

Immigrant Children's Literature:  
Reading and Writing in a Postcolonial Continuum

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## **Abstract**

Students in the School District of Philadelphia are coming of age in a time when anti-immigrant sentiment is a predominant political issue in the United States. This, of course, is part of a pivotal motif in the renewed racist narrative that began with the beginning of Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2015. Trump's immigration policies led to immigrants, including children, being required to live in inhumane conditions and there were, according to PBS Newshour (2022), at least 5,000 children separated from their parents. This circumstance requires an intervention of culturally relevant pedagogy, particularly in humanities classrooms. Much of my teaching career has been devoted to designing and implementing inquiry-based curricula that explicitly connects postcolonial African and African-American literature, film, history and culture. This particular project will expand my teaching and learning practices by focusing on two Young Adult (YA) novels focusing on immigrant and migration stories: *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang and *The Night Diaries* by Veera Hiranandani. Rather than buttress this unit with an abundance of academic scholarship, I will rely heavily on ideas from postcolonial film and literature. Additionally, I will address the manner in which the praxis of Jazz Pedagogy has informed my practice.

## **Key Words**

Postcolonial Literature, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Jazz Pedagogy, Historically Responsive Literacy, Young Adult Fiction

## **Head Start: Preparing to Become an Educator**

I was an avid reader as a child. Many of the books were about cultures vastly different from my own. One of my favorite series was *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. According to Liz Fields, writing in *American Masters* (2021), many of these books are now considered to contain racist depictions of Native and African-Americans. Another of my childhood favorites, *The Five Chinese Brothers*, is also considered to be objectionable today (Ward, 2022). Other series, such as *All-of-a-Kind Family* by Sydney Taylor *The Great Brain* by John D. Fitzgerald, were windows into which I could peer into and learn about other cultures. *All-of-a-Kind Family* revolved around a Jewish family living in the early 20th Century Lower East Side. *The Great Brain* featured a Catholic family living in predominantly Mormon late 19th Century Utah.

At this time, my family and I were living in a segregated housing development in Northeast Philadelphia. I attended an all-white elementary school which employed exactly two African-American teachers, both of whom were cold and distant. I can't imagine what they experienced. My only sustained contact with Black culture was the television show, *Good Times*, a program depicting the lives of an African-American family living in a housing project in Chicago. *Good Times* was created by Norman Lear, a white man. This all took place amidst the bussing movement, when my parents were openly advocating for integrated schools. My father heard someone call my mother a "n\*\*\*\*\* lover" at a PTA meeting, so my parents moved us to West Mt. Airy and enrolled in a predominantly African-American school. From there, I matriculated to Central High School, which at that time was still segregated by gender—still all male. Though racially and ethnically diverse, there was no sense or awareness of an attempt at implementing multicultural curricula. My 10th grade biology teacher was less than attentive and there was a time span when students taught each other racial slurs that were weaponized in their respective communities. We certainly knew that these words were highly inappropriate in any other context, but it was a safe space and it was a reminder that students were aware of differences but had no constructive way of confronting this reality. Unbeknownst to me, these cumulative experiences were preparing me for my future as an educator.

## **Jazz Pedagogy**

Just as my early reading and schooling experiences would inform my current teaching practices, my love of jazz, discovered when I was in college, would lay a vital role as well. I had the good fortune of living in Philadelphia at a time when there was a serious and significant revival of experimental jazz. I had started consuming this music while in college in New York and attending concerts when I moved back home to Philadelphia. There was an arts center in Philadelphia that held regular concerts of the most innovative musicians, most of whom were based in New York City. While I certainly knew how much I loved this music, I had no idea how much this music was preparing me to be both a student and a teacher.

Listening to jazz helped me understand the dialogical relationship between structure and improvisation as well as the generative value of listening. This awareness helped me formulate strategies for better listening, especially when students participating in classroom discussion suddenly broke into small ensembles, debating different aspects of the general discussion. Rather than submit to the conventional "one person at a time" format, I realized that these "improvised jam sessions" were equally vital. Similarly, jazz helped think more creatively about curriculum design. Griffin et. al. (2023) are convincing in their assertion that jazz pedagogy offers praxis for any pedagogy committed to asking the question, in the spirit of Marvin Gaye, "What's Goin' On?"

