

Lesson 10: The Author Narrates

What's on for today and why:

Today we'll be looking at the chapters where Marita Golden speaks in her own voice. This is very interesting because most novels express the author's point of view through the characters, but she has been able to separate herself from the characters as if she had not written each of the other narratives and needs her own chapters to bring her own voice into the novel. It really illustrates the idea that a personal narrative is displaying a character's opinions and emotions, not the author's.

What to do:

1) Ask the students to open their books to pages 209-211. Ask them who is speaking in this section. See if anyone is able to realize that it is Marita Golden's voice coming through. Once they come to that conclusion (or you lead them there) ask them why she would put chapters in her own words into a book about other people. Make sure you make the connections to the use of personal narratives and why the author felt she could not put her own feelings into someone else's chapter. Ask them how they feel about her having done this, ask them to look and see if they commented on this chapter in their journals and what they said.

2) Now tell the students that they are about to get the chance to write a narrative that will be added to the book. It should be written in their own voices and express some feeling they have in conjunction with the novel. They may begin it in class, but take it home to finish it and then hand it in the next day for a grade.

How did it go?

Talking about the author's desire to get into the game makes her a lot more human to the students. Getting them to do the same thing that she did helps them relate and really puts them into the novel instead of just being observers. It also shows them the limitations placed on the author when trying to write a novel in the form of personal narratives, which should broaden their perspectives on the subject.