

### Highlights of Presentation

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Gunn, G (1987). *The culture of criticism and the criticism of culture*. New York: Oxford.

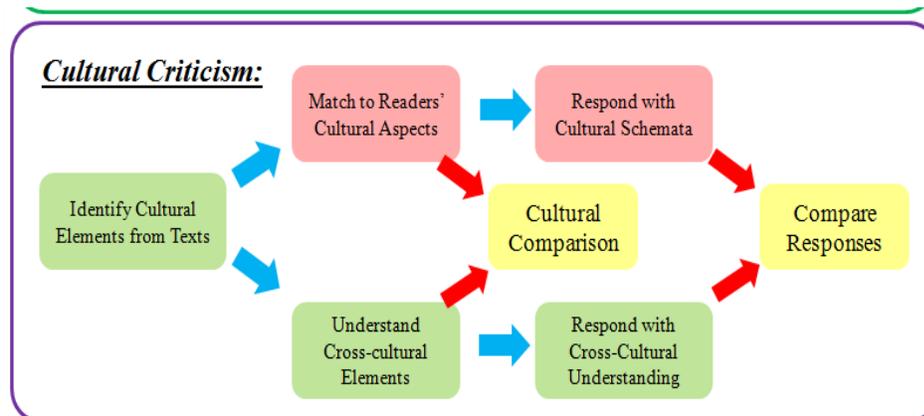
#### ***Cultural Criticism (Gunn, 1987):***

- Focus on the elements of culture and how they affect one's perceptions and understanding of texts;
- Examines how different religions, ethnicities, class identifications, political beliefs, and views affect the ways in which texts are created and interpreted.

#### **Fundamental Principles in Using Cultural Criticism in cross-cultural literature teaching and learning**

- a) consider students' cultural context
- b) provide students with opportunities to observe and experience characters' life experience influenced by the social cultural context at that time
- c) provide access to the first-hand resources that could reflect the authentic culture in the text
- (d) orient students to exploring a particular cultural issue or theme after a close reading of one or more literary works;
- (e) support students' inquiry towards a particular culture and facilitate cross-cultural communication in the learning process.

#### **Teaching Procedure in Employing a Cultural Criticism Approach**



- i) Instructor preselects the discussion topics and themes for the assigned literary works in each literary unit.

- ii) Students identify cultural elements and concepts from the literary text and from their own cultural schemata separately.
- iii) Students respond to the text separately based on the two types of identified culture in step (ii). Students compare their responses and provide a corrected response.

### **Group Leading Discussion Model for Practice Using Cultural Criticism**

**Guideline:** Read *Romeo and Juliet* thoroughly, select the scripts that are related to the following theme: Betrayal of arranged marriage in beloved people. Every group should assign three pieces of selected literature texts to the class, and make sure the group puts **forward five essential questions that are connected to the social cultural influence** (for example, parental authority, social status, economic security, and pedigree, class consciousness) on the marriage for the class before formal discussion.

### **I: Selected Literary Texts in *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare**

#### **Romeo and Juliet Selected Scripts 1**

Act 2, Scene 2, Capulet's Garden.

Scripts could be found in the following links:  
[http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page\\_78.html](http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page_78.html)

#### **Romeo and Juliet Selected Scripts 2**

Act 3, Scene 5, Capulet's orchard.

Scripts could be found in the following links:

[http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page\\_186.html](http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page_186.html)

### **Romeo and Juliet Selected Scripts 3**

Act 5, Scene 3, A churchyard; in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets

Scripts could be found in the following links:

[http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page\\_260.html](http://nfs.sparknotes.com/romeojuliet/page_260.html)

### **III: Sample Group Leading Questions:**

To answer the following questions, you may contextualize the British social culture in 16<sup>th</sup> century by researching the relevant literature to support your viewpoints.

- 1) What is Juliet's dad, Lord Capulet's attitude towards his daughter's marriage? How would you characterize the Capulets' marriage? Why does he hold such an attitude? Please justify your answer based on the British social culture in 16<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 2) Why do Romeo and Juliet marry in secret? What are the consequences of such secrecy?
- 3) How does the social culture (i.e. parental authority, relationship between two families, class consciousness) influences on the choice of marriage for the characters in the texts? Please choose at least one character in the novel to answer this question.
- 4) What are Romeo and Juliet's attitudes/values towards marriage? How does it conflict with their parents? What might account for the different cultural values towards marriage between Romeo and Juliet and Juliet's parents?

#### **Choose one of the following questions:**

- 1) What were the people's attitude towards marriage in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in China? Compare it with the values on marriage in *Romeo and Juliet's* story.
- 2) Romeo and Juliet sacrificed their lives in opposition to the marriage that Juliet's family wanted her to have. In your opinion, could Romeo and Juliet be considered a respectable couple in the modern Chinese society? Why? Please justify your answer.

## **II: Cultural Incident Study**

### **Directions:**

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Marriage is seemingly always on the minds of the characters in *Romeo and Juliet*. As we see in the novel, Juliet's attitude towards marriage always conflicts with her parents' views. For Juliet, marriage is a way of formally recognizing a shared emotional bond (love). For her parents, marriage is a means of securing wealth, status, and stability. Find out a literary script *Romeo and Juliet* that addresses the same theme. Keeping your attention focused on the theme of marriage and the elements of culture related to the marriage (for example, parental authority, social status, economic security, and pedigree, class consciousness). Then depict the cultural influences on the choice of marriage for the characters Romeo and Juliet, analyze the possible causes of the young woman, Juliet's betrayal of arranged marriage from her family. In this study, you need to contextualize the British social culture for marriage in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. You will need use a primary or secondary source to help you secure you own grasp on the main points of values towards marriage in Britain. The paper should be a five-page narrative writing piece.