



Japanese Ghosts, Demons, and Haunted Spaces

Curriculum Unit 05.01.09
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Rationale

Japan is cool. Students love its animated cartoons, are intrigued by its stark differences from American culture, and are curious about its history. They seek Japanese electronics with zeal and have even fallen in love with their card games (Yu-Gi-Oh). However, students know very little else about this island country that has been, at different times in its history, the victim of our gunboat diplomacy, our most enthusiastic fan, our enemy, our outpost, number two trading partner, our ally, and our competitor. Now, Japanese popular culture has more entrée with American audiences than at any time in its history. In fact, this author believes that Japan may be the one nation with which American youth culture has a pop culture trade deficit: Japan seems to have little need for our television and children's literature, while we are voraciously consuming theirs. All of these elements combine into a grandiose "teachable moment" for prospective teachers of world literature.

Overview

Summary

In order to teach students in my 10th grade EnglishWorld Literaturecourse about this fascinating country and culture, I am adopting a strategy based on the teaching of narrative through film. By using selected live-action and animated films, I will be able to guide students through an exploration of essential questions about Japan and its culture that will culminate in a project that displays students' understanding of the ways in which Japanese narratives work as stories and as vehicles through which cultural messages are transmitted.

One of the most important tasks a high school English teacher faces is to convince students that texts are crafted, not just written. In order to help students internalize this lesson and, as a result, to enable them to analyze the quality of an author's craft, one must teach them how the elements of a narrative are manipulated. At Wilbur Cross high school, students often come to me in tenth grade without an understanding of *author's craft*. Students are still looking at stories as existing as if they were born, not made, and are looking at the plot as a series of actions, not necessarily as the interplay of all plot elements.

Because of the pressure placed on students to internalize an understanding of author's craft before the CAPT exam, 10th grade English classes are indeed a make-or-break moment for students in this regard. Fortunately, there are methodologies that can help students discover the ways in which authors create texts.

Another important aspect of storytelling that students must recognize is that narrative forms are culturally situated: each culture tells stories in a way that develops along with the culture itself. By examining the culture of a text, readers can compare and contrast their own culture's symbolic meanings with those of the culture of origin. In our case, by looking at the ways that Japanese storytellers use beliefs about space and place in their culture, we hope to engender an appreciation for Japanese perspectives on the natural environment as a setting for stories.

Unfortunately, telling students that we are going to study the *where, when, and feel* of stories isn't usually persuasive in and of itself. Students, though, do love the supernatural. Japanese cultural history lends itself easily to a study of the relationships of setting and the supernatural, especially supernatural characters. This, then, becomes an interesting angle from which one can activate the imagination of students.

Goals

There are two types of goals for this unit. First, we will explore the following two questions:

- How do artists tell stories about the supernatural in literature and film?
- Do different cultures have different ways of telling stories?

The key to this approach, I believe, is actually engaging in a shared inquiry. What do the students really think when we reach the end of the unit? How can I, as a teacher, get them to ask authentic questions that they really want to answer, and then get out of their way? By asking the students to explore the supernatural, a topic that students are very likely to have their own questions and theories about, it is possible to anticipate the kinds of question that students will ask. This helps the teacher and students maintain a shared framework for inquiry that allows them to build upon their validated theories confidently while continuing to hypothesize about the supernatural.

The second goal in this unit is to teach students how to apply a cultural studies approach to what they read and view. I will discuss this approach in considerable detail in the following section: strategies.

Strategies

Description

In my 10th grade world literature course, I will use Japanese cinema to teach students the ways in which setting can interact with character, plot, and symbolism in Japanese narratives in particular, and by extension, narratives in general. I will focus on ghost stories and other mysterious tales in order to capitalize on student interest in the macabre. Furthermore, by using *kwaidan* ghost stories as well as mysteries, students will have to articulate elements of storytelling that they may have overlooked before, such as atmosphere.

We will situate the stories and films within Japanese mythological and historical contexts, and pay particular

attention to the symbolic meanings associated with the settings in the films. With this background, students will be able to analyze the effects that the different settings have on both intended Japanese audiences and themselves as viewers of the films and readers of the texts.