Griffin et. al. in *Towards a Jazz Pedagogy: Learning with and from Jazz Greats and Great Educators* maintain, "Given its distinct history as a form of resistance against racist oppression, the work of jazz, and all Black music, is and has always been resistance (Griffin et. al. 2023, p 410)." This concept embraces the justification for studying, however briefly, the Israel/Palestine war, which, of course, remains divisive politically, in the media, on college campuses and in

other public spaces. It is also important to recall that we engaged in Paul's unit just a little more than a month after the war began. Keep in mind that Griffin et. al. make us aware that jazz pedagogy "recognize[s] the implications and possibilities of improvisation and allow students to draw on their own style and knowledge to create something all *their own*" (Griffin et. al. 2023, p. 411)."

## Postcolonial Teaching and Learning

Thirty years of teaching in the School District of Philadelphia has convinced me that teaching and learning for social justice is a grassroots project. I believe that teachers work best when we collaborate with fellow educators and students to create classrooms that value students as makers of knowledge. Students are genuinely excited to learn when offered a curriculum that welcomes who they are and values their race, language, and identity. For me, this means developing politically conscious, culturally relevant curricula. My students are 11th graders at George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science in Philadelphia. Carver HSES is a National Blue Ribbon School with a culturally and ethnically diverse population, 72% of whom come from low-income households. Many are either immigrants or children of immigrants. I most enjoy teaching writers like Chinua Achebe, August Wilson and Toni Morrison, as well as filmmakers like Ousmane Sembene and Raoul Peck. Additionally, TIP has enabled me to study African music, Black Visual Culture. These artists systematically examine the lives of people who live the legacies of slavery and colonialism while also, like the great blues and jazz musicians, use their art to resist and transform the conditions that emerge from institutionalized oppression. They also examine gender, power and the inability of certain communities to establish generational wealth.

My capacity to teach postcolonial literature and film was informed by the teachings of Dr. Maureen Eke when I attended *Writing Africa: Comparative Palavers and Perspectives* through the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2004. This seminar introduced me to many texts and topics that shaped my approach to teaching and learning. *Writing Africa* afforded me the opportunity to design and implement an elective course, "World Literature." This class incorporated an interdisciplinary curriculum focusing on African history, literature and film. units included using excerpts from Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost* in conjunction with Raoul Peck's biopic, *Lumumba* (2000). This was an important antidote to the World History textbook that dedicated at least forty pages to WWII and the Holocaust, but only four sentences to King Leopold's colonization of the "Belgian Congo." Thank you, Dr. Eke.

We also studied the 1994 Rwanda genocide by viewing Peck's masterpiece, *Sometimes in April* (2005) and engaging in independent research. We paired Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* with Ousmane Sembene's magical film, *Moolaade* (2004). Just as *Things Fall Apart* examines an Igbo community's inability to combat British colonialism, *Moolaade*, filmed in a rural community in Burkina Faso, explores how the inhabitants resolve a feminist uprising against the cultural practice of Female Genital Mutilation. Finally, we viewed *La Vie Est Belle* (1987), starring the Congolese singer, Papa Wemba. *La Vie Est Belle* was filmed in Mobutu's Zaire, and so generally avoids political topics. It is a very interesting portrayal of a musician's attempt to gain fame. I showed it because it took place in a postcolonial city ruled by a tyrant in real time.

I began to understand that the curriculum works best (for me) when I teach texts that “talk” to each other. After studying the Congo, we would read *Sula* by Toni Morrison, *Fences* or *The Piano Lesson* by August Wilson. We would also view Michael Roemer’s civil rights/labor rights era film classic, *Nothing But A Man* (1964). It seemed that reading a range of texts that fit into a historical continuum was a way to examine the legacies of racism, misogyny, plunder and violence that are ever present in the United States.

Around the time I began relying on postcolonial literature, Dr. Arlene Ackerman became Superintendent of schools. It is impossible to calculate the amount of damage that was during her reign. President George W. Bush’s disastrous No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education policies were well entrenched and standardized testing ruled the day. The seven-step lesson plan was required and hyper-surveillance was rampant. The near-religious adherence to miseducation made it quite apparent that Ackerman and her cronies, like Bush and his crowd, did not believe that African-American children could learn. It is worth noting that Ackerman’s signature fashion style was leopard-print made famous by the aforementioned Zairian kleptocrat, Joseph Sese Seko Mobutu.

