why not? *Answers will vary.*

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- Sophocles. “Antigone.” *The Internet Classics Archive* David C. Stevenson, Web Atomics, 2011, classics.mit.edu/Sophocles/antigone.html.

Women's Rights and Racism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Creator: Daphne Wilkins

This unit will cover the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) listed below.

ELAGSE11-12RL1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELAGSE11-12RI2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

ELAGSE11-12RL3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

ELAGSE11-12RI3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

ELAGSE11-12RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

ELAGSE11-12RI4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text

ELAGSE11-12RL5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

ELAGSE11-12RI5: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

ELAGSE11-12RL6: Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

ELAGSE11-12RI6: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

ELAGSE11-12RI8: Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy.

ELAGSE11-12RI9: Analyze foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance.

ELAGSE11-12W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

ELAGSE11-12W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

This unit will combine literature with historic speeches in order to take an analytical look at the issues of women's rights and racism in the time period of 1850-1900. First, students will analyze the rhetorical strategies used by Sojourner Truth and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Next, students will analyze themes and literary devices used in Kate Chopin's short stories, "Story of an Hour" and "Desiree's Baby." Students will analyze how the author's life experiences and the political issues of the time influenced Chopin's stories. This unit will require students to analyze and synthesize information in order to make connections between the social issues addressed in the speeches, the cultural influences affecting the author, and the problems encountered by the characters in Chopin's stories.

Both of the stories by Kate Chopin used in this unit highlight the plight of women in the late nineteenth century. The female protagonists in the stories are both dependent on a man for their care and upkeep. Although Chopin did not speak outright in support of women's rights, many of her stories support the desires for freedom for the women, especially the married

women, of that time period. Literary critic Robert C Evans states, “The most obvious social context for Chopin’s story [“The Story of an Hour”] is the growing emphasis, in the nineteenth century, on various forms of emancipation for women” (195). The second story in this unit, “Desiree’s Baby,” adds the issue of slavery and racism into the mix. This seems wholly appropriate considering the historical relationship between abolition and women’s suffrage.

History shows that women were on the forefront of the abolition movement long before women’s suffrage came into the spotlight. Sojourner Truth was a prominent figure in the fight for equal rights for blacks and particularly black women. Students will make connections in this unit between the racial issues in “Desiree’s Baby” and the statements made in Truth’s speech “Ain’t I a Woman?” Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s speeches also focused on the rights of women, particularly married women such as Desiree who were trapped in emotionally abusive relationships. Stanton spoke out against emotional domination by men against their wives at the Seneca Falls Women’s Rally in 1848 (Ahmetpahić and Kahrić 28). In this unit, students will analyze how the influence of women’s rights activists could have hypothetically affected the outcomes of both female protagonists from Chopin’s stories to rewrite the tragic endings suffered at the end of both of the Chopin stories.

This unit is a follow-up to a rhetoric unit from earlier in the school year that required students to analyze rhetorical strategies, author’s purpose, and author’s tone in Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address and Patrick Henry’s Address to the Virginia State Assembly. Students will use the skills learned in that previous unit and combine those skills with literary analysis. Students will also refer back to notes and handouts in their binders for help with answering some of the questions that deal with rhetoric and tone, as well as notes they already have concerning literary devices.

This unit will be taught to three different classes of American Literature 11th grade students that range from honor level students to struggling learners. Most accommodations will be tailored to specific student need as the unit progresses using formative assessments. The classes meet for 50 minutes per day, five days a week. The lesson plan will be broken down by activities, with most activities taking more than one day. The goal will be to complete the unit in 2 weeks; however, different classes may work at different speeds. The assessments for this unit will be writing based. There will also be a larger standards-based assessment that will follow this lesson and cover a previous lesson on argumentative writing as well. The unit district assessment is through an online assessment program, USATestPrep.com, and will not be shown here in the lesson plan. The rubrics used to grade the writing assignment(s) will be the same rubrics used on the end of course test and are designed by the state.

The analysis and discussion questions in this unit are authored by me (the teacher) and are original questions that I came up with based on my prior knowledge and the knowledge I gained from taking this class (Women's Rhetoric). This lesson is entirely original except for the speeches, stories, and videos used.

INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

Task 1: Students will watch a short video about Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Students will then read an edited version of Stanton's speech, "On Divorce." Students will read the speech aloud with a partner. While reading, they will stop after each paragraph to write a one sentence summary (of each paragraph). Students will also annotate their individual copies of the speech by circling unknown words and highlighting sentences they need help understanding. Students will also identify rhetorical devices, strategies, and appeals on the annotated copy. Last, students will complete the rhetorical analysis chart on the handout shown in the materials section with a partner and teacher assistance as needed. Class discussion will follow.

Task 2: Students will watch a bio video and a video of a reading of Sojourner Truth's speech. After watching, they will discuss the speech first with a partner and then as a whole class. Next, students will receive a handout of the speech with the follow-up questions. Students will answer the questions with a partner and teacher assistance as needed.

Task 3: Students will watch bio videos of Kate Chopin. I will stop the videos as needed to discuss and so that students can write down important details about Chopin's life that may have influenced her writing. Next, students will individually read and annotate a copy of "Story of an Hour" by Chopin. Annotation instructions will include circling unknown vocabulary words and identifying figurative language: imagery, metaphors, simile, and personification. A class discussion will cover the psychological changes to the main character throughout the story and the irony at the end of the story. Last, students will answer the follow-up questions on the

included handout individually or with peer assistance as needed. We will end with a class discussion about the literary devices found and the answers to the questions.

Task 4: Students will receive a copy of “Desiree’s Baby” by Kate Chopin. We will read the story together aloud as a whole class with teacher and students taking turns reading using the popcorn method. Next students will answer the follow-up questions with a partner and teacher assistance as needed. We will go over the questions together as a class using an app on my smart device to call on students randomly. We will also have open discussion about student feelings and opinions about the story.

Task 5: After a recap discussion of the speeches and stories, students will choose between two narrative prompts:

Prompt one: Students will rewrite the ending to “Desiree’s Baby” starting at the part when Armand starts to treat Desiree differently because he noticed the baby is developing features that he associates with African American slaves.

This new ending will consider the following changes to the background story:

- Assume that prior to becoming pregnant with the baby, Desiree had visited family members up north where she had the opportunity to hear Sojourner Truth give a public speech on the topic of slavery and racism.
- Assume that Desiree has already found the letter from Armand’s mother admitting to her African heritage. Rewrite the ending to the story.

Prompt two: Students will rewrite the ending to “Story of an Hour” starting at the part when Mrs. Mallard’s sister begs her to open the bedroom door.

This new ending will consider the following changes to the background story:

- Assume that prior to the events occurring in the story, Mrs. Mallard had the opportunity to hear one of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's speeches about women's rights. Rewrite the ending to the story.

Video Links:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Bio

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_UTaecQMso

Sojourner Truth Bio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THcghPfdvQ8>

Sojourner Truth Speech

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V090_BhJw3Y

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry_i8w2rdQY

Kate Chopin Bio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TDXOhOzIG0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQf4yCPdaTk>

Text Links:

“Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

https://my.hrw.com/support/hos/hostpdf/host_text_219.pdf

“Desiree’s Baby” by Kate Chopin

<https://www.katechopin.org/pdfs/desirees-baby.pdf>

“Ain’t I a Woman” by Sojourner Truth

https://thehermitage.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Sojourner-Truth_Aint-I-a-Woman_1851.pdf

“Address to the Legislature of the State of New York, 1854” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton

<https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/address-to-the-new-york-legislature-1854.htm>

“Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin

Author’s Purpose

Answer the following response questions in reference to the story.

1. What is Mrs. Mallard’s first name? When is this revealed? Why do you think Chopin waited until this point in the story to reveal the first name of the main character?
2. Look at the image on the board of a male and female set of mallard ducks. Why do you think Chopin chose to give this couple the surname of Mallard?
3. Refer to the paragraph that begins, “She could see in the open square...” Explain the imagery used in this paragraph and what that imagery may symbolize for Mrs. Mallard.
4. In the next paragraph Chopin writes, “the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.” Why type of figurative language is used here (literary device)?
5. Referring to the same passage as #4, why do you think Chopin chose to have Mrs. Mallard’s window face the west instead of the east? (symbolism) Explain how this could be foreshadowing.
6. Explain how the last lines of the story are ironic and whether it is situational or dramatic.

