

Name: _____ Mark: _____ / 26

Teacher or Date and Time: _____

Read from “Stoop-Sitting” to “Sharing”

In this week’s homework, we will look at the life of a girl—through her eyes—to see what she and many others go through. To this end, we will (re)introduce ourselves to several issues that females confront, and we will connect them to the said girl. If you have not guessed who the girl is by now, she is the protagonist of the novel *The Poet X*.

Girl Trouble

Read about the issues that females confront in the boxes, and answer the accompanying questions that relate them to Xiomara of *The Poet X*.

From *A Glossary of Literary and Cultural Theory* by Peter Booker

A specific theory of the ‘male gaze’ was elaborated by Laura Mulvey in her extremely influential essay ‘Visual pleasure and narrative cinema’ (first published in *Screen* 16:3 Autumn 1975 and reprinted many times). Mulvey drew on Freud’s concept of ‘scopophilia’ (a translation of Freud’s German *Schaulust*) to designate the pleasure of watching screen images . . . Viewing images in a darkened cinema is likened to ‘voyeuristic phantasy’ . . . Mulvey draws out the implicit gender imbalance in the psychoanalytic theorization of these concepts and argues that in dominant or mainstream cinema, the gaze in question is male, and that it is men who are invited to view and desire women on screen as objects. Scopophilia thus means ‘taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze.’ Men look while women are positioned as sexual objects who can only exhibit ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ (1989b: 16, 19).

I. How is Xiomara subjected to males’ gazes or scopophilia, and how does she respond?

Content: _____ / 1.5 Grammar: _____ / 0.5

From *The Objectification Spectrum: Understanding and Transcending Our Diminishment and Dehumanization of Others* by John M. Rector

Andrea Dworkin (2000[1985]) was one of the first to offer a feminist definition of the term in her attempts to underscore the problem of male domination of females as typified by the pornography industry:

Objectification occurs when a human being, through social means, is made less than human, turned, into a thing or commodity, bought and sold. When objectification occurs, a person is depersonalized, so that no individuality or integrity is available socially or in what an extremely circumscribed privacy. Objectification is an injury right at the heart of discrimination: those who can be used if they are not fully human are no longer fully human in social terms; their humanity is hurt by being diminished. (pp 30-31)

2. Who objectifies Xiomara and how do they do so?

Content: _____ / 1.5 Grammar: _____ / 0.5

From *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender*

Slut shaming refers to deliberate efforts to discredit people by associating them with sexual deviancy, especially sexual immodest and promiscuity. Victims of slut shaming, who are disproportionately girls and women, may attain a poor reputation, experience social isolation and a loss of social status, as well as feel negative, painful emotions such as embarrassment, humiliation, regret, and sadness.

3. Who slut-shames Xiomara, and why do you think they do it?

Content: _____ / 1.5 Grammar: _____ / 0.5

From *Sexual Assault: The Ultimate Teen Guide* by Olivia Ghafoerkhan

When people hear the term *sexual assault* they often think of a man in a dark mask, hiding in an alley at night with a knife or a gun. People think of forcible rape by a stranger.

There are several different kinds of sexual assault, however. Rape is a form of sexual assault. Any sexual contact without express consent is sexual assault.

4. When and where is Xiomara sexually assaulted, and what does it suggest about society?

Content: _____ / 1.5 Grammar: _____ / 0.5

From *Gender Development* by Susan Golombok

Stereotypes are organized sets of beliefs about characteristics of all members of a particular group. A *gender stereotype* then is defined as a set of beliefs about what it means to be female or male. Gender stereotypes include information about physical appearance, attitudes and interests, psychological traits, social relations, and occupations (Ashmore, DelBoca, & Walers, 1986; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Huston, 1985, 1983).

5. What gender stereotypes are Xiomara expected to embody, and how does she not fit or resist them? You may compare her to other characters in the novel.

Content: _____ / 1.5 Grammar: _____ / 0.5

Female Gaze

Read and annotate the following the poem. Refer to the “Questions to consider” in this week’s handout for ideas. (4 marks)

“Medusa” by Carl Ann Duffy

A suspicion, a doubt, a jealousy
grew in my mind,
which turned the hairs on my head to filthy snakes
as though my thoughts
hissed and spat on my scalp.

My bride’s breath soured, stank
in the grey bags of my lungs.
I’m foul mouthed now, foul tongued,
yellow fanged.
There are bullet tears in my eyes.
Are you terrified?

Be terrified.
It’s you I love,
perfect man, Greek God, my own;
but I know you’ll go, betray me, stray
from home.
So better by for me if you were stone.

I glanced at a buzzing bee,
a dull grey pebble fell
to the ground.
I glanced at a singing bird,
a handful of dusty gravel
spattered down.

I looked at a ginger cat,
a housebrick
shattered a bowl of milk.
I looked at a snuffling pig,
a boulder rolled
in a heap of shit.

I stared in the mirror.
Love gone bad
showed me a Gorgon.
I stared at a dragon.
Fire spewed
from the mouth of a mountain.

And here you come
with a shield for a heart
and a sword for a tongue
and your girls, your girls.
Wasn't I beautiful
Wasn't I fragrant and young?

Look at me now.

1. Why does Xiomara relate to Medusa? Could she relate to the Medusa of Carol Ann Duffy's poem?

Content: ____ / 3 Grammar: ____ / 1

Herstory

Throughout *The Poet X*, Xiomara makes allusions to biblical women. Read about one of the following three: Delilah, Lot's Wife, or Eve.

I. Compare and contrast Xiomara to the biblical woman you selected.

Content: ____ / 3 Grammar: ____ / 1

First Draft of Assignment I

Write about the most impact day of your life.. Attach a rough draft for potential bonus marks.

[illegible]

Grammar: There are no errors.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75 2
Language: The writing is descriptive, emotive, and fitting.	0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75 2
Content: It is evident why the day you wrote about is the most meaningful one of your life. In other words, the explanations are thoughtful	0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75 2 2.25 2.5 2.75 3 3.25 3.5 3.75 4