



**UNESCO Chair
on Visual Anticipation
and Futures Literacy
towards Visual Literacy**



TROJAN WOMEN RE-IMAGINED

ACTIVITY 5: CULTURAL NARRATIVES & COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDINGS

Objective

The objective of this activity is to explore how cultural narratives evolve and persist over time, shaping collective understandings of concepts (e.g. freedom, heroism, beauty).

Preparation

The instructor informs learners on the objective of the activity. Learners watch the film (17') and take notes.

Instructions

Divide learners into groups and assign each a concept introduced in the film (e.g. freedom, heroism, homeland, beauty).

Each group finds sources (texts, art, media clips etc.) from different historical periods or cultures that reflect the assigned concept and identifies the central values and assumptions underpinning the narratives.

Learners analyse how the representation of the concept changes or remains constant, noting the influence of cultural, social, or political factors.

Each group creates a 'concept timeline' illustrating the evolution of the narrative and presents it to the plenary.

Learners rewrite, individually or in groups, the narrative of the assigned concept from the perspective of an excluded or marginalized voice.

Indicative Discussion Questions

- ✚ What do persistent cultural narratives reveal about the values, aspirations, and fears of the society that created them?
- ✚ How do persistent cultural narratives influence contemporary life and with what consequences?
- ✚ Why do societies insist on preserving cultural narratives that generate conflict and divides?
- ✚ How do cultural narratives reinforce or challenge existing societal structures?



- ✚ How shifting perspectives can illuminate biases in the original narrative?
- ✚ How does reframing a narrative challenge collective structures?
- ✚ How do arts, symbols, media, and rituals, among others, embody and perpetuate cultural narratives?
- ✚ How deeply rooted cultural narratives influence our perceptions of the future?

Outcome

Learners write a brief reflection entitled “What collective narratives do we fight for today, what are their sources and how do they impact our collective lives?”

Recommended Application of Visual Literacy tools

This activity is mostly compatible with the “Babel”, the “Visuality Iceberg”, the “Wall”, the “Barcoded Baby”, the “Alternative Futures”, the “Frame”, and the “Reframing Concepts” visual literacy tools.

NOTE: The Visual Literacy tools list is accessible at <https://vickykaraiskou.com/> Check the “Visual Literacy” tab and go at the “Visual Literacy tools” page.