Since then, my students have engaged in sustained inquiry into historical and cultural issues unveiled in postcolonial texts, most notably generational trauma. Morrison’s novels such as *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, as well as Wilson’s plays, most notably *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *King Hedley II* and *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* include characters whose lives are plagued by undiagnosed trauma. This trauma often leads to terrible consequences for both themselves and the people around them. These authors also suggest that the challenges inherent in navigating “cultural overlap and hybridity” are a significant source of said trauma. Additionally, both Morrison and Wilson articulate the role of Western capitalism being utilized as a hegemonic force eviving “the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all [...] through means of economic and political control.... (Mitchell, n.d.)”

TIP has helped me create curricular units based on the role of women in both the classic civil right movement, as well as the Black Lives Matter era. Additionally, TIP has enabled me to study African music, Black visual culture, and now the role of music in healing trauma. Each of these seminars have enriched my capacity to cultivate interdisciplinary curricula. One of the most rewarding projects emanated from the seminar *Black Visual Culture* led by Dagmawi Woubshet. My students and I studied artists that visualized trauma and/or conditions that lead to generational trauma. These include Jean-Michel Basquiat, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems and filmmakers Arthur Jafa and Khalil Joseph. These artists brilliantly imagine the intersections of history, resistance to oppression, capitalism and trauma.

### **Content Objectives: Composing Texts Reflecting Children’s Immigrant Experience**

The project involves *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang and *The Night Diary* by Veera Hiranandani. Both of these novels fit into the postcolonial continuum. *Front Desk* tells the story of a Chinese family who moves to Los Angeles in search of the American dream. They live in dire poverty until they seemingly “strike gold” when the parents are hired to manage a small hotel. What they

don't know is they have unwittingly entered into a sharecropper-style financial arrangement with the owner, who also happens to be Chinese. The novel tells the story of the narrator, Mia's, attempts to assimilate into US culture while navigating the various obstacles experienced by many immigrants. *The Night Diary*, on the other hand, concerns the lives of a half-Hindu, half-Muslim family summarily thrust into exile in the aftermath of the 1947 Partition. The narrators of both books, Mia and Nisha, bear witness to historical moments in which they live.

I have always endeavored to design curricula in which the various novels, plays, films, songs "speak" to each other. Similarly, I present these texts in an interdisciplinary manner, including historical and cultural contexts. Given that I will present *Front Desk* and *The Night Diary* as examples of postcolonial Young Adult fiction, this unit will be situated in the continuum of other postcolonial texts that my future students will read or have already read. Consequently, I will discuss themes from texts artists that I currently teach in order to articulate the pedagogical grounding from which my approach to *Front Desk* and *The Night Diary* emerge.

Student inquiry will consist of three distinct phases.

### **Phase One: Historical Context**

Students will be organized into groups of four. Two students in each group will read *Front Desk* and the other two students will read *The Night Diary*. Prior to beginning the novels, students who are reading *Front Desk* will produce a research-based presentation on the history of Chinese Immigration in the United States while those reading *The Night Diary* will do the same for the 1947 India Partition. This research and project design will occur in class. Students will identify 8-10 key moments and/or participants in each historical event. They will create a PowerPoint, canva, podcast or utilize some other platform. Research and composition will occur over approximately 8 class periods. On the 9th group members will present to each other

### ***Front Desk* and *The Night Diary* Research Assignment and Presentation**

Students will engage in a research project based on either Chinese Immigration to the United States or the 1947 India Partition.

### **Chinese Immigration Source Bank:**

[Chinese Immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Acts](#)

[Chinese Immigration | History Detectives | PBS](#)

[Asian American Timeline - Immigration, Achievements & Famous Firsts | HISTORY](#)

[Teaching Chinese Immigration in the 19th Century: Lesson Plans and Resources](#)

[Article: Chinese Immigrants in the United States | migrationpolicy.org](#)

[Chinese migrants are fastest growing group crossing into U.S. from Mexico | 60 Minutes](#)

### **Partition Source Bank:**

[https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple?\\_sp=13adc7ac-3952-4945-9676-87b2d8283096.1717434777886](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple?_sp=13adc7ac-3952-4945-9676-87b2d8283096.1717434777886)

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=india+pakistan+partition+documentary](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=india+pakistan+partition+documentary)

[Partition in the Classroom: Differentiated Strategies for Teaching India's Partition](#)