Cultural Studies Approaches

Our primary tool for exploring these films will be a cultural studies framework, or cultural analysis. According to Kathleen McCormick, a professor of writing who has used cultural analysis to great effect, "Cultural analysis asks you to relate the values, practices, or beliefs of a text you are reading to other, often different or seemingly unrelated ideas, beliefs, or practices from the same time period in which the text was produced.(1) "

An example may be in order. The Japanese samurai tale *Chushingura* is the true story of a group of 47 samurai who, after a long period of exile, return to avenge their fallen lord. Occurring in 1703, after approximately 100 years of peace, this story reminded many Japanese of the ideals of the samurai. In the Hiroshi Inagaki version of this story (1962), we see a catalogue of **daily practices** and **rules** that revolve around the idea of honor. Samurai must not draw their swords in the capital, for it is dishonorable. Also, deference and bribes should be paid to those who have knowledge you seek, for to fail in bribing them is to miss essential knowledge, and risk dishonoring oneself (this is, in fact, what causes the lord's downfall). We also see samurai who disband to preserve the honor of their lord, and many characters commit ritual suicide in order to preserve their honor.

Through synthesizing these many practices and rules that involve the principle of honor, we can begin to form a rudimentary idea of what the Japanese consider to be honorable, and may even be able to figure out what is happening in the culture that is causing them to have these attitudes about in this case honor.

After having unearthed these beliefs, students should be able to identify the underlying assumption the beliefs about the culture that are taken as true on face, with no questioning operating in the culture. In our example, students saw a series of statements and beliefs about honor, including a suicide. An underlying assumption that goes unquestioned in this culture is the idea that one should die with one's honor, even if that entails death at one's own hand.

At this point, students will likely start to look deeper: what beliefs did the Japanese have at this time that made them think honor was more important than life? Everyone who talks about honor in this way is a samurai. Is this a feature of the samurai class alone, or the Japanese people in general? Asking these questions will lead to the exploration of other texts and may even lead to the discovery of contradictory practices and beliefs, which students will have to resolve for themselves.

Why should we use such an approach? Because students are much less likely to suggest simplistic, either/or answers to complicated questions of *why* people within a culture behave in certain ways. Also, because it is very rare that this type of analysis will produce a single answer, students must either learn how to negotiate their differences and find consensus or learn how to allow simultaneous, yet opposing, viewpoints to exist in the same place and time.

Furthermore, students will inevitably connect their cultural analyses to their own culture that of whatever United States communities to which they claim membership. At this point, the cultural analysis becomes intercultural, even if the teacher does not encourage it.

For our purposes, we can extend our exploration to include those practices and beliefs that seem *abnormal* and *supernatural* as well. After viewing and reading throughout the unit, students should have enough observations about the worlds displayed in the narratives to sort out operative definitions of what appears normal and what myths may lie behind that normalcy. This list can be used by students to answer their third essential question: do different cultures have different definitions of the supernatural?

Film Studies Approaches

In order to familiarize oneself with the language of film, the Yale Film Studies Film Analysis Website <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/> provides a useful primer. I will not devote time to recreating this site here. The page states: "The Film Analysis Guide was developed to meet the needs of faculty and students at Yale who are interested in becoming familiar with the vocabulary of film studies and the techniques of cinema." (2)

While the Film Analysis Website does provide teachers with a useful primer in the language of film, its purposes do not extend to explaining the ways in which different cultures develop their own sense of filmmaking. In order to help students explore our second essential question about the cultural differences in storytelling, there are a few Japanese aesthetic principles that should be explained.

First, even more than in the west, the major influence in the development of filmmaking in Japan was drama. As a result, realism was of less import to some prominent Japanese filmmakers. They viewed film as an "extension of the stage." Because visual realism was not a goal of the Japanese stage, it meant less to the Japanese filmmaker than it would to a western filmmaker that regarded a film as a combination of photographs.(3)

Traditional Japanese painting did influence Japanese filmmakers, however. The Japanese films of Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi, and Masaki Kobayashi (the first and third of whom we will discuss later in this unit) were built around the assumption that a camera frame was a canvas to be filled, and that reality is contained within it. Western filmmakers typically regard the camera frame as an eye that follows the movie's action in the world.(4) This difference is particularly noticeable in *Kwaidan* by Kobayashi, who was a painter before he began making films.

