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Innholdsfortegnelse

Innholdsfortegnelse **2**

1 The Joy of Reading **9**

A Collection of Short Stories 9

Eveline 9

The Story of an Hour 12

Desiree's Baby 15

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky 20

The Sun in my Eyes 28

Flush of Gold 30

Everything Will Be Allright 34

Popular Mechanics 40

Lispeth 42

How the Garden Grows 46

The Drover's Wife 50

What do you read? 55

Comics and Cartoons 55

Crime - Disturbing, Dark, and Delightful 59

Fact or Fiction - or Both 62

Science Fiction 65

Kids' Stuff 69

Life on Record - Biographies 73

Text Appeal 76

"Whodunit" - The Classic Crime Plot 80

Humour - a Serious Matter 84

Good Bad Books 88

One for the Ladies 91

Words from the Good Book 94

Poetry in Touch with Life 96

A Brief Guide to the Menu 96

Moonstruck and Dazzled 97

Die For Your Country 101

All You Need is Love 103

The Bitter Taste of Success 106

Vertical Slum 108

Lynching and Hanging - and all that Jazz 110

Ethnocentrism 112

Choices 114
On the Outside Looking in 116
Expendables 119
An Endless Pursuit 123
Book Reviews 125
Why I Love Reading (audio) 125
One to Read 126
A Close Study of the novel The Help by Kathryn.. 130
Art with an Agenda 134
More than Entertainment 134
Songs of Discontent 137
2 Cultural Aspects 142
Anglo-American Culture 142
Crime on TV - To Catch a Killer at all Costs 142
From Soap Operas to Teen Drama 145
Hollywood 148
Hollywood Show-Down 150
James Dean - American Icon 152
James Dean - American Icon / fagstoff 152
John Lennon - Working Class Hero 153
Reality Series - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly 157
The World of TV Series - How They Affect Us 159
Music, Film, and Literature 161
"The Book was Better." Literature and Film 161
Turning Novels into Film Successes 165
Turning Novels into Film Successes / aktualitet 165
American Tune 170
Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen - Rock Poets 172
Poetry Meets Rock 176
Times They are a Changin': Music and Change 178
West Side Story 180
Youth Culture 182
News and Trends 186
Yo! 186
Good Bad Guys 189
Talking Heads 192
This is Your FuturE-Book 195

THE BEST ROCK ARTISTS EVER 199

3 Art and Architecture 201

Church and Cathedral 201

Visit a Cathedral - St. Giles' in Edinburgh 201

Images and Paintings 203

I. William Hogarth (1697 – 1764), Marriage à-l.. 203

II. John Constable (1776 – 1837), The Haywain,.. 205

III. Georgia O'Keeffe, Ram's Head and White Ho.. 206

IV. Jasper Johns, American Flag, 1954 209

V. Roy Lichtenstein, Whaam! 210

VI. British Pop Art - Richard Hamilton 212

Art on Display 213

Dedication to Art - Peggy Guggenheim in Venice 213

Dedication to Art - Peggy Guggenheim in Venice / fagstoff 215

4 The Big Screen 217

Literature and Film 217

Frankenstein Revisited 217

Working with Film 218

One to Watch 218

How to Analyze a Film 227

Braveheart 230

Once Were Warriors 233

Avatar - Unique Box Office Success 236

Mississippi Burning - Working with the Film 238

Forrest Gump 240

The Constant Gardener 242

Freedom Writers 245

The Iron Lady 247

The King's Speech 249

5 Literature 1550 to 1780 251

The Renaissance 251

The Renaissance - Science, Religion and Philos.. 251

Introduction to the Renaissance 253

Hamlet - an Introduction 255

The Language of the Elizabethan Age 257

Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare 259

William Shakespeare - His Life and Works 265
Shakespeare's Sonnets 267
Elizabethan Lyrics 269
The Enlightenment 272
The Enlightenment - An Introduction 272
Jonathan Swift and Gulliver's Travels 274
Satire - Definition and Approach 277
A Modest Proposal by Jonathan Swift 278
A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General 280
Robinson Crusoe - the Enlightenment Man 282
Benjamin Franklin and Poor Richard 283

6 Literature 1780 to 1840 287
Romantic Poetry 287
The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe 287
Annabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe 290
The Solitary Reaper by William Wordsworth 292
The Tables Turned by William Wordsworth 294
Upon Westminster Bridge by William Wordsworth 296
Two Critical Poems by Percy Bysshe Shelley 298
Tam o' Shanter by Robert Burns 300
The Echoing Green by William Blake 303
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 305
So We'll Go No More a-Roving by Lord Byron 309
The Human Seasons by John Keats 311
Romantic Prose 312
Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë 312
The Gothic Novel 315
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein 317
Edgar Allan Poe - An Introduction 319
The Tell-Tale Heart 321
"The Wizard of the North" 323
Jane Austen - Romantic or Realist 326
Pride and Prejudice 329
Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice 200th Anniversary 331
The Romantic Era 332
The Romantic Period - An Introduction 332
Revolution and Love 335

Percy Bysshe Shelley - A Romantic Rebel 338
Robert Burns 340

7 Literature 1840 to 1900 345

Authors of the Victorian Age 345
Charles Dickens - An Introduction 345
Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad - Late Victoria.. 348
Victorian Literature - more than Dickens 349
Oscar Wilde - a 19th Century Celebrity 351
American Literature in the 19th Century 353
Emily Dickinson - Life and Poetry 353
Emily Dickinson - Life and Poetry / fagstoff 353
Walden by Henry David Thoreau 354
I Hear America Singing by Walt Whitman 357
Stephen Crane - An American Naturalist 359
Mark Twain - An American Realist 360
Tom Sawyer 364
Reality and Realism in the Late 19th Century A.. 366
Science and Philosophy during The Vitorian Era 369
Charles Darwin 369
Karl Marx 371
The Literature of The Victorian Period 373
Hard Times 373
The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde 378
The Lady of Shalott 383
Home-Thoughts From Abroad by Robert Browning 388
The Cry of The Children by Elizabeth Barrett B.. 389
Alice in Wonderland 392
The Selfish Giant (Oscar Wilde) 396
The Victorian Period 397
The Victorian Period - An Introduction 397
The Correlation between Science and Literature.. 400
At Heaven's Command 402

8 Literature after 1900 403

Contemporary Literature 403
A Close Study of the Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck 403
"Amundsen" by Alice Munro 415
The Cider House Rules by John W Irving 418

Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" 436
Alice Munro 438
Doris Lessing 439
Modernism 440
Modernism - An Introduction 440
Modernist Poetry 443
American Poetry - From Traditionalism to Modernism 443
Four Selected Poems by William Butler Yeats 446
The Waste Land by Thomas Stearns Eliot 449
Langston Hughes 451
Modernist Prose 456
"A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner 456
Indian Camp by Ernest Hemingway 457
Indian Camp by Ernest Hemingway / fagstoff 458
The Killers 460
Modernist Writers 461
Ernest Hemingway 461
Virginia Woolf 463
The Irish Renaissance 466
A Wider Horizon 468
Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies 468