<https://why.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/the-real-history-of-partition-ms-marvel-video/historians-take/>

[Partition: Why was British India divided 75 years ago?](#)

[The South Asia Crisis and the Founding of Bangladesh, 1971](#)

[How a Trump-era policy that separated thousands of migrant families came to pass | PBS News Weekend](#)

### **Phase Two: *Front Desk* and *The Night Diary* as Postcolonial Young Adult Fiction**

In order to familiarize students with key concepts of postcolonialism I will present a slideshow directly quoting definitions created by Dr. Phillip Irving Mitchell from Dallas Baptist University. These slides will offer students a strong understanding of key theoretical terms of postcolonialism. Additionally, students, when appropriate, will make connections to these concepts and events that occur in the novels.

#### **Slide # 1:**

**colonialism:** The imperialist expansion of Europe into the rest of the world during the last four hundred years in which a dominant imperium or center carried on a relationship of control and influence over its margins or colonies. This relationship tended to extend to social, pedagogical, economic, political, and broadly culturally exchanges often with a hierarchical European settler class and local, educated (compractor) elite class forming layers between the European "mother" nation and the various indigenous peoples who were controlled. Such a system carried within it inherent notions of racial inferiority and exotic otherness.

#### **Slide # 2:**

**post-colonialism:** Broadly a study of the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies. It is concerned with both how European nations conquered and controlled "Third World" cultures and how these groups have since responded to and resisted those encroachments. Post-colonialism, as both a body of theory and a study of political and cultural change, has gone and continues to go through three broad stages:

. initial awareness of the social, psychological, and cultural inferiority enforced by being in a colonized state

the struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy

a growing awareness of cultural overlap and hybridity

### Slide # 3:

**ambivalence:** the ambiguous way in which colonizer and colonized regard one another. The colonizer often regards the colonized as both inferior yet exotically other, while the colonized regards the colonizer as both enviable yet corrupt. In a context of hybridity, this often produces a mixed sense of blessing and curse.

### Slide # 4:

**alterity:** "the state of being other or different"; the political, cultural, linguistic, or religious other. The study of the ways in which one group makes themselves different from others.

### Slide # 5:

**colonial education:** the process by which a colonizing power assimilates either a subaltern native elite or a larger population to its way of thinking and seeing the world.

### Slide # 6:

**diaspora:** the voluntary or enforced migration of peoples from their native homelands. Diaspora literature is often concerned with questions of maintaining or altering identity, language, and culture while in another culture or country.

### Slide # 7:

**essentialism:** the essence or "whatness" of something. In the context of race, ethnicity, or culture, essentialism suggests the practice of various groups deciding what is and isn't a particular identity. As a practice, essentialism tends to overlook differences within groups often to maintain the status quo or obtain power. Essentialist claims can be used by a colonizing power but also by the colonized as a way of resisting what is claimed about them.

### Slide # 8:

**ethnicity:** a fusion of traits that belong to a group—shared values, beliefs, norms, tastes, behaviors, experiences, memories, and loyalties. Often deeply related to a person's identity.

### Slide # 9:

**exoticism:** the process by which a cultural practice is made stimulating and exciting in its difference from the colonizer's normal perspective. Ironically, as European groups educated local, indigenous cultures, schoolchildren often began to see their native lifeways, plants, and animals as exotic and their European counterparts as "normal" or "typical."

### Slide # 10:

**hegemony:** the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all, often not only through means of economic and political control but more subtly through the control of education and media.

### Slide # 11:

**hybridity:** new transcultural forms that arise from cross-cultural exchange. Hybridity can be social, political, linguistic, religious, etc. It is not necessarily a peaceful mixture, for it can be contentious and disruptive in its experience. Note the two related definitions:  
*catalysis: the (specifically New World) experience of several ethnic groups interacting and mixing with each other often in a contentious environment that gives way to new forms of identity and experience.*  
*creolization: societies that arise from a mixture of ethnic and racial mixing to form a new material, psychological, and spiritual self-definition.*

### Slide # 12:



*identity: the way in which an individual and/or group defines itself. Identity is important to self-concept, social mores, and national understanding. It often involves both essentialism and othering.*

**Slide # 13:**

**ideology:** "a system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true" (Bordwell & Thompson 494)

**Slide # 14:**

**language:** In the context of colonialism and post-colonialism, language has often become a site for both colonization and resistance. In particular, a return to the original indigenous language is often advocated since the language was suppressed by colonizing forces. The use of European languages is a much-debated issue among postcolonial authors.