A final aesthetic consideration relates to traditional uses of space in Japanese art, and the effects these traditions may or may not have on some Japanese filmmakers. In Japan,

woodblock printing, standing screens, and scrolls that are read from left to right are important artistic media, and directors such as Kurosawa have had their works compared to these traditions numerous times.(5) One example of this is in the film *Rashomon*, wherein characters who have given testimony sit by a wall in the background. The first character abuts the right edge of the frame, while the others fill in to his left, giving the appearance of characters being written on a scroll. One might ask, is this an allusion to the scroll as an artistic medium? Is it a paean to the traditional standing screen, which does not employ perspective as it is used in the West? These aesthetic questions may prove useful to some teachers.

Noticing subtle variations on these themes will allow students an opportunity to see how older Japanese notions of art that differed from western notions led to a different sense of how one makes a film, of how one tells a story on film.

Background on Japan

Geographical and Cultural Settings of Japan

Japan is an extremely mountainous country, with most of the population living in two plains regions: the Kanto, containing Tokyo and Yokohama, and the Kansai, containing Kyoto, Nara, and Kobe. Cultural anthropologists have theorized that the remoteness of Japanese villages, which were (and still are) situated in mountain valleys, led to the development of the Japanese group-based social order. Reliance on and the inability to escape from one's neighbors became a key organizing principle in Japanese culture, and has been a key feature of the society ever since.

Understanding the remoteness of early Japanese life is important for two major reasons. First, the local nature of Japanese life led to local deities, spirits, and other entities gaining anthropomorphic significance even mountains became "kami" in some places (the Japanese reverence of Mount Fuji is the best known example of this phenomenon).. Furthermore, the contrast with American culture could not be more severe. With our ideas of "manifest destiny" and our belief in the myth of the "Marlboro Man" the lone rider who can carve his own history out of the vast possibility that American geography represents Japanese "closeness" and desire for harmony provide a thought-provoking contrast to bring to students attention.

Spiritual Landscape

Japan's first religion was Shinto. Shinto maintains that Japan was created when the gods dipped a jeweled spear into the oceans and pulled it out, leaving behind drippings that became the four main islands of Japan. From this moment on, the divinity of place has been a core tenet of Japanese religion, spirituality, myth, and folklore.

Shintoism's deities, *kami*, are limitless. Millions are on record, but everyone's ancestors become a form of *kami* upon death, also. Shrines dot the Japanese landscape, with the most famous being located in the two historical capitals of Edo and Nara (near Kyoto). The result of all of these minor deities inhabiting the countryside is a rich mythological and folk tradition of ghosts and spirits.

Japanese History

Japan was a collection of hunting, farming, and fishing villages until the southern half of the main island, Honshu, was unified around 500 a.d. as the kingdom of Yamato. From this point in time until the 1100s, Japan was heavily influenced by Chinese thought, most of which came to Yamato through Korea. Major innovations of this period were the arrival of Buddhism, which successfully melded with the indigenous Shinto religion, the implementation of the principles of Confucian ethicalism which governed secular social relations, the growth of Chinese writing, and the codification of laws in a constitution. (6) Japanese court life also spurred a flowering of art and culture that included the publication of the world's first novel, *Genji Monogatari*, or *The Tale of Genji*, in about 1000 a.d.

Japanese history from approximately 1100 to 1600 was characterized by a series of military rules, or shogunates. Zen Buddhism was a powerful force in all aspects of Japanese culture at this time, and the rise of *Nô* Theater elevated Zen to a necessity for the aspiring artist. Zeami, the premier *Nô* author in Japanese history, was himself a practitioner of Zen. *Nô* relies on intuitive understanding rather than explicit narration, resulting in a surreal viewing experience for a Western sensibility. Furthermore, Zeami, a theorist as well as a

playwright, considered *yūgen*, or "mystery" to be the most important aesthetic element of *Nō* theater.⁽⁷⁾ This dramatic tradition, however, maintains a primary place in Japanese drama of all types: kabuki theater, bunraku plays, and films until the rise of the western style of filmmaking in Japan. Kobayashi's film, *Kwaidan*, endeavors to capture this feeling of *yūgen*.