BONUS: What real-life event from Kate Chopin’s life also occurs in this story?

“Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin **TEACHER KEY**

Author’s Purpose

Answer the following response questions in reference to the story.

1. What is Mrs. Mallard’s first name? When is this revealed? Why do you think Chopin waited until this point in the story to reveal the first name of the main character?

Mrs. Mallard’s first name, Louise, is revealed when her sister calls to her through the bedroom door. Her first name is revealed after she has accepted her freedom as an individual person, separate from her husband.

2. Look at the image on the board of a male and female set of mallard ducks. Why do you think Chopin chose to give this couple the surname of Mallard?

Teacher will project image on the white board. The male mallard is colorful while the female is plain and blends into the background. This is symbolic of Mrs. Mallard’s loss of identify as a married woman. The husband is represented by the colorful duck because he is the head of the household.

3. Refer to the paragraph that begins, “She could see in the open square...” Explain the imagery used in this paragraph and what that imagery may symbolize for Mrs. Mallard.

The beautiful spring scene is symbolic of a new life for Mrs. Mallard.

4. In the next paragraph Chopin writes, “the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.” Why type of figurative language is used here (literary device)?

personification

5. Referring to the same passage as #4, why do you think Chopin chose to have Mrs. Mallard’s window face the west instead of the east? (symbolism) Explain how this could be foreshadowing. The east symbolizes new life with the sunrise while the west symbolizes death with the sunset. This is foreshadowing because Mrs. Mallard is looking forward to a new life, but death comes to her instead.

6. Explain how the last lines of the story are ironic and whether it is situational or dramatic.

Answers may vary.

Dramatic irony because the ending is opposite of what is expected, or situational irony because the doctors say she died from joy because she did not die from joy. However, the doctors don’t know that, only the audience.

BONUS: What real-life event from Kate Chopin’s life also occurs in this story? Train accident

“Desiree’s Baby” by Kate Chopin

1. What is Chopin’s purpose in writing this story? Which two controversial topics of that time-period are being addressed?
2. Where does this story take place? How do you know?
3. Compare and contrast Armand with his father; what assumption can you make about their personalities? (infer)
4. What do you think Armand’s mother would say to him about his treatment of Desiree?
5. What can you infer about the character “La Blanche” that is briefly mentioned in the story?
6. Compare and contrast this story with “Story of an Hour.”

“Desiree’s Baby” by Kate Chopin **TEACHER KEY**

1. What is Chopin’s purpose in writing this story? Which two controversial topics of that time-period are being addressed?

Rights of married women and slavery/racism – Her purpose is to draw attention to these issues and show how they are problems in society.

2. Where does this story take place? How do you know?

Answers may vary - Louisiana Bayou – mention of the bayou – French language and French names – Louisiana is known to have a large French population – In the south on a plantation that owns slaves

3. Compare and contrast Armand with his father; what assumption can you make about their personalities? (infer)

The story hints that Armand was not as easy going as his father. One can infer that Armand’s father was more open minded because he knowingly married a woman of mixed race.

4. What do you think Armand’s mother would say to him about his treatment of Desiree?

Answer may vary. She would feel sadness, anger, disappointment. She would chastise him.

5. What can you infer about the character “La Blanche” that is briefly mentioned in the story?

La Blanche is a light-skinned slave. La Blanche is lighter skinned than Armand.

EXTEND: Armand spends time at La Blanche’s cabin, so this may insinuate that the quadroon boy, La Blanche’s son, may actually also be Armand’s son.

6. Compare and contrast this story with “Story of an Hour.”

Answer will vary

Sojourner Truth – Rhetorical Analysis

After reading the speech and watching the video, answer the questions below with your partner. We will discuss afterward with the whole class.