*abrogation: a refusal to use the language of the colonizer in a correct or standard way.*

*appropriation: "the process by which the language is made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience."*

**Slide # 15:**

**magical realism:** the adaptation of Western realist methods of literature in describing the imaginary life of indigenous cultures who experience the mythical, magical, and supernatural in a decidedly different fashion from Western ones. Weaving together elements we tend to associate with European realism and elements we associate with the fabulous, where these two worlds undergo a "closeness or near merging."

**Slide # 16:**

**mapping:** the mapping of global space in the context of colonialism was as much prescriptive as it was descriptive. Maps were used to assist in the process of aggression, and they were also used to establish claims. Maps claim the boundaries of a nation, for example.

**Slide # 17:**

**metanarrative:** ("grand narratives," "master narratives.") a large cultural story that seeks to explain within its borders all the little, local narratives. A metanarrative claims to be a big truth concerning the world and the way it works. Some charge that all metanarratives are inherently oppressive because they decide whether other narratives are allowed or not.

**Slide # 18:**

**mimicry:** the means by which the colonized adapt the culture (language, education, clothing, etc.) of the colonizer but always in the process of changing it in important ways. Such an approach always contains it in the ambivalence of hybridity.

**Slide # 19:**

**nation/nation-state:** an aggregation of people organized under a single government. National interest is associated both with a struggle for independent ethnic and cultural identity and ironically an opposite belief in universal rights, often multicultural, with a basis in geo-economic interests. Thus, the movement for national independence is just as often associated with a region as it is with ethnicity or culture, and the two are often at odds when new nations are formed.

**Slide # 20:**

**orientalism:** the process (from the late eighteenth century to the present) by which "the Orient" was constructed as an exotic other by European studies and culture. Orientalism is not so much a true study of other cultures as it is a broad Western generalization about Oriental, Islamic, and/or Asian cultures that tend to erode and ignore their substantial differences.

**Slide # 21:**

**other:** the social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalizes another group. By declaring someone "Other," persons tend to stress what makes them dissimilar from or opposite of another, and this carries over into the way they represent others, especially through stereotypical images.

**Slide # 22:**

**race:** the division and classification of human beings by physical and biological characteristics. Race often is used by various groups to either maintain power or to stress solidarity. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was often used as a pretext by European colonial powers for slavery and/or the "white man's burden."

**Slide # 23:**

**semiotics:** a system of signs in which one knows what something is. Cultural semiotics often provide the means by which a group defines itself or by which a colonizing power attempts to control and assimilate another group.

**Slide # 24:**

**space/place:** space represents a geographic locale, one empty in not being designated. Place, on the other hand, is what happens when space is made or owned. Place involves landscape, language, environment, culture, etc.

**Slide # 25:**

**subaltern:** the lower or colonized classes who have little access to their own means of expression and are thus dependent upon the language and methods of the ruling class to express themselves.

**Slide # 26:**

**worlding:** the process by which a person, family, culture, or people is brought into the dominant Eurocentric/Western global society.

Groupmates will begin to read their respective novels in class at approximately 20 pages at a time. Twice a week the teams will present to each other, emphasizing plot development, character evolutions and connections to postcolonial theory.

After reading 40 pages each will choose one of Mitchell's definitions and track how it is manifested in the novel that they are reading. After completing the novels each student will create 5 slides demonstrating how their chosen postcolonial theory is evident in their respective novels. Each group member's slides will be assembled into a collaborative slideshow demonstrating how *Front Desk* and *The Night Diary* exemplify postcolonial fiction.

The PowerPoint should be at least 25 slides.

- Each slide should include an image and written text.
- The slide should include both a clearly stated postcolonial image and reference to the novel(s).
- Sources must be cited.
- Individuals in the group should divide the labor evenly.
- The presentation should be rehearsed ahead of time.
- The final presentations will be presented to the entire class.
- Be prepared to take questions at the end of your presentation.

## **Phase Three: Choice Board**

*Special thanks to my colleague, John Taylor-Baranik for sharing many of these choice board ideas.*

Choice Board assignments will be completed either individually or in small, self-determined groups. Each student must submit at least two Choice Board selections.