This period figures heavily in Japanese literature, as the instability and uncertainty of life in this time provides fertile ground for the exploration of deep themes. All of the literary and filmic narratives in this unit focus on settings that predate the unification of the country under the Tokugawa clan in 1600. The stricture of Tokugawa law led many artists—literary, visual, and dramatic—to focus their arts in the tumultuous past in order to avoid censorship.

The Tokugawa period was the longest sustained peace in the history of a united Japan, and led to the creation of many of Japan's most famous art forms. The tea ceremony, Sumo, haiku, kabuki Theater, sword dueling, and Zen archery were elevated to art forms in this period, at least partially in an attempt to give the now subjugated samurai something to do. This period of time also saw the rise of a petty bourgeoisie that would consume the popular art of this time, especially woodblock printing, *bunraku* puppet theatre, and *kabuki* theater, which was a popularized stage drama drawn from *Nō*.

Japan initiated contact with the west in the late 1500s, when the Portuguese introduced guns, bread, and other staples of western culture to Japan. However, the period between 1600 and 1855 was largely characterized by the word *sakoku*, or closed country. That changed in 1855, when an American Commodore, Matthew Perry, pointed his gunships at Japan and requested that Japan trade with America. This effectively ended the Tokugawa regime, and ushered in the modern era. The social tensions that arose during this period of modernization had two predictable results: a conservative, "pure Japanese" school of thought, and a more modernizing, westernizing view. Literature played no small role in this debate, and many authors looked to the *sakoku* period as either the height of a purely Japanese Japan. Others, of course, took this opportunity to debunk revisionist views of premodern Japan. (Akutagawa, one of the authors discussed later, could be put into the second group.) Many Japanese folk stories were recorded for the first time during this period. Also, many authors set their explorations of social themes during the *sakoku* period because its unity (enforced by Tokugawa hegemony, of course), could allow for a shared set of assumptions about the dominant social order. But, perhaps inspired by Admiral Perry's example, Japan then developed an imperial itch, which it scratched by defeating the Russians in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. This imperial moment lasted until 1945, when Japan became the only country in the world to experience a nuclear detonation.

After World War II, there was no denying Japan's role as a major world power, and its economic power has been considerable ever since the retooling of the economy in the late 1950s. Westernization was irreversible, especially after occupation, but there was an interesting nostalgia and soul searching period in the aftermath of the war, as well. Many *jidai-geki*, or period pictures {most of which were set in either the Tokugawa *sakoku* era or the warring states period (*jidai geki*) that preceded it} were produced in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, and these are the pictures that we will focus on for our unit.

Japanese Ghosts, Demons, and Haunted Spaces: The Narratives (Filmic and Print)

We will situate the stories and films within Japanese mythological and historical contexts, and pay particular attention to the symbolic meanings associated with the settings in the films. With this background, students will be able to postulate the effects that the different settings have on both intended Japanese audiences and themselves as viewers of the films and readers of the texts.

Grasscutter: Japanese Mythology in a graphic novel.

Stan Sakai's graphic novel *Grasscutter* is very engaging, and reading the four Prologues in it will allow students to gain a background in the Japanese creation myths of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, which explain some of the major gods and goddesses, as well as introducing students to the different aspects of Japanese spiritualism. For instance, many of the original Kami were born of the vomit and corpse of one Kami who died as a result of burnt genitalia after giving birth to a fire deity!⁽⁸⁾ Here, we see a very different creation myth than one American students would be familiar with. Sakai meticulously researched his comics, and substantial endnotes exist to help teachers provide further context for students. Through use of these graphic novels, students can understand the ways in which Shintoism led to the primacy of place. This will help students understand the symbolism of both the literature and the films and literary symbolism more thoroughly.