1. Who is the speaker, and what can you infer about her based on this speech?
2. What is the primary rhetorical strategy used in this speech? Is it effective?
3. What is the primary allusion used in the speech, and what appeal does this create? Is it effective?
4. Who is she addressing in the speech? Who is her secondary audience?
5. What is the purpose of her speech?
6. Explain what she means when she says, “Where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter.”
7. Explain the analogy about the pint and the quart.

Sojourner Truth – Rhetorical Analysis **TEACHER KEY**

After reading the speech and watching the video, answer the questions below with your partner. We will discuss afterward with the whole class.

1. Who is the speaker, and what can you infer about her based on this speech?

A black woman who is a former slave. She is interested in equal rights for black women and for voting rights for all women.

2. What is the primary rhetorical strategy used in this speech? Is it effective?

Answers may vary

Rhetorical questions and Biblical Allusions

3. What is the primary allusion used in the speech, and what appeal does this create? Is it effective?

Biblical Allusion – Appeal to authority (God) (Ethos)

4. Who is she addressing in the speech? Who is her secondary audience?

A convention on women’s rights including some men at the meeting who did not agree that women should vote.

Anyone else who might hear about the speech.

5. What is the purpose of her speech? **To argue that black women should be included and deserve the right to vote the same as white women.**

6. Explain what she means when she says, “Where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter.”

There is so much talk, commotion, noise, uproar on the issue of women’s rights, so there must be something valid about the claim.

7. Explain the analogy about the pint and the quart.

Men at the convention say that women do not have the same amount of intelligence as men. Truth argues that as an irrelevant point, not whether or not it is true. She says it does not matter; women still deserve their rights.

Rhetorical Analysis – Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Instructions: Fill out the chart on the back of this page by answering the questions below.

Speaker	The communicator who produced the work. Consider: what has gotten under the communicator's skin? What can you infer about his or her background? Is he or she credible and trustworthy?
Occasion	The time, place, context, and/or current situation that prompted the work. Consider: is the work in response to a specific event or person?
Audience	The group of readers to whom the work is directed. Generally, there are a primary and secondary audience; the primary audience is the particular individual or group the writer is addressing, while the secondary audience is the individual or group other than the intended audience who will also read the piece. Consider: what assumptions can you make about the audience in terms of gender, socio-economic status, education, beliefs, etc.?
Purpose	The reason why the work was created. Consider: is the work meant to inform, persuade, or explain? What does the writer want the reader/listener to do?
Subject	The general topic, content, and ideas contained in the text. Consider: how has the subject been presented? Is the subject explicitly stated or is it implied?
Tone	The speaker's attitude. Consider: what striking uses of diction, syntax, details, and imagery help convey the speaker's attitude?

Rhetorical Analysis – Elizabeth Cady Stanton **TEACHER KEY**

Instructions: Fill in the chart below with answers to the questions on the back of this paper. You may use your notebook for definitions and explanations of the rhetorical terms.

Speaker	<p>Elizabeth Cady Stanton She is a well-known speaker for women's rights. She has a good reputation and is credible.</p>
Occasion	<p>She is addressing the all-male legislature in New York State on the topic of married women's rights and the right to a divorce.</p>
Audience	<p>The all-male legislature and anyone present that day. Secondary: anyone who would read the speech later or hear about it. You can assume they do not agree with her beliefs, and she is attempting to convince them.</p>
Purpose	<p>To educate them about the lack of rights for married women and all the things women suffer from due to those lack of rights. To persuade them to change the laws regarding divorce to allow women to divorce their husbands and keep their property and children.</p>
Subject	<p>Divorce and women's limited legal status.</p>
Tone	<p>Tone - Assertive, passionate, confident, determined Syntax - repetition and parallel sentence structures, rhetorical questions, some short sentences, some long sentences with lists of examples. Diction - some language is concrete, but some language is abstract and figurative - descriptive with examples of imagery</p>

Analysis Questions – Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Instructions: Refer to your binder for notes from our previous rhetoric lesson concerning rhetorical devices, rhetorical strategies, and rhetorical appeals (under the umbrella of logos, pathos, ethos), diction, syntax, and tone.

