

**Wise Woman Project**

What is the assignment?

Over the course of the semester, we studied Jane Addams’ “Breadgivers” and “Cassandra” speeches. According to Addams’ “Cassandra” essay, a wise woman is a woman who is able to address many different types of audiences effectively. She is one who uses her rhetorical prowess to promote change in society (39). I challenged students to come up with their own definition of a wise woman. I asked them to think about what qualities they admire or respect in women. What makes a woman a good role model? What a makes a woman a positive force for change? Once they have developed their definition, they were asked to provide an example of a woman today who seems to fit their definition. This woman might be an author, a musician, a spokeswoman, a politician, a teacher, or even a neighbor or friend. They then created a 2:30-3:00 minute video incorporating their definition with visual support for their argument.

Steps to success:

1. Create a definition of a wise woman.
2. Come up with an example of a woman who matches your definition
3. Provide visual evidence of this woman and what makes her wise.

**Goals Met:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how literature also constructs human cultures.

In class we discuss how literature, film, and other forms of mass consumed or culturally produced texts shape our perceptions of women whether positively or negatively. We have a unit over definitions of women and their texts in which we discuss how women define themselves and how they are defined by others. We look specifically at novels and short stories like *The Awakening, Their Eyes were Watching God, Bastard out of Carolina, Women of Brewster Place, “*The Shawl,” “Never Marry a Mexican,” “The Rules of the Game*,”* etc. to see how characters within the novels are struggling with their identities. Students also read the essays and the speeches of such women as Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Douglas, Audre Lorde, Sharon Rainer, and Jane Addams to see how these women hope to change society’s perception of women. Finally, they watch *Miss Representation* in order to see how the media has portrayed women.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of literature as it impacts and/or reflects society and the individual

After watching and reading these texts, we discuss how the women are both products of their time and their societies and initiators of change within their societies. By creating our own definitions of a “wise woman” we are participating in expanding how women can and should be perceived by society.

Interact with the text culturally and communally through various mediums: blogs, Infographics, and Youtube.

Our definitions of “Wise Women” are an extension of our class discussions of the texts and an expansion of the ideas the authors have presented about women within their texts. By creating the video, we are becoming authors of our own text and contributing to the culture by making our definitions public to the class, the blogging community, and potentially to viewers of Youtube.