Grasscutter, and Hearn and Kobayashi's print and film versions of "Mimi Nashi Hoichi."

The Fourth Prologue of *Grasscutter* tells one of the great stories in Japanese history: the defeat of the Heike clan by the Minamoto clan at the battle of *Dan-no-Ura* in 1185, which ushered in the Kamakura Shogunate. During this naval battle, when the Heike realized that they were to be defeated, legend has it that the 6-year-old emperor, Antoku, was drowned when his grandmother jumped overboard with him in her arms instead of surrendering to the Minamoto clan. Several hundred Heike warriors followed her. To this day, the Japanese do not eat the crabs found in the waters of Dan no Ura because they believe that the spirits of the fallen are embodied in the crabs. Supporting their claim is the "fact" that the faces of the Heike are visible on the shells of the crabs!

Here we see the significance of place and native religion in Japanese culture. Luckily, we can also point to *The Story of Mimi Nashi Hoichi* and the story by the same name in Kobayashi's *Kwaidan*, which both retell this story. The battle scene in *Kwaidan* is an exceptional blending of traditional Japanese drama, beautiful color, and Japanese surreal set designs. The battle scene is filmed in a studio that has been painted: there is no realism in the western sense here, but Zeami's notion of *yugen* is thick in the frame. It looks and feels like a Japanese *N*; the only music for this scene is a solitary biwa, or Japanese lute.

In "Mimi Nashi Hoichi," Hoichi is a blind flutist living in a Buddhist monastery who plays the songs that commemorate the battle of Dan-no-Ura so beautifully that the fallen Heike are brought to him, hoping to take him back to the ocean with them to soothe their pain. Because it incorporates Japanese history, it fits within a folk tradition; it may in fact be teaching us that even Buddhist priests have their limits when dealing with the ghosts of the world. This film and story both show the practices that Buddhist priests considered "normal" for dealing with a haunting.

Kwaidan: Stories by Lafcadio Hearn, Film by Masaki Kobayashi

Hearn's *Kwaidan* is a collection of strange Japanese folk tales. "Yuki-Onna," ("Snow Woman,") details the story of a bargain made with a ghost that is later forgotten. In the tale, a pair of woodcutters is caught in a snowstorm created by a Snow Woman, a ghost, who demands their lives. She kills the older, while allowing the younger to live as long as he promises never to reveal his secret. He, of course, forgets his promise later in life, and is reminded in terrifying, fatal form.

This story explores themes of material wealth, the ability of the supernatural to deceive people, and hubris. It, like all of the stories in this movie, is visually stunning and heavily influenced by painting.

"Black Hair" in *Kwaidan* ("The Reconciliation" is the name of the Hearn story that is the source. It is found in *Shadowings*), focuses on the karmic debt that people incur when committing a wrong. In this case, the tale is of a man whose desire for fortune and glory lead him to abandon one wife for another. However, the new, more lucrative, and loveless marriage is unfulfilling, and the man returns to his former wife completely unaware of the terrifying changes that have occurred.

Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* : Places Haunted by Evil Deeds

Rashomon (1951) , the film that arguably introduced Japanese cinema to the world, is based on Akutagawa's stories "In a Grove" and "Rashomon."

"In a Grove" is a story told in several episodes, each of which is the testimony of a witness to an unknown judge the reader. Because the reader is the judge, there is no resolution to the story. The setting a grove set back from a road is an ominous one, for the story is set during the warring states period of Japanese history, where morality was in great flux. Three characters are present in the grove, which makes the choice even harder no either/or binary opposition that one might feel comfortable with. The lack of a resolution places the reader squarely in the author's sights, and the question, "how can we know what the truth is?" is unavoidable.

"Rashomon" asks us to consider the possibility of an absolute good and an absolute evil. Again, the author wants to force us into a situation in which the usual binary opposition is rendered moot by the plot itself, prompting serious questions about the nature of humanity.

