

LESSON 3: RELATIONSHIPS



SELLY RABY KANE
JANT YI

OVERVIEW

The film *Jant Yi*, by Senegalese filmmaker and fashion designer Selly Raby Kane, is set in a dystopian future Dakar. The artist uses the narrative, characters, and visual techniques to invite viewers to consider the relationship between humans and energy, as well as our shared responsibility to the environment. Students will explore the imaginary versus reality and create their own zine.

Objectives:

1. Students will explore contemporary discussions of energy through a dystopian lens of science fiction and mythology.
2. Students will explore themes of relationship, responsibility, and power dynamics.
3. Students will utilize interdisciplinary and creative thinking skills to inhabit the imaginary as a brave space for sowing potential futures.
4. Students will generate their own ideas by creating a zine that reflects an environmental issue they are passionate about.

Lesson Plan:

1. Introduction: 5 minutes
2. Screen Film: 5 minutes
3. Group Discussion: 15 minutes
4. Partner Talk: 10 minutes
5. Activity: 20 minutes
6. Conclusion: 5 minutes

Key Terms & Vocabulary: Climate Change, Energy, Labor, Community, Dystopian, Mythology, Offshore Oil Drilling, Oracle, Power Dynamics, Regenerative, Science Fiction

Materials:

1. Scissors
2. Provided activity sheets (to be printed)
3. Writing tools (pens, (colored) pencils, markers)

1 INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Welcome students.

Today, we will watch a film that blurs the lines between imagination, mythology, and reality. We will work together to understand the film and consider the concept of relationship. Specifically, we will explore human relationships with each other, energy, and our environment. We will now discuss some terms that will help us better understand how the artist communicates their ideas.

Q: How would you define the term “dystopian”?

A: Dystopian denotes an imagined state or society where there is great suffering or injustice.

Q: How would you define the term “mythology”?

A: Mythology is a collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

Q: How would you define the term “science fiction”?

A: Science-Fiction is fiction based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space, time travel, or life on other planets.

Let’s keep these terms in mind as we work through this lesson.

2 SCREEN FILM (5 MINUTES)

We will now watch a film titled *Jant Yi*, by an artist named Selly Raby Kane. The artist, based in Dakar, is both a filmmaker and a fashion designer.



ACTION: As we watch the film together, please consider:

1. Which parts of the film do you believe are imagined, and which do you believe are realistic?
2. What relationships are present in the film, and how do they function?

3 GROUP DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

Take a moment to recall what we just saw in the film.

Q: What first comes to mind or stands out about the film?

Q: What is the overall plot or story that the filmmaker is presenting?

Q: What are the leaders trying to harvest or collect? How and why are they doing so?

Q: Who are the main characters in the film?

Q: What is the major conflict? What conflicting desires are present in the film?

While the characters and working conditions are fictional, there are some aspects of the film that resonate with reality.

Q: What aspects of the film did you find to be based on imagination and mythology?

Q: What aspects of the film did you find most realistic or believable?

A: Exploitation of environmental resources, power dynamics, Sangomar

Great answers. The dystopian elements of the film represent fears around natural resources, people with power, and the environment.

Q: Based on the plot and characters, what does the filmmaker warn us about?

Q: How do the characters depend on one another to create a regenerative world?

Q: How do the characters depend on the environment?

4 PARTNER TALK (10 MINUTES)

Pair up with a partner sitting next to you. Work together to answer the following questions below.

In the film, the most significant relationships between people and the environment surround the potential offshore drilling of Sangomar. While there are economic incentives for offshore drilling of oil and gas, there are negative consequences for humans and the environment.

Q: Can you recall Sangomar in the film?

Q: What is Sangomar?

Q: What is happening to Sangomar?

Q: Why does the oracle in the film ask the main character to work against the government's plans to drill?

Q: What negative impact can oil and gas drilling cause on the planet?

Q: What might this teach us about our responsibility to the environment?

Ask groups to share their insights from the partner talk discussion.

5 ACTIVITY: FUTURIST ZINE (20 MINUTES)

Students will now work independently to create a zine (mini magazine), to explore their own hopes for a safe environmental future.

Filmmaker Selly Raby Kane uses mythology and futurist imaginations to caution us about potentially dangerous relationships between humans and the environment. The artist also offers us space to consider how to respond to these dangers.

Students will now be prompted to consider one relationship between humans and the environment that they are passionate about, and create a zine to express cautionary ideas.

- Step 1** Ask students to consider the following questions prior to designing their zines:
1. What is one relationship between humans and the environment that you are passionate about, i.e., recycling, fishing, agriculture, consumerism, fast fashion, etc.?
 2. In what ways can this relationship be improved upon? In what ways can this relationship offer environmental solutions?
 3. Identify specific actions or best practices that can come from this relationship and contribute to an environmentally safer future. Use the zine to share your ideas through drawings and text.
- Step 2** Prepare your materials. Students will need scissors and the attached zine-making sheet or a blank piece of paper where they can draw the template. Students will also need a writing tool (pencil, pen, marker, etc.).
- Step 3** Follow the zine-making instructions in order to help students cut and fold their individual zines.
- Note:** This can be modified as a partner or group activity.
Note: You might want to prepare these in advance if the class is short on time.
- Step 4** Give students time to create their zines, applying their thoughts from Step 1 through drawings and text.
- Step 5** Invite two to three participants to briefly share their work with the class.

6 CONCLUSION (5 MINUTES)

Today we have considered our individual and collective relationships with the environment. The film *Jant Yi* gave us several ways to explore these ideas.

Concluding Questions:

- Q:** What was your favorite part of the film or the lesson today?
- Q:** How did the artist use imagination and mythology to raise environmental issues?
- Q:** What did you learn about your impact on or relationship to the environment?
- Q:** What are some small acts that we can take every day to protect our surroundings?
- Q:** Are there any other questions or comments before we end our lesson for the day?

GLOSSARY

Climate Change (noun): A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change beginning in the 20th century and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by humans using fossil fuels.

Community (noun): A group of people living in the same place or having a characteristic in common.

Dystopian (adjective): Relating to or denoting an imagined state or society where there is great suffering or injustice.

Energy (noun): Power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, especially to provide light, heat or electricity.

Labor (noun): Work, especially hard physical work.

Mythology (noun): A collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

Offshore Oil Drilling (transient verb): The process of drilling holes in the ocean seabed, lakes, and inland seas for oil.

Oracle (noun): A priestess acting as a medium through whom advice or prophecy was sought from the gods in classical antiquity.

Power Dynamics (noun): The way different people or different groups of people interact with each other and where one of these sides is more powerful than the other one(s).

Regenerative (transient verb): To regrow or be renewed or restored, with the intention to improve upon what has been damaged or lost.

Science-Fiction (noun): Fiction based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space, time travel, or life on other planets.

FUTURIST ZINE (ACTIVITY, DESIGN A MINI MAGAZINE!)

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1. **First**, use this template to sketch or outline your zine, including your hopes and dreams for an environmentally safe future.
2. After you draft your ideas, cut and fold a blank piece of paper to create your zine. Then, create your final zine!

Page 4	Page 3	Page 2	Page 1
Page 5	Page 6	Back Cover	Front Cover