1. Paragraph 1: Explain the analogy. Who is the tyrant, Custom? How has his scepter been broken?
2. Paragraph 2: Refer to the phrase: “legal disabilities under which we labor?” What does this phrase mean, and how is the speaker’s diction (word choice) meant to be persuasive?
3. Paragraph 3: Stanton begins paragraph 3 with an argument that is similar to the argument brought against England prior to the American Revolution. Explain the similarities. What appeal is Stanton using here? Is it effective?
4. Paraphrase what Stanton is saying in paragraph 4.
5. Explain the appeal used in paragraph 5. Is it effective?
6. Paraphrase Stanton’s argument in paragraph 6.
7. What appeal is used toward the end of paragraph 6. Explain and state its effectiveness.
8. Identify 3 examples of alliteration in paragraph 7.
9. Which counterclaim does Stanton address in paragraph 8?

10. What rhetorical devices or strategies does Stanton use to refute (give her rebuttal) the counterclaim from paragraph 8 in paragraphs 9 and 10?

11. Paraphrase paragraph 11. Explain the last sentence in detail.

Analysis Questions – Elizabeth Cady Stanton **TEACHER KEY**

Instructions: Refer to your binder for notes from our previous rhetoric lesson concerning rhetorical devices, rhetorical strategies, and rhetorical appeals (under the umbrella of logos, pathos, ethos), diction, syntax, and tone.

1. Paragraph 1: Explain the analogy. Who is the tyrant, Custom? How has his scepter been broken? Stanton is referring to the removal of old laws and replacement with modern ideas, such as the abolishment of slavery in NY in 1827. His scepter is broken because old ways of thinking are falling out of favor for more modern laws and beliefs. She says that now woman has come to get her rights the same as the slaves are getting theirs.

2. Paragraph 2: Refer to the phrase: “legal disabilities under which we labor?” What does this phrase mean, and how is the speaker’s diction (word choice) meant to be persuasive?

Stanton words her argument in a way that emphasizes the ill effects of the current laws and stresses the fact that women are working, productive members of society.

3. Paragraph 3: Stanton begins paragraph 3 with an argument that is similar to the argument brought against England prior to the American Revolution. Explain the similarities. What appeal is Stanton using here? Is it effective? Logos – appeal to logic – Stanton uses the law to point out that women are not represented and not allowed to vote even though they pay taxes and do everything else that men do as citizens. This is similar to the colonists’ argument against the King concerning taxation without representation. Stanton says that women are not bound by laws they have not agreed to or helped create.

4. Paraphrase what Stanton is saying in paragraph 4. The men in government are being asked to explain why/how they have the authority to rule over the women when they have not been elected by the women.

5. Explain the appeal used in paragraph 5. Is it effective? Appeal to logic, appeal to common sense – logos – Stanton logically explains that men expect to be judged by a jury of their peers, and women expect the same thing.

6. Paraphrase Stanton’s argument in paragraph 6.

Summary of the wrongs suffered by the wife of an abusive husband.

7. What appeal is used toward the end of paragraph 6. Explain and state its effectiveness.

Pathos – appeal to sympathy – The audience is expected to feel pity for the women and children who are victims of abusive men.

8. Identify 3 examples of alliteration in paragraph 7. What do women want, could complain, sires and sons, fought for freedom, tramping all tyranny, waiting world

9. Which counterclaim does Stanton address in paragraph 8? The counter claim is that Stanton only represents “a few sour, disappointed old maids and childless women.”

10. What rhetorical devices or strategies does Stanton use to refute (give her rebuttal) the counterclaim from paragraph 8 in paragraphs 9 and 10?

She lists the activities of idle men and says that women support these men because they have to. She then states that these women should have control of their own money. Appeal to logic, appeal to anger, sympathy. Rhetorical questions. Loaded language – “beastly drunkard” “gross companionship”

11. Paraphrase paragraph 11. Explain the last sentence in detail.

Stanton continues to list other classes of women, both working and those in poverty. She ends with a reference to upper class women “a small class of fashionable butterflies” who may not need help right now, but eventually will and will have to rely on someone else to come asking for what is rightfully theirs.

Works Cited

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