### **Option 1: Group Performance**

Plan how you will perform a scene for the class (5 minutes) and questions that you will use to facilitate a class discussion (3-5 questions, 5-minute discussion). The performance must be more than a mere reenactment of the text. You may choose to:

- Pause the action and (1) have characters step out of the scene to give a monologue (2) create a flashback (3) use slow-motion to emphasize key actions
- Perform the scene and then replay it, making specific changes (change perspective or open up new interpretations)
- Use music and sound effects (from your own voice or from phone) to add to the scene
- Come up with another idea and get it approved!

### **Option 2: Individual or Group Illustration**

Create an illustration of a key idea, theme, or topic in the novel. Your illustration must feature one or more essential quotes from the text, though they can be incorporated in any fashion you wish. You may want to consider:

- A body biography
- An illustrated character map
- A “split” portrait

### **Option 3: Individual or Group Film**

Create a film of 2 minutes or less that brings new insight or interpretation to a scene in the book. Your film must show clear evidence of careful composition and editing.

### **Option 4: Individual Poem**

Create a poem about one of the characters in *Front Desk* or *The Night Diary*. You may write it from your perspective, or the perspective of one of the characters. You may use any form you wish. Although there is no minimum number of lines, your poem must show clear evidence of careful composition and drafting.

### **Option 5: Individual Close Reading**

Write a 500-word analysis of a scene in the book, performing a close reading of a scene in order to illustrate the book's connection to postcolonial theory. Quotations should be correctly integrated and MLA formatting should be used.

### **Option 6: Individual Narrative from Another Character's Perspective**

Both novels are written in the 1st person. Identify a compelling scene and write a 500-word narrative 1st person narrative from the perspective of a character in the scene.

### **Option 7: (*Night Diary*) Individual Letter:**

A 500-word letter to Nisha explaining how Gandhi is perceived in contemporary culture.

### **Option 8: Individual or Group Itinerary for Nisha's visit to Los Angeles**

Pretend that you are Mia and that you're planning for Nisha to visit you in Los Angeles. Compose a page-length itinerary explaining where you would take Nish, and why. Think of famous places!

### **Option 9: Learning Differences**

Nisha's brother, Amil, has an undiagnosed learning difference. It serves to alienate him from his father and schoolmates. Compose a 500-word letter to Nisha explaining what we have learned about learning differences.

### **Option 10: Labor Exploitation**

Mia and her family are subject to Jim Crow-era labor conditions. Compose a 500-word letter to Mia articulating what labor looks like today.

Choice Board assignments will be "cushion grades." All projects will receive an A or B depending on evidence of effort.

### **Conclusion**

I know that many students entering my classroom next year will have studied *Sula* and *Things Fall Apart*. This should help me better prepare them to learn how to analyze and interpret *Front Desk* and *The Night Diary* as postcolonial Young Adult fiction. Similarly, they will come to recognize that both Yang and Hiranandani are writing within a postcolonial artistic continuum, though they have the capacity to reach younger readers as well. I look forward to teaching these

novels in the future, while expanding on my capacity to teach postcolonial and immigrant texts from a variety of cultures and genres.

## **Rubrics**

[Collaboration Rubric](#)

[Copy of Rubric for group presentations](#)

## **Pennsylvania ELA Standards**

### 1.2 Reading Informational Text

Students read, understand, and respond to informational text—with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence.

CC.1.2.11–12.C Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas, sequence of events, or specific individuals over the course of the text.

CC.1.2.11–12.D Evaluate how an author’s point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CC.1.2.11–12.E 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.

CC.1.2.11–12.F Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

CC.1.2.11–12.G Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### 1.4 Writing

Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.

CC.1.4.11–12.A Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.

CC.1.4.11–12.B Write with a sharp, distinct focus identifying topic, task, and audience.

CC.1.4.11–12.D Organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a whole; use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text; provide a concluding statement or section that supports the information presented; include formatting when useful to aiding comprehension.

CC.1.4.11–12.M Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CC.1.4.11–12.N Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple points of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters.

CC.1.4.11–12.O Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, reflection, multiple plotlines, and pacing to develop experiences, events, and/or characters; use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, settings, and/or characters.

CC.1.4.11–12.R Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

CC.1.2.11–12.A Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the central ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.2.11–12.B Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and conclusions based on and related to an author's implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs.

CC.1.2.11–12.I Analyze foundational U.S. and world documents of historical, political, and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

CC.1.2.11–12.J Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college- and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

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