



Native American Literature

Day #1: Historical Background and
Culture

Then vs. Now



Then vs. Now



Then vs. Now



Then vs. Now



Then vs. Now



Fact vs. Stereotype



"We are Still Here"

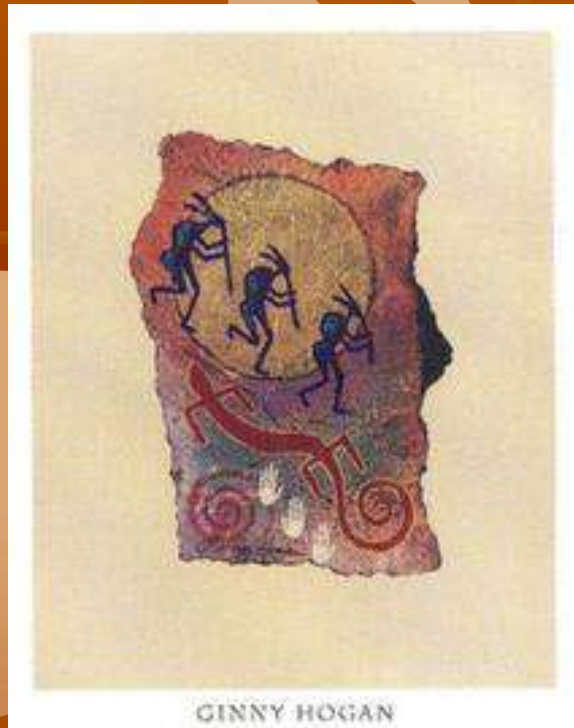
Rebel Music: Native America

- Some cultures were lost due to disease and forced religion, relocation, and education
- Many still survive today in reservations, cities, and suburbs.
- Literature is still sung, told, and written down in English
- Most modern literature is about harmonizing old with new practices and beliefs

The Origins of NA Literature

- Let's talk about the original Native Americans and the first literature produced in America.

The First Americans



- The original native peoples belonged to more than 200 distinct groups who spoke more than 500 different languages.
- Names of these peoples such as Anishinabe and Lakota meant “the people.”

The First Americans

- Life was dictated by natural surroundings which varied greatly.
- Complex religions, sophisticated political systems, strong social values all reflected their literature



What themes are prevalent in Native American Lit?

- Living in harmony with the natural world
- Kinship with animals, plants, the land, heavenly bodies (ancestors), and the elements
- All of the above are seen as alive, aware and sacred as a whole.
- Humans are seen as a part of nature; they must maintain a right relationship with the world around them.

Forms of Literature



- Performed orally in storytellings or play-like performances.
- While stories may differ from the originals, they still have the beauty, wisdom, and humor of the Native American oral literature.

Rabbit's Wish For Snow

- While you listen to the following story:
 - Summarize the main events.
 - Write the moral/lesson of the story.
 - Give examples of what the speaker did to make the performance memorable.

Rabbit's Wish for Snow



Native American Literature

Culture and Literature

From our last class: What themes are prevalent in Native American Lit?

- **Living in harmony with the natural world**
- **Kinship with animals, plants, the land, heavenly bodies (ancestors), and the elements**
- **All of the above are seen as alive and aware as well as seen as a sacred whole**

What themes are prevalent in Native American Lit?

- **Humans are seen as a part of nature; they must maintain a right relationship with the world around them.**

Types of Literature

- **Creation Myths:**
Explain the beginning of the world
- **Trickster Tales:**
Transformed the world into its present state
- **Didactic Myth:**
Teaching social norms
- **Pictographs:** Picture stories (somewhat like cave drawings)



Ritual Songs/Chants:
Belonging to religious ceremonies

Types of Literature

**Didactic Myths:
teach social norms**

“Kivioq”

Archetypes

What is an archetype?

- An archetype is the way we describe characters; think of them as general categories of characters.

Archetypes

Which archetypes are seen in Native American Literature?

- **Trickster:** a god, goddess, spirit, human, or animal who plays pranks or disobeys normal rules and behaviors.
- **Earth Mother:** the bountiful spirit of the earth
- **Faithful Companion:** supports the hero along the way

Types of Literature

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Types of Literature

Creation Myth

Archetype: Earth-Mother

“World on the Turtle’s Back”

Read along! Listen and let your imagination create pictures in your mind!

“World on the Turtle’s Back”

1. What is a creation myth?
2. How did the animals help the woman who fell from the sky?
3. What are the differences between the twins?
4. Why do the Iroquois honor both the left-handed twin and the right-handed twin?
5. Creation Myths have four functions or roles. They instill awe, explain the world, support customs, and guide people. Which of these four functions does this Iroquois creation myth best serve and why?

Partner Activity

With your partner, choose ONE of the following:

1. Brainstorm together what both of you would include in a letter to your creator. Then write a one-page letter to this creator and describe the things this creator has done well and ask important questions.
2. Illustrate yours and your partner's beliefs about the creation of the world using coloring utensils. Stick to the topic of creation and provide a full paragraph explaining the image. Put the paragraph underneath.
3. Compare and contrast both of your beliefs about the world's creation to the one presented in the story. Create a detailed Venn Diagram with 3 circles to list details of how your views, your partner's views, and the story's views are different.

Trickster Tales: Group Work

- In groups of 3, complete 1 assignment.