The film is shot in beautiful black and white. The setting the *Rashomon* gate in the middle of a tumultuous storm, and the grove itself, underneath a sunny sky, are both shot with painstaking care. The initial entry into the grove by the woodcutter incorporates many shots, but the woodcutter moves from right to left while the camera moves from left to right, adding greater depth to the woods. This film and these stories lend themselves well to the question of adaptation, and, depending on how observant your students are, subtle dialogue shifts might give away some of Kurosawa's interpretations of Akutagawa's stories. Applying a cultural studies approach to the characters in these two texts is also interesting, as each of the three characters offers something a little different to the readers as to what their beliefs about the world are.

Hayao Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke* : Old Spirits, Old places, and New Challenges

Hayao Miyazaki's animated classic *Princess Mononoke* will also be used. It is perhaps the most accessible film to students both because it is animated, and because it clearly articulates natural motifs that are based upon Shinto traditions and beliefs. Animals are gods, "unnatural" hatred leads creatures to change into demons, and people form adversarial relationships to the natural world without understanding the implications of their choices. Furthermore, there is a stark contrast between the twin protagonists of the film a boy from a strange, native tribe and a feral girl and the antagonists, a modernizing, "progress" oriented pioneer community. This

proves extremely useful for our cultural studies analysis.

Lesson Plans

Plan One: Teaching the Cultural Studies Framework

Objective:

To analyze a cultural myth that students recognize in order to define daily practices and beliefs.

Exploration :

Ask students to think about a belief that is widely held by small children in our culture that they have now grown out of: Santa Claus. Give students time to think of everything they can remember about Santa.

Operation :

We will discover how our culture influences our beliefs by diagnosing the sources of our beliefs about Santa Claus and identifying the ways in which our culture explains away our doubts about him.

Define *daily practices* and ask students to provide examples of daily practices that support the idea that Santa is real. Daily practices may include seeing Santa at the mall, writing him letters, watching movies about him, staying on his "nice" list and off of his "naughty" list, singing songs that celebrate him, and the like.

Have students think about the rules that govern Santa: You cannot see him while he is in, or he'll leave without giving you presents. He will leave you coal if you are bad. You must leave him cookies.

Ask students what these practices and beliefs tell us about children: that is, what unquestioned beliefs/myths do we hold about children? Good kids should be rewarded, bad kids should be punished, children are being watched and must do as they are told, etc.

Independent Practice :

Have students choose another mythical character, such as the Tooth Fairy or the Easter Bunny and repeat the process. Continue this until they can identify enough practices and beliefs, and have an idea what a cultural myth that provides a foundation for those beliefs and practices is.

Assessment :

Can students articulate core values, practices, and myths about their fictional entity?

Plan Two: Analyzing Setting in Princess Mononoke

Objective:

To provide a critique of the role setting plays in influencing character behavior by comparing and contrasting the practices and beliefs of characters from rural and urban settings regarding the land.

Exploration :

Students will be split into small groups of four or five students each. Half of the groups will share ideas about the practices and beliefs of San and Ashitaka towards the forests, while the other half will share ideas about the practices and beliefs of Lady Eboshi and the mining town inhabitants.

Operation :

The groups will articulate reasons *why* the members of their group might believe as they do. For example, San, raised by the Wolf Gods, would believe that nature is more important than human civilization. Ashitaka, who has befriended his elk mount, would believe that there is a shared relationship, because he works as his elk mount's partner through much of the film.

Assessment :

Do the students offer plausible, supported theories for why the characters have different perspectives at the same time (the heart of cultural analysis)?

Plan Three: Director's Commentary for *Kwaidan*

Objective :

To explain how directors manipulate the means of telling a story in order to achieve a desired effect by writing our own director's commentary for a short film.

Exploration :

First, the students will be asked the question: how does Kobayashi use filmmaking techniques to enhance his telling of one of the stories in *Kwaidan*? After students offer some initial theories, follow up by asking the students what techniques did he have at his disposal?

Operation :

Students will be put into groups of four or five. They will then review the materials from the Yale Film Study Center at <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/> in order to refresh their memory about all the different elements of making a film.

As a model, students should watch Donald Richie's commentary for *Rashomon*. While it will be unnecessary to watch the commentary for the entire film, the initial scenes of the Rashomon gate and at least one of the characters' testimony before the judge should be viewed so that students can create a list of possible comments to include. Students should then be able to generate a checklist of elements to include in a thorough discussion of the filmmaker's techniques: lighting, mise-en-scene, editing, and so on. These lists should be discussed in a whole-class setting in order to set the standards for the student projects.

Application :

Students should be given time to watch the appropriate sections of their film and to create their commentary.

Because this could take some time, I suggest having this group project take place at the same time as an individual writer's workshop about some related topic, so that all groups are thoughtfully engaged while not watching film per se.

The students should then create their commentaries in small groups, using both their notes from the film analysis website and their checklists generated from watching the commentary on *Rashomon*. Each member of the group should contribute to the oral recitation of the commentary, which they should give to the class while watching the film on mute.

Assessment :

Both students and teacher should assess the group's "director's commentary" by completing the checklist both during and after the presentation. Other group presentation criteria should also be established by the class, as well as group work criteria.

Content Standards Relevant to Unit

The content standards discussed here are from the Connecticut State Department of Education. Listing these standards should provide prospective users of this unit with a frame of reference narrow enough to help teachers decide whether or not the unit is applicable to his or her goals while not being so broad as to seem applicable to all programs of study.

While not all content standards listed here are not explicitly linked to each of the sample lesson plans included in this unit, each is implicitly linked to the activities and strategies discussed within the narrative sections of the unit.

Content Standard One: Reading and Responding

Educational experiences in this unit will assure that students:

1.1 describe the text by giving an initial reaction to the text and describing its general purpose;

1.3 reflect on the text to make judgements about its meaning and quality;

1.5 generate questions before, during and after reading, writing, listening, and viewing

1.8 use the structure of narrative, expository, persuasive, poetic, and visual text to interpret and extend meaning;

1.12 make inferences about ideas implicit in narrative, expository, persuasive, and poetic texts

1.13 interact with others in creating, interpreting, and evaluating written, oral, and visual texts.

Content Standard Four: Exploring and Responding to Texts

Educational experiences in this unit will assure that students:

- 4.3 evaluate the merit of literary texts on the basis of individual preferences and established standards;
- 4.4 examine the ways readers and writers are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical context;
- 4.6 demonstrate an understanding that literature represents, recreates, shapes, and explores human experience through language and imagination;
- 4.7 explore and respond to the aesthetic elements of literature, including spoken, visual, and written texts;
- 4.8 use literature as a resource to explore ideas and decisions, as well as political and social issues; and
- 4.9 identify the unique and shared qualities of the voices, cultures, and historical periods in literature.

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Books

Addiss, Stephen. *Japanese Ghosts and Demons: Art of the Supernatural*. New York: George Braziller, Inc. 1985.

This book has many excellent prints of Japanese ghosts and other supernatural entities, several of which relate to the types of female ghosts found in *Kwaidan*.

Erlich, Linda and David Desser. *Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts of China and Japan*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press. 1994.

This book offers several very good essays on issues in Japanese cinematic aesthetics, drawing on both the history of art and the contemporary decision-making and influence of prominent directors.

Galbraith, Stuart IV. *Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company. 1994.

A very detailed description of 97 Japanese films that have been released in the United states between 1950 and 1992. The first film included is *Rashomon*.

McCarthy, Helen. *Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Japanese Animation*. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press. 1999.

This book is accessible to strong high school readers, and gives background on Miyazaki's career in general and his major titles in particular. There are spoilers in this text, however, so be careful about the sections you choose for students before they view the film(s) you select.

Reider, Noriko. *Tales of the Supernatural in Early Modern Japan: Kaidan, Akinari, Ugetsu Monogatari*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

This is an excellent resource for obtaining background information on the evolution of early modern ghost tales in Japan.

Dissanayake, Wimal. *Cinema and Cultural Identity: Reflection son Films from Japan, India, and China*. New York: University Press of America. 1988.

The section on Japan offers two essays on Japanese dramatic traditions that may be of interest. Also, two essays about genre in Japanese cinema, one focusing on Samurai films, are useful when considering the use of Japanese film as a cultural lens.

McCormick, Kathleen. *Reading Our Histories, Understanding our Cultures: A Sequenced Approach to Thinking, Reading, and Writing*. New York: Longman. 2003.

This text offers a lengthy review of cultural/historical analysis, with eight example unit plans that can help teachers understand the framework. This may be the only resource in the unit that cannot be replaced with alternative texts.

Internet Resources

Japan Guide. 2005. Japan-guide.com, Inc. 17 July 2005. www.japan-guide.com.

This website acts as a clearinghouse for information on Japanese history and culture. Primarily a tourism site, it is useful for analyzing contemporary Japanese practices and folkways.

Yale Film Studies Film Analysis Website. 2002. Yale University. 18 July 2005. <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>.

This site provides ample information to introduce students to the discipline of film study. Still shots from a diverse range of films help explain the terminology.

Annotated Bibliography for Students

Films

Descriptions of all of the films are provided, in detail, in the narrative section titled *Japanese Ghosts, Demons, and Haunted Spaces: The Narratives (Filmic and Print)*

Chushingura . Dir. by Hiroshi Inagaki. Japan: Toho Co., Ltd. (1966 re-release)

Kwaidan. Dir. By Masaki Kobayashi. Japan: Hoho Co., Ltd. 1965

Princess Mononoke. Dir. by Hayao Miyazaki. Japan: Studio Ghibli. 1997.

Rashomon . Dir. by Akira Kurosawa. Japan: Daiei Co., Ltd. 1950

Student Reading List

Akutagawa, Ryunosuke. *Rashomon and other Stories* . (Takashi Kojima, trans.). Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1952.

This is the source volume for the two stories, "Rashomon" and "In A Grove," that form the basis for Kurosawa's *Rashomon*. They are great stories in their own right, as well. I have heard them described as reminiscent of O'Henry and Edgar Allan Poe.

Keene, Donald. *Anthology of Japanese Literature from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. New York: Grove Press. 1955.

Much of the premodern and early modern Japanese writing on poetics and aesthetics is excerpted or included here.

Hearn, Lafcadio. *Kwaidan* : Stories and Studies of Strange Things. Rutland, Vermont: 1971.

Three of the tales that comprise the film *Kwaidan* are found here, two of which I have referred to specifically in this unit. The fourth is also interesting, and could easily be included in this unit.

Hearn, Lafcadio. *Shadowings* . Rutland, Vermont: 1971.

The story "The Reconciliation," which is the source for "Black Hair" in the film *Kwaidan*, can be found here.

Sakai, Stan. *Usagi Yojimbo Book Six* . Seattle, Washington: Fantagraphics Books. 1994.

This volume is a compilation of Usagi Yojimbo comics. Chapter One, "The Bridge," has an interesting story about Japanese demons, or *oni*. Chapter Three, "Yurei," tells another story about female ghosts that is sourced from Japanese folklore.

Sakai, Stan. *Usagi Yojimbo, v. 12* . Milwaukie, Oregon: Dark Horse Comics. 1999.

The four prologues in this volume cover a lot of Japanese religious and historical ground. The first two are adaptations of the Kojiki, the Japanese Shinto creation myth. The fourth, "Dan-no-Ura," is essential reading before watching "Mimi Nashi Hoichi" in *Kwaidan*. It tells the story of the Battle of Dan-no-Ura that serves as an introduction to "Mimi Nashi Hoichi".

1. McCormick, Kathleen. *Reading Our Histories, Understanding Our Cultures*. p.3
2. <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/>, 7/13/05.
3. Ritchie, Donald. "The Influence of Traditional Aesthetics on Japanese Film" Found in *Cinematic Landscapes*. p. 154
4. *ibid.*, 156
5. Richie, "Influence of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics on Japanese Film," in *Cinematic Landscapes*, p. 158.
6. Japanese History: Overview. Japan-Guide.com. May 26, 2005 <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2126.html>>.
7. p. 258 Keene, Donald. *Anthology of Japanese Literature*. New York: Grove Press, 1955.
8. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/kojiki.htm>

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