9 Literary Skills 470

Genres 470
Literary Genres 470
How to analyse 472
How to Analyze Poetry 472
How to Analyze a Short Story 473
How to Analyze a Novel 476
Looking for Literary Devices 478
Literary Terminology 484
A Collection of Literary Animations 484
Check your Literary Vocabulary 487
Literary Terms 488
Poetry Vocabulary List 494
Writing 496
Write Your Own Short-Story 496
Mind the Gap (Short Story Writing) 500

Inspiration 504
Writing a Literary Essay 507
Suggested Topics for Essay Wrting 510
Use, Evaluate and Cite Sources of Information 511

11 Plans, Extras, and Revision 515

Advanced 515
Literature in Theory 515
Old Ideas Still Rule 517
Communicating Literature 520
Literature in the Classroom 520
Suggested Themes for Oral Presentation 523
Library and Links 525
Link Library 525
Plans 526
Planning the Year 526
Quiz 531
Literary Quiz 531

12 Language and Style 532

Literary Style 532
The Rough Guide to Literary Style 532
Literary Style - A Comparative Study 538
Style and Angle 542
Language and Vocabulary 546
Compare and Explain (Usage) 546
Vocabulary 1 548
Vocabulary 2 550
Vocabulary 3 551

1 The Joy of Reading

A Collection of Short Stories

Eveline

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Eveline (105209)

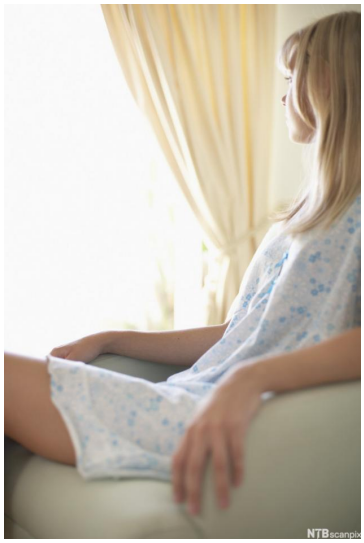
James Joyce (1882-1941) is one of the most influential writers in modern literature. He represents modernism with its experimental and complex writing. In that respect, the following story is not so typical of Joyce's style, since it is fairly straightforward and comprehensible. Still, we may easily spot clear and typical traits of modernist literature. *Eveline* was included in Joyce's first collection of stories - *Dubliners* (1914). His fiction is focused on everyday events, and the plot will often unfold in the mind of a protagonist; this style is called "stream of consciousness."
In literature, the word "epiphany" means the sudden clarification that brings light and truth out of an ordinary situation, a memory or a visual- or sense impression; it comes almost like a divine revelation. (The word is Greek and means "the manifestation of God.")
Follow the link below, and read more about James Joyce and the Irish Renaissance. When you have read the story, go back to the top and follow the link for tasks and activities.

James Joyce

Tasks and Activities

Eveline by James Joyce

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains, and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.
Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it – not like their little brown houses, but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field – the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.
Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out



Eveline
Fotograf: Corbis

the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margareth Mary Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

“He is in Melbourne now.”

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

“Miss Hill, don’t you see these ladies are waiting?”

“Look lively, Miss Hill, please”

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married – she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father’s violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl; but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother’s sake. And now she had nobody to protect her, Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decoration business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave up her entire wages – seven shillings – and Harry always sent up what he could, but the trouble was to get money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn’t going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about in the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday’s dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under the load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work – a hard life – but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the ight-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Aires, where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see The Bohemian Girl and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting, and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Aires, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

“I know these sailor chaps,” he said.
One day he had quarrelled with Frank, and after that she had to meet her lover secretly. The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite, but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother’s bonnet to make the children laugh.
Her time was running out, but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, the promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother’s illness; she was again in the close, dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given a sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sick-room saying:
“Damned Italians! Coming over here!”
As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother’s life laid its spell on the very quick of her being – that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother’s voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:
“Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!”
She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.
She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Aires. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.
A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:
“Come!”
All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.
“Come!”
No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.
“Eveline! Evvy!”
He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

The Story of an Hour

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Story of an Hour (104722)

The Story of an Hour
Fotograf: Somos Images

The Story of and Hour by Kate Chopin

Knowing that Mrs Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.
It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences, veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when the intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed". He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened for forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.
She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.
There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.
She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.
There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.
She sat down with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.
She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the colour that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will – as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: “Free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would liver for herself. There would be no powerful will bending her in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had lover him – sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door – you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running a riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs.

Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Richards’ quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of a heart disease – of joy that kills.

Activities

1 Basic Analysis

1. Write a brief summary of the plot. Skip unnecessary details; length about 6-8 lines.
2. What information do we get about the different characters, and what information do we not get?
3. Describe the setting. In what way is the setting related to the plot?
4. What would you say is the theme of the short story?

2 Looking for Details

1. What is the connection between the first and the last lines of the story?
2. The setting in Mrs Mallard's room is given a detailed description (the open window, the scent of rain and spring, a song, sparrows, patches of blue sky). How do you interpret all this?
3. Comment on the paragraph: "She was young… - …a suspension of intelligent thought."
4. Describe the transformation she goes through when she sits in her armchair. Point out some lines that illustrate this change.
5. Explain her different notions of "life might be long."
6. What is the bitter irony in the last sentence of the story?
7. In what way do the plot and the situation reveal when (and why) the story was written?
8. Read more about

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) was an American feminist writer who, in her literature, bravely took on the challenge of displaying the submissive situation for women at the time. Her main work, "The Awakening," scandalized the American reading public when it was published in 1899. It is the story about a young Louisiana woman who breaks away from her traditional roles as mother and wife to pursue her own intellectual and sexual awakening. The book was deemed as "unhealthy and essentially vulgar" by American critics. Kate Chopin was one of the pioneers of feminist literature; writing about women's rights and equality between the sexes in the last half of the 19th century certainly was both visionary and courageous. Kate Chopin lived in St. Louis and New Orleans, and most of her stories are set in Louisiana.

Desiree's Baby

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Desiree's Baby (115009)

"Big solemn oaks grew close..."
Fotograf: Robert Holmes

Desiree's Baby by Kate Chopin

As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmonde drove over to L'Abri to see Desiree and the baby.
It made her laugh to think of Desiree with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Desiree was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the gateway of Valmonde had found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar.
The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord, for she was of the toddling age. The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that Coton Mais kept, just below the plantation. In time Madame Valmonde abandoned every speculation but the one that Desiree had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her affection, seeing that she was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere,--the idol of Valmonde.
It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles.
Monsieur Valmonde grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded that she was nameless. What did it matter about a name when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Louisiana? He ordered the corbeille from Paris, and contained himself with what patience he could until it arrived; then they were married.
Madame Valmonde had not seen Desiree and the baby for four weeks. When she

reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad looking place, which for many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land too well ever to leave it. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their thick-leaved, far-reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the old master's easy-going and indulgent lifetime.

The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft white muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen asleep, at her breast. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself.

Madame Valmonde bent her portly figure over Desiree and kissed her, holding her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child.

"This is not the baby!" she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmonde in those days.

"I knew you would be astonished," laughed Desiree, "at the way he has grown. The little cochon de lait! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and fingernails,--real finger-nails. Zandrine had to cut them this morning. Isn't it true, Zandrine?"

The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, "Mais si, Madame."

"And the way he cries," went on Desiree, "is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin."

Madame Valmonde had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the baby narrowly, then looked as searchingly at Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields.

"Yes, the child has grown, has changed," said Madame Valmonde, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. "What does Armand say?"

Desiree's face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself.

"Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not,--that he would have loved a girl as well. But I know it isn't true. I know he says that to please me. And mamma," she added, drawing Madame Valmonde's head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, "he hasn't punished one of them--not one of them--since baby is born. Even Negrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work--he only laughed, and said Negrillon was a great scamp. oh, mamma, I'm so happy; it frightens me."

What Desiree said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny's imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what made the gentle Desiree so happy, for she loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand's dark, handsome face had not often been disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her.

When the baby was about three months old, Desiree awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to grasp. It had only been a disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful change in her husband's manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out.

He absented himself from home; and when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves. Desiree was miserable enough to die.

She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her peignoir, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. The baby, half naked, lay asleep upon her own great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche's little quadroon boys--half naked too--stood fanning the child slowly with a fan of peacock feathers.

Desiree's eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt closing about her. She looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. "Ah!" It was a cry that she could not help; which she was not conscious of having uttered. The blood turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face.

She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first. When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He laid aside the great, soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes.

She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright.

Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table and began to search among some papers which covered it.

"Armand," she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. "Armand," she said again. Then she rose and tottered towards him. "Armand," she panted once more, clutching his arm, "look at our child. What does it mean? tell me."

He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. "Tell me what it means!" she cried despairingly.

"It means," he answered lightly, "that the child is not white; it means that you are not white."

A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. "It is a lie; it is not true, I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown; and my eyes are gray, Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair," seizing his wrist. "Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand," she laughed hysterically.

"As white as La Blanche's," he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with their child.

When she could hold a pen in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmonde.

"My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God's sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live."

The answer that came was brief:

"My own Desiree: Come home to Valmonde; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child."

When the letter reached Desiree she went with it to her husband's study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless after she placed it there.

In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words.

He said nothing. "Shall I go, Armand?" she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense.

"Yes, go."

"Do you want me to go?"

"Yes, I want you to go."

He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife's soul. Moreover he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name.

She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back.

"Good-by, Armand," she moaned.

He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate.

Desiree went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it. She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches.

It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes

were picking cotton.
Desiree had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun's rays brought a golden gleam from its brown meshes. She did not take the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmonde. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds.
She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again.
Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L'Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide hallway that commanded a view of the spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze.
A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless layette. Then there were silk gowns, and velvet and satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the corbeille had been of rare quality.
The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribblings that Desiree had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Desiree's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's love:--
"But above all," she wrote, "night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery."

Tasks and Activities

1. In what way is the setting of "Desiree's Baby" especially important?
2. How would you characterise Armand?
3. A dynamic character is a person that changes during a story. Is Armand such a character? Give reasons for your answer.
4. What is the theme of the story?
5. What is the symbolic significance of the way L'Abri (Armand's place) is described? (Go back to the top and see the image.)
6. Comment on the conversation between Desiree and Madame Valmonde when she comes to see the baby. (Are they talking about the same thing?)
7. What was Armand's immediate reaction when he realised that the baby was not all white? How is this reaction related to the theme of the story?
8. When Desiree left "it was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking". How do you interpret this symbolically?
9. Comment on the class issue raised in "Desiree's Baby".
10. How does this story justify Kate Chopin's status as a feminist writer? Open the link below and read more about Kate Chopin.

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) was an American feminist writer, who in her literature, bravely took on the challenge of displaying the submissive situation for women at the time. Her main work, *The Awakening*, scandalized the American reading public when it was published in 1899. It is the story about a young Louisiana woman who breaks away from her traditional roles as mother and wife to pursue her own intellectual and sexual awakening. The book was deemed as "unhealthy and essentially vulgar" by American critics. Kate Chopin, who was one of the pioneers of feminist literature writing about women's rights and equality between the sexes in the last half of the 19th century, was certainly both visionary and courageous. Kate Chopin lived in St. Louis and New Orleans, and most of her stories are set in Louisiana.

Research

Go on the net and do some research about the French culture in Louisiana, both in the mid - late 19th century and today.

Key words:

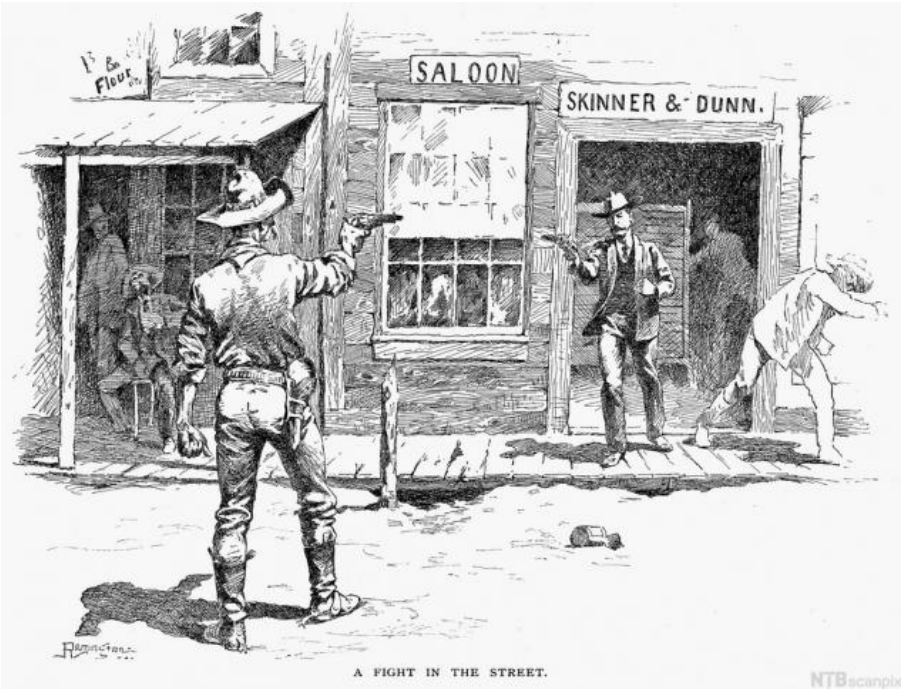
- Cajun and Cajun culture
- Acadia
- Creole
- The current status of French culture in Louisiana

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky (104933)

The classic Western story is a somewhat obsolete genre today, but not many decades ago people loved to read about the heroes of the Wild West. The following story is an interesting example because it seems to break with the rules of the genre at certain points, and it is obvious that it has a different agenda than the traditional Western usually had. Stephen Crane was an American Naturalist who portrayed his characters as victims of a powerful system that was out of their control, and which forced them into a destructive and degrading course of action.
Follow the links below for more information about the traditional Western genre and Stephen Crane. When you have read the story, go back to the top and follow links for tasks and activities.

- The Western
- Stephen Crane
- Tasks and Activities



Duel in the Main Street
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky by Stephen Crane

Part One

THE great Pullman was whirling onward with such dignity of motion that a glance from the window seemed simply to prove that the plains of Texas were pouring eastward. Vast flats of green grass, dull-hued spaces of mesquite and cactus, little groups of frame houses, woods of light and tender trees, all were sweeping into the east, sweeping over the horizon, a precipice.

A newly married pair had boarded this coach at San Antonio. The man's face was reddened from many days in the wind and sun, and a direct result of his new black clothes was that his brick-colored hands were constantly performing in a most

conscious fashion. From time to time he looked down respectfully at his attire. He sat with a hand on each knee, like a man waiting in a barber's shop. The glances he devoted to other passengers were furtive and shy.

The bride was not pretty, nor was she very young. She wore a dress of blue cashmere, with small reservations of velvet here and there and with steel buttons abounding. She continually twisted her head to regard her puff sleeves, very stiff, straight, and high. They embarrassed her. It was quite apparent that she had cooked, and that she expected to cook, dutifully. The blushes caused by the careless scrutiny of some passengers as she had entered the car were strange to see upon this plain, under-class countenance, which was drawn in placid, almost emotionless lines.

They were evidently very happy. "Ever been in a parlor-car before?" he asked, smiling with delight.

"No," she answered, "I never was. It's fine, ain't it?"

"Great! And then after a while we'll go forward to the diner and get a big layout. Finest meal in the world. Charge a dollar."

"Oh, do they?" cried the bride. "Charge a dollar? Why, that's too much -- for us -- ain't it, Jack?"

"Not this trip, anyhow," he answered bravely. "We're going to go the whole thing."

Later, he explained to her about the trains. "You see, it's a thousand miles from one end of Texas to the other, and this train runs right across it and never stops but four times." He had the pride of an owner. He pointed out to her the dazzling fittings of the coach, and in truth her eyes opened wider as she contemplated the sea-green figured velvet, the shining brass, silver, and glass, the wood that gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a pool of oil. At one end a bronze figure sturdily held a support for a separated chamber, and at convenient places on the ceiling were frescoes in olive and silver.

To the minds of the pair, their surroundings reflected the glory of their marriage that morning in San Antonio. This was the environment of their new estate, and the man's face in particular beamed with an elation that made him appear ridiculous to the negro porter. This individual at times surveyed them from afar with an amused and superior grin. On other occasions he bullied them with skill in ways that did not make it exactly plain to them that they were being bullied. He subtly used all the manners of the most unconquerable kind of snobbery. He oppressed them, but of this oppression they had small knowledge, and they speedily forgot that infrequently a number of travelers covered them with stares of derisive enjoyment. Historically there was supposed to be something infinitely humorous in their situation.

"We are due in Yellow Sky at 3:42," he said, looking tenderly into her eyes.

"Oh, are we?" she said, as if she had not been aware of it. To evince surprise at her husband's statement was part of her wifely amiability. She took from a pocket a little silver watch, and as she held it before her and stared at it with a frown of attention, the new husband's face shone.

"I bought it in San Anton' from a friend of mine," he told her gleefully.

"It's seventeen minutes past twelve," she said, looking up at him with a kind of shy and clumsy coquetry. A passenger, noting this play, grew excessively sardonic, and winked at himself in one of the numerous mirrors.

At last they went to the dining-car. Two rows of negro waiters, in glowing white suits, surveyed their entrance with the interest and also the equanimity of men who had been forewarned. The pair fell to the lot of a waiter who happened to feel pleasure in steering them through their meal. He viewed them with the manner of a fatherly pilot, his countenance radiant with benevolence. The patronage, entwined with the ordinary deference, was not plain to them. And yet, as they returned to their coach, they showed in their faces a sense of escape.

To the left, miles down a long purple slope, was a little ribbon of mist where moved the keening Rio Grande. The train was approaching it at an angle, and the apex was Yellow Sky. Presently it was apparent that, as the distance from Yellow Sky grew shorter, the husband became commensurately restless. His brick-red hands were more

insistent in their prominence. Occasionally he was even rather absent-minded and far-away when the bride leaned forward and addressed him.

As a matter of truth, Jack Potter was beginning to find the shadow of a deed weigh upon him like a leaden slab. He, the town marshal of Yellow Sky, a man known, liked, and feared in his corner, a prominent person, had gone to San Antonio to meet a girl he believed he loved, and there, after the usual prayers, had actually induced her to marry him, without consulting Yellow Sky for any part of the transaction. He was now bringing his bride before an innocent and unsuspecting community.

Of course, people in Yellow Sky married as it pleased them, in accordance with a general custom; but such was Potter's thought of his duty to his friends, or of their idea of his duty, or of an unspoken form which does not control men in these matters, that he felt he was heinous. He had committed an extraordinary crime. Face to face with this girl in San Antonio, and spurred by his sharp impulse, he had gone headlong over all the social hedges. At San Antonio he was like a man hidden in the dark. A knife to sever any friendly duty, any form, was easy to his hand in that remote city. But the hour of Yellow Sky, the hour of daylight, was approaching.

He knew full well that his marriage was an important thing to his town. It could only be exceeded by the burning of the new hotel. His friends could not forgive him. Frequently he had reflected on the advisability of telling them by telegraph, but a new cowardice had been upon him.

He feared to do it. And now the train was hurrying him toward a scene of amazement, glee, and reproach. He glanced out of the window at the line of haze swinging slowly in towards the train.

Yellow Sky had a kind of brass band, which played painfully, to the delight of the populace. He laughed without heart as he thought of it. If the citizens could dream of his prospective arrival with his bride, they would parade the band at the station and escort them, amid cheers and laughing congratulations, to his adobe home.

He resolved that he would use all the devices of speed and plains-craft in making the journey from the station to his house. Once within that safe citadel he could issue some sort of a vocal bulletin, and then not go among the citizens until they had time to wear off a little of their enthusiasm.

The bride looked anxiously at him. "What's worrying you, Jack?"

He laughed again. "I'm not worrying, girl. I'm only thinking of Yellow Sky."

She flushed in comprehension.

A sense of mutual guilt invaded their minds and developed a finer tenderness. They looked at each other with eyes softly aglow. But Potter often laughed the same nervous laugh. The flush upon the bride's face seemed quite permanent.

The traitor to the feelings of Yellow Sky narrowly watched the speeding landscape. "We're nearly there," he said.

Presently the porter came and announced the proximity of Potter's home. He held a brush in his hand and, with all his airy superiority gone, he brushed Potter's new clothes as the latter slowly turned this way and that way. Potter fumbled out a coin and gave it to the porter, as he had seen others do. It was a heavy and muscle-bound business, as that of a man shoeing his first horse.

The porter took their bag, and as the train began to slow they moved forward to the hooded platform of the car. Presently the two engines and their long string of coaches rushed into the station of Yellow Sky.

"They have to take water here," said Potter, from a constricted throat and in mournful cadence, as one announcing death. Before the train stopped, his eye had swept the length of the platform, and he was glad and astonished to see there was none upon it but the station-agent, who, with a slightly hurried and anxious air, was walking toward the water-tanks. When the train had halted, the porter alighted first and placed in position a little temporary step.

"Come on, girl," said Potter hoarsely. As he helped her down they each laughed on a false note. He took the bag from the negro, and bade his wife cling to his arm. As they slunk rapidly away, his hang-dog glance perceived that they were unloading the two

trunks, and also that the station-agent far ahead near the baggage-car had turned and was running toward him, making gestures. He laughed, and groaned as he laughed, when he noted the first effect of his marital bliss upon Yellow Sky. He gripped his wife's arm firmly to his side, and they fled. Behind them the porter stood chuckling fatuously.

Part Two

THE California Express on the Southern Railway was due at Yellow Sky in twenty-one minutes. There were six men at the bar of the "Weary Gentleman" saloon. One was a drummer who talked a great deal and rapidly; three were Texans who did not care to talk at that time; and two were Mexican sheep-herders who did not talk as a general practice in the "Weary Gentleman" saloon. The barkeeper's dog lay on the board walk that crossed in front of the door. His head was on his paws, and he glanced drowsily here and there with the constant vigilance of a dog that is kicked on occasion. Across the sandy street were some vivid green grass plots, so wonderful in appearance amid the sands that burned near them in a blazing sun that they caused a doubt in the mind. They exactly resembled the grass mats used to represent lawns on the stage. At the cooler end of the railway station a man without a coat sat in a tilted chair and smoked his pipe. The fresh-cut bank of the Rio Grande circled near the town, and there could be seen beyond it a great, plum-colored plain of mesquite.

Save for the busy drummer and his companions in the saloon, Yellow Sky was dozing. The new-comer leaned gracefully upon the bar, and recited many tales with the confidence of a bard who has come upon a new field.

" -- and at the moment that the old man fell down stairs with the bureau in his arms, the old woman was coming up with two scuttles of coal, and, of course -- "

The drummer's tale was interrupted by a young man who suddenly appeared in the open door. He cried: "Scratchy Wilson's drunk, and has turned loose with both hands." The two Mexicans at once set down their glasses and faded out of the rear entrance of the saloon.

The drummer, innocent and jocular, answered: "All right, old man. S'pose he has. Come in and have a drink, anyhow."

But the information had made such an obvious cleft in every skull in the room that the drummer was obliged to see its importance. All had become instantly solemn. "Say," said he, mystified, "what is this?" His three companions made the introductory gesture of eloquent speech, but the young man at the door forestalled them.

"It means, my friend," he answered, as he came into the saloon, "that for the next two hours this town won't be a health resort."

The barkeeper went to the door and locked and barred it. Reaching out of the window, he pulled in heavy wooden shutters and barred them. Immediately a solemn, chapel-like gloom was upon the place. The drummer was looking from one to another.

"But, say," he cried, "what is this, anyhow? You don't mean there is going to be a gun-fight?"

"Don't know whether there'll be a fight or not," answered one man grimly. "But there'll be some shootin' -- some good shootin'."

The young man who had warned them waved his hand. "Oh, there'll be a fight fast enough if anyone wants it. Anybody can get a fight out there in the street. There's a fight just waiting."

The drummer seemed to be swayed between the interest of a foreigner and a perception of personal danger.

"What did you say his name was?" he asked.

"Scratchy Wilson," they answered in chorus.

"And will he kill anybody? What are you going to do? Does this happen often? Does he rampage around like this once a week or so? Can he break in that door?"

"No, he can't break down that door," replied the barkeeper. "He's tried it three times. But when he comes you'd better lay down on the floor, stranger. He's dead sure to

shoot at it, and a bullet may come through."

Thereafter the drummer kept a strict eye upon the door. The time had not yet been called for him to hug the floor, but, as a minor precaution, he sidled near to the wall. "Will he kill anybody?" he said again.

The men laughed low and scornfully at the question.

"He's out to shoot, and he's out for trouble. Don't see any good in experimentin' with him."

"But what do you do in a case like this? What do you do?"

A man responded: "Why, he and Jack Potter -- "

"But," in chorus, the other men interrupted, "Jack Potter's in San Anton'."

"Well, who is he? What's he got to do with it?"

"Oh, he's the town marshal. He goes out and fights Scratchy when he gets on one of these tears."

"Wow," said the drummer, mopping his brow. "Nice job he's got."

The voices had toned away to mere whisperings. The drummer wished to ask further questions which were born of an increasing anxiety and bewilderment; but when he attempted them, the men merely looked at him in irritation and motioned him to remain silent. A tense waiting hush was upon them. In the deep shadows of the room their eyes shone as they listened for sounds from the street. One man made three gestures at the barkeeper, and the latter, moving like a ghost, handed him a glass and a bottle. The man poured a full glass of whisky, and set down the bottle noiselessly. He gulped the whisky in a swallow, and turned again toward the door in immovable silence. The drummer saw that the barkeeper, without a sound, had taken a Winchester from beneath the bar. Later he saw this individual beckoning to him, so he tiptoed across the room.

"You better come with me back of the bar."

"No, thanks," said the drummer, perspiring. "I'd rather be where I can make a break for the back door."

Whereupon the man of bottles made a kindly but peremptory gesture. The drummer obeyed it, and finding himself seated on a box with his head below the level of the bar, balm was laid upon his soul at sight of various zinc and copper fittings that bore a resemblance to armor-plate. The barkeeper took a seat comfortably upon an adjacent box.

"You see," he whispered, "this here Scratchy Wilson is a wonder with a gun -- a perfect wonder -- and when he goes on the war trail, we hunt our holes -- naturally. He's about the last one of the old gang that used to hang out along the river here. He's a terror when he's drunk. When he's sober he's all right -- kind of simple -- wouldn't hurt a fly -- nicest fellow in town. But when he's drunk -- whoo!"

There were periods of stillness. "I wish Jack Potter was back from San Anton'," said the barkeeper. "He shot Wilson up once -- in the leg -- and he would sail in and pull out the kinks in this thing."

Presently they heard from a distance the sound of a shot, followed by three wild yowls. It instantly removed a bond from the men in the darkened saloon. There was a shuffling of feet. They looked at each other. "Here he comes," they said.

Part Three

A man in a maroon-colored flannel shirt, which had been purchased for purposes of decoration and made, principally, by some Jewish women on the east side of New York, rounded a corner and walked into the middle of the main street of Yellow Sky. In either hand the man held a long, heavy, blue-black revolver. Often he yelled, and these cries rang through a semblance of a deserted village, shrilly flying over the roofs in a volume that seemed to have no relation to the ordinary vocal strength of a man. It was as if the surrounding stillness formed the arch of a tomb over him. These cries of ferocious challenge rang against walls of silence. And his boots had red tops with gilded imprints, of the kind beloved in winter by little sledding boys on the hillsides of New England.

The man's face flamed in a rage begot of whisky. His eyes, rolling and yet keen for ambush, hunted the still doorways and windows. He walked with the creeping movement of the midnight cat. As it occurred to him, he roared menacing information. The long revolvers in his hands were as easy as straws; they were moved with an electric swiftness. The little fingers of each hand played sometimes in a musician's way. Plain from the low collar of the shirt, the cords of his neck straightened and sank, straightened and sank, as passion moved him. The only sounds were his terrible invitations. The calm adobes preserved their demeanor at the passing of this small thing in the middle of the street.

There was no offer of fight; no offer of fight. The man called to the sky. There were no attractions. He bellowed and fumed and swayed his revolvers here and everywhere.

The dog of the barkeeper of the "Weary Gentleman" saloon had not appreciated the advance of events. He yet lay dozing in front of his master's door. At sight of the dog, the man paused and raised his revolver humorously. At sight of the man, the dog sprang up and walked diagonally away, with a sullen head, and growling. The man yelled, and the dog broke into a gallop. As it was about to enter an alley, there was a loud noise, a whistling, and something spat the ground directly before it. The dog screamed, and, wheeling in terror, galloped headlong in a new direction. Again there was a noise, a whistling, and sand was kicked viciously before it. Fear-stricken, the dog turned and flurried like an animal in a pen. The man stood laughing, his weapons at his hips.

Ultimately the man was attracted by the closed door of the "Weary Gentleman" saloon. He went to it, and hammering with a revolver, demanded drink.

The door remaining imperturbable, he picked a bit of paper from the walk and nailed it to the framework with a knife. He then turned his back contemptuously upon this popular resort, and walking to the opposite side of the street, and spinning there on his heel quickly and lithely, fired at the bit of paper. He missed it by a half inch. He swore at himself, and went away. Later, he comfortably fusilladed the windows of his most intimate friend. The man was playing with this town. It was a toy for him.

But still there was no offer of fight. The name of Jack Potter, his ancient antagonist, entered his mind, and he concluded that it would be a glad thing if he should go to Potter's house and by bombardment induce him to come out and fight. He moved in the direction of his desire, chanting Apache scalp-music.

When he arrived at it, Potter's house presented the same still front as had the other adobes. Taking up a strategic position, the man howled a challenge. But this house regarded him as might a great stone god. It gave no sign. After a decent wait, the man howled further challenges, mingling with them wonderful epithets.

Presently there came the spectacle of a man churning himself into deepest rage over the immobility of a house. He fumed at it as the winter wind attacks a prairie cabin in the North. To the distance there should have gone the sound of a tumult like the fighting of 200 Mexicans. As necessity bade him, he paused for breath or to reload his revolvers.

Part Four

Potter and his bride walked sheepishly and with speed. Sometimes they laughed together shamefacedly and low.

"Next corner, dear," he said finally.

They put forth the efforts of a pair walking bowed against a strong wind. Potter was about to raise a finger to point the first appearance of the new home when, as they circled the corner, they came face to face with a man in a maroon-colored shirt who was feverishly pushing cartridges into a large revolver. Upon the instant the man dropped his revolver to the ground, and, like lightning, whipped another from its holster. The second weapon was aimed at the bridegroom's chest.

There was silence. Potter's mouth seemed to be merely a grave for his tongue. He exhibited an instinct to at once loosen his arm from the woman's grip, and he dropped the bag to the sand. As for the bride, her face had gone as yellow as old cloth. She was a slave to hideous rites gazing at the apparitional snake.

The two men faced each other at a distance of three paces. He of the revolver smiled with a new and quiet ferocity.

"Tried to sneak up on me," he said. "Tried to sneak up on me!" His eyes grew more baleful. As Potter made a slight movement, the man thrust his revolver venomously forward. "No, don't you do it, Jack Potter. Don't you move a finger toward a gun just yet. Don't you move an eyelash. The time has come for me to settle with you, and I'm goin' to do it my own way and loaf along with no interferin'. So if you don't want a gun bent on you, just mind what I tell you."

Potter looked at his enemy. "I ain't got a gun on me, Scratchy," he said. "Honest, I ain't." He was stiffening and steadying, but yet somewhere at the back of his mind a vision of the Pullman floated, the sea-green figured velvet, the shining brass, silver, and glass, the wood that gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a pool of oil -- all the glory of the marriage, the environment of the new estate. "You know I fight when it comes to fighting, Scratchy Wilson, but I ain't got a gun on me. You'll have to do all the shootin' yourself." His enemy's face went livid. He stepped forward and lashed his weapon to and fro before Potter's chest. "Don't you tell me you ain't got no gun on you, you whelp. Don't tell me no lie like that. There ain't a man in Texas ever seen you without no gun. Don't take me for no kid." His eyes blazed with light, and his throat worked like a pump.

"I ain't takin' you for no kid," answered Potter. His heels had not moved an inch backward. "I'm takin' you for a -- -- -- fool. I tell you I ain't got a gun, and I ain't. If you're goin' to shoot me up, you better begin now. You'll never get a chance like this again."

So much enforced reasoning had told on Wilson's rage. He was calmer. "If you ain't got a gun, why ain't you got a gun?" he sneered. "Been to Sunday-school?"

"I ain't got a gun because I've just come from San Anton' with my wife. I'm married," said Potter. "And if I'd thought there was going to be any galoots like you prowling around when I brought my wife home, I'd had a gun, and don't you forget it."

"Married!" said Scratchy, not at all comprehending.

"Yes, married. I'm married," said Potter distinctly.

"Married?" said Scratchy. Seemingly for the first time he saw the drooping, drowning woman at the other man's side. "No!" he said. He was like a creature allowed a glimpse of another world. He moved a pace backward, and his arm with the revolver dropped to his side. "Is this the lady?" he asked.

"Yes, this is the lady," answered Potter.

There was another period of silence.

"Well," said Wilson at last, slowly, "I s'pose it's all off now."

"It's all off if you say so, Scratchy. You know I didn't make the trouble." Potter lifted his valise.

"Well, I 'low it's off, Jack," said Wilson. He was looking at the ground. "Married!" He was not a student of chivalry; it was merely that in the presence of this foreign condition he was a simple child of the earlier plains. He picked up his starboard revolver, and placing both weapons in their holsters, he went away. His feet made funnel-shaped tracks in the heavy sand.

The Sun in my Eyes

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Sun in My Eyes (84893)

Pre-reading: Allied forces are involved in many military operations in different countries around the world. UN peace keeping forces, allied EU efforts and NATO operations are examples where the western world has intervened in a conflict, either to protect civilians or to help overthrow a totalitarian regime. To some it might be an opportunity for some action and adventure, others are dedicated to the mission and feel they contribute to peace and democracy in the world.

A US soldier looks from a roof top during a mission

1. What do you think it is like to join these forces, and fight in a distant country for a cause you may not even identify with?
2. The soldiers go through intensive training before they leave, simulating all sorts of situations. But how can you be prepared for the unexpected?

The Sun in My Eyes / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125083

Comprehension

1. Where do you think this story takes place? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What does the Captain mean by saying “to satisfy the wolves out there”?
3. What were the narrator’s reactions to what happened?
4. What did he think of the help he was offered?
5. What were his "demons"?
6. At the end he speaks of an alternative. What do you think that might be?

Literary analysis

1. What do you see as the turning point of the story?
2. Describe the setting.
3. What do you think is the theme of the story?
4. Discuss symbolic elements.
5. Comment on the title of the story.

Vocabulary

Find the expressions / words that are used in the text with the following meanings:

1. Someone who fires his gun quite easily
2. On the loose, free to walk about
3. A bait
4. Classified information about military activity
5. Recordings on film
6. Pretending for training
7. Salvation

1. Trigger-happy cowboy
2. At large
3. Decoy
4. Intelligence
5. Footage

Discussion

1. Give some examples of external intervention in internal conflicts, and discuss the effect the interference had on the

6. Simulating outcome of the conflict.
7. Redemption
2. What motives do you think young people have who sign up for missions in a foreign country?
3. What is meant by "post-war trauma"? Search the net and find examples, facts and figures.

4. When western forces have intervened in internal conflicts (e.g. Iraq and Afghanistan) it is usually to contribute to establish what we could call a western concept of democracy. In what way can that be problematic?

Flush of Gold

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Flush of Gold (108767)

Jack London (1876-1916)

Few writers have had such an extensive production as Jack London. During his 15-year career, he wrote 49 books including novels, short-story collections, plays and political pamphlets - a number which equals more than three books a year. His contribution to early 20th century American literature is somewhat underestimated; critics claim that his vast production holds a varied literary quality. However, Jack London was an immensely popular author in his time, and his major works are enjoyed by a large audience even today.

Jack London
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Jack London, or John Griffith London, which was his original name, led a turbulent and dramatic life, and much of his writing was inspired by his own life experiences from the 1890s gold rush in Alaska to the sordid slums of East-End London. Thematically, his stories evolve around man's encounter with the harsh elements of untamed nature. Jack London's most famous novels are *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906) both set in the wilderness of Alaska, where wolves, sled dogs, greedy prospectors and loose women represent the different aspects of the fight for survival in the wild. The two stories have also been successfully adapted for film.

Jack London's writing belongs more to the naturalist and socio-critical tradition than the modernist style that was predominant at the time.

Flush of Gold by Jack London

Dawson City on the Yukon River
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Lon McFane didn't tell me what to expect at Surprise Lake. Surprise Lake? It was Surprise Cabin to me, as it turned out.

We came upon the cabin abruptly. For a week on trail we had met no one. And there is was, right before my eyes, a cabin. The next moment Lon had rapped on the door, and a woman's voice told him to enter.

"Have you seen Dave recently?" she asked.

"Nope," Lon answered carelessly. "I've been in the other direction, down Circle City way. Dave's up Dawson way, ain't he?"

I thought it was Dave coming when I heard your dogs," she said.

After that she said nothing, but seemed to be listening for the sound of dogs along the trail. Lon was cooking supper, while I lay back on the blankets and watched her. I looked at her face, unnoticed by her, and the longer I looked the harder it was to take

my eyes away. It was a wonderfully beautiful face.
Suddenly, as if for the first time, she seemed to notice my presence.
“Have you seen Dave recently?” she asked me. It was on the tip of my tongue to say “Dave who?” when Lon coughed loudly. “No, I haven’t,” I answered. “I’m new in this part of the country.”
“But you don’t mean to say,” she interrupted, “that you’ve never heard of Dave – of Big Dave Walsh? Lon, tell him about Dave,” she said.
“Oh, Dave is a fine man,” he said. “He’s a man, every inch of him, and he stands six feet four in his socks. His word is as good as his bond. The man lies who ever says Dave told a lie, and that man will have to fight with me too – if there’s anything left of him when Dave gets done with him. For Dave is a fighter.”
A howling of the dogs took the woman to the door. She opened it an inch and listened.
“Where is Dave Walsh?” I asked in an undertone. “Dead,” Lon answered. “In hell, maybe. I don’t know. Shut up.”
In the morning it was quick breakfast, feed the dogs, load the sled and hit the trail. The woman stood in the doorway and watched us off. I carried the vision of her unearthly beauty with me.
“You didn’t know her?” Lon asked suddenly. I shook my head.
“You noticed the color of her hair and eyes and her skin, well, that’s where she got her name – she was like the first warm glow of sunrise. She was called Flush of Gold.”
“Why do you speak of her in the past tense, as if she were dead?”
“Because the darkness of her soul is the same as the darkness of death. The Flush of Gold that I knew is dead.”
“I do not understand,” I said. Begin at the beginning, and tell me the whole story.” And Lon began.
“Marie, which was her real name, was the daughter of an old Frenchman who first came to California in the days of gold. The search for gold eventually brought him to Alaska, where his daughter was born. He took very good care of her after her mother died. Flush of Gold was the pet name he gave her.
She was remarkably beautiful. She turned all men’s hearts – and heads. It was her beauty that made all men love her.
Big Dave Walsh came to Alaska in the late 1880s – a real pioneer. He was twenty years old then. He was a young bull. When he was twenty-five he could lift clear of the ground thirteen fifty-pound sacks of flour. He was a bull, a great bull. He could kill the strongest man in the country with hard work. He could travel all day with wet feet when the thermometer registered fifty below zero.
Yet Dave Walsh was soft and easy-natured. Anybody could lie his last dollar out of him. But he had a way of laughing off his softness; “It doesn’t matter,” he said. Now don’t get the idea that he had no backbone. He went after a bear with an airgun. When it came to fighting, he was the toughest ever. He was easy and kind with the weak, but the strong had to give trail when he went by. And he was a man the men liked.
Dave never took part in the big gold rush to Dawson. He discovered gold himself at Mammon Creek. Cleaned eighty-four thousand up that winter, and opened up the claim so that it promised a couple of hundred thousand for the next winter. Then he took a trip up the Yukon, where he first saw Flush of Gold. I remember the night. I shall always remember. It was something sudden, and it makes one shiver to think of a strong man with all the strength withered out of him by one glance from the soft eyes of a weak, blond girl like Flush of Gold. The sight of Flush of Gold had sent Dave clean daffy. They said afterwards that he had been drunk. And so he had. He was drunk, but Flush of Gold was the strong drink that made him so.
That settled it, that first glimpse he caught of her. He did not start back down the Yukon in a week, as he had intended. He lingered on a month, two months, all summer. There was romance sprinkled all over Dave Walsh. And Flush of Gold loved him, and having danced him through a whole summer, at the end their engagement was made known. Fall came, and Dave had to be back for the winter’s work on Mammon Creek, but Flush of gold refused to be married right away. Dave lingered on in Dawson, but she wanted

her freedom a while longer; and she would not marry until next year. And so, on the first ice, Dave Walsh went alone down the Yukon behind his dogs. The marriage was to take place when he arrived on the first steamboat of the next year.
Now Dave was as faithful as the Pole Star, and she was as false as a magnetic needle in a cargo of loadstone. Dave, who never doubted anybody, doubted her. He was afraid to trust her till the next year. Before he left her, he announced to Flush of Gold that they were plighted to each other. Dave was very dramatic, with fire in his eyes. He talked about “until death do us part”. He took her by the shoulder with his great paw and almost shook her as he said: “Even unto death are you mine, and I would rise from the grave to claim you.” Flush was pretty badly frightened.
In Dawson, that winter, was a music player, a Russian count, who played the violin and the piano, and sang – for pleasure only, as he did not need the money. Flush of gold soon lost her heart to him.
Anyway, she was plighted to Dave, and Dave was coming up on the first steamboat to get her. That was the summer of 1889, and the first steamboat was to be expected the middle of June. Flush of Gold was afraid to throw Dave down and face him afterwards, so it was all planned quickly. The Russian count was her obedient slave. She planned it; the Count took his orders from her. He caught that first steamboat down. And so did Flush of Gold. It was the *Golden Rocket*.
As the Golden Rocket sailed down the Yukon, heavily laden with a lot of poorly secured deck cargo, it passed the *Glendale*, bound up for Dawson. As the steamers saluted, people thought Dave was on board the *Glendale* hurrying to Dawson for Flush of Gold. But Dave Walsh wasn’t on the *Glendale*.
On the deck of the *Golden Rocket* preparations were being made for a wedding. There was a missionary on board, getting off at the next stop, so they had to use him quick. That’s what they’d planned to do, Flush of Gold and the Count, get married on the boat.
The reason Dave Walsh wasn’t on the *Glendale* was that he was on the *Golden Rocket*. It was this way. He had gone off on a moose hunt with an Indian, one morning the spirit thermometer went down to seventy-five below zero. And that morning the Indian broke through the ice and wet himself to the waist. Of course he began to freeze right away. The proper thing was to build a fire. But Dave Walsh was a bull. It was only half a mile to the camp, where a fire was already burning. He threw Mr Indian over his shoulder – and ran with him – half a mile – with the thermometer seventy-five below. That’s suicide. There’s no other name for it. That Indian weighed a lot, and Dave ran half a mile with him. Of course he froze his lungs. Must have frozen them near solid. Anyway, after a few terrible weeks, Dave Walsh died.
the Indian decided to take Dave’s body to Forty Mile, which was Dave’s headquarters. He put his cargo on a steamboat. An there you are, on the deck of the *Golden Rocket*, Flush of Gold being married, and Dave Walsh dead in his big box.
The missionary had lined the pair up and started the wedding service. He had just reached the point where he was saying “In sickness and in health,” and “Until death do us part”. Just then an oblong box began to slide down. Flush of Gold and the Count were facing the box; the missionary had his back to it. The box must have fallen ten feet straight, and it hit end on.
It couldn’t have been better planned. The box struck on end, and on the right end. The whole front came off; and out swept Dave Walsh on his feet, partly wrapped in a blanket, his yellow hair flying and showing bright in the sun. Right out of the box, he swept upon Flush of Gold. No doubt he was rising from the dead to claim her. Possibly that is what Flush of Gold thought. At any rate, the sight froze her. She couldn’t move. She just watched Dave Walsh coming for her. And he got her. It looked almost as though he threw his arms around her, and down to the deck they went together. We had to drag Dave Walsh’s body clear before we could get hold of Flush of Gold. She was in a faint, but it would have been just as well if she never came out of that faint; for when she did, she began screaming the way insane people do. She kept it up for hours.
Oh, yes, she recovered a bit, but she still lives in darkness. She believes that she is waiting for Dave Walsh, and so she waits in the cabin he built for her. And she is no

longer fickle. It is nine years now that she has been faithful to Dave Walsh, and the outlook is that she'll be faithful to him to the end."

I lay silently under the blankets for the space of a minute.

"What happened to the Count?" I asked. "Is he still in the country?"

But there was a gentle sound of heavy breathing, and I knew Lon McFane was asleep.

(Adapted)

Tasks and Activities

1. Though Jack London is not a typical representative of modernist literature, this short-story has one feature that was a popular technique used by modernist writers. What is that?
2. Most of the narrative is told by Lon McFane. How does that work for the writer in terms of language, for example?
3. How is the story structured?
4. Comment on the narrative angle of the story.
5. What would you say is the theme of this short-story?
6. When justice is done in a narrative, we call it poetic justice. Do you think the plot of this story holds poetic justice in any way?
7. Jack London has been criticised for the macho image of many of his protagonists – tough men taming the wild elements either of nature, dogs, wolves, or women. Does this story support such criticism?
8. Comment on the first couple of lines of the story.
9. If you are critical, you may find certain elements in the plot that seem a bit on the verge of credibility (or at least, they are not fully explained). What elements might that be?
10. Jack London's popularity is quite remarkable. Why do you think so many readers are attracted by this kind of literature?
11. Find more information about Jack London's dramatic life: his radical political views, his extravagant life-style, his woman affairs, and his suicide.
12. Search the net for information about Alaska and the gold rush of the 1890s. See if you can find the locations that are mentioned in the story.
13. Check YouTube for trailers or clips from the films *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang.*

Everything Will Be Allright

Forfatter: Stine Erstad, Jaspreet Gloppen
Everything Will Be Allright (109008)

Fear, physical and psychological horror, mystery, supernatural beings/phenomena, ghosts, haunted buildings, architectural traditions from the Middle Ages, castles, darkness, death, doppelgangers, insanity, secrets, graveyards, gothic doubles and curses...

Literature including some of these elements is often referred to as Gothic literature. Gothic literature can be great fun to read but truly – even more fun to write.

The following Gothic short story was written by Stine Erstad when she was a junior at Sotra videregåande skole. Read the story and study which Gothic elements she includes. Afterwards it is your turn to try your hand at writing a short story, creating a gothic and dark atmosphere. See the guidelines following the story.

Everything Will Be Allright / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125161

Tasks and Activities

Understanding Gothic

1. Which gothic elements are used in this short story? SeeElements of the Gothic Novel and discuss with a partner.
2. Look at the pictures illustrating this story. How would you describe them? Consider the actual images as well as the atmosphere they convey. Find at least two pictures on the Internet which you consider typically gothic and explain why you think so. See, for instance, FlickrCC and Free Photo Bank.
3. The use of appropriate vocabulary is important to create a gothic atmosphere in a story. Study the vocabulary listed in #10here. Choose at least ten of these words and make a Wordle Compare with a fellow student. Did you choose the same words? Print the wordles and make your classroom gothic.

Write a Gothic Short Story

Use your knowledge about gothic fiction and write a short story. When writing a short story, you also need to take the following into consideration:

Title	Needs to be relevant, original and captivating
Plot Elements	Your story needs to have the following five plot elements: 1. Orientation or presentation of the setting, the characters etc. 2. Rising Action or a Conflict. There needs to be a central conflict which leads to a growing excitement in the reader indicating that something is about to happen. 3. Climax or Confrontation or Turning Point of the story: This is what the story builds up to. There is usually a confrontation. 4. Falling action: What happens after the Climax. Do

	things become worse or better for the protagonist? 5. Resolution: The final paragraph where you explain how the story ends and what happens to the character. You can try to surprise your reader with a twist. You can also leave the ending open so that there are many different readings of the same story.
Characterization	Your characters need to be well developed and should have thoughts, feeling and actions.
Use of Gothic Elements	You need to try and include as many elements as possible to create a gothic and dark atmosphere. Some elements are: Fear, physical and psychological horror, mystery, supernatural beings/phenomena, ghosts, haunted buildings, architectural traditions from the Middle Ages, castles, darkness, death, doppelgangers, insanity (especially in females), secrets, graveyards, gothic doubles and curses. See also Elements of the Gothic Novel.
Narration Styles	You need to use different narrative modes like descriptive, stage scenes (if required), direct speech when the characters talk directly to each other, reported speech when retelling something a character has said, chronology, retrospection, flashback etc.
Use of Literary Devices	Foreshadowing, Similes, Metaphors, Symbols, repetition etc.
Point of View	Make sure you use the same point of view consistently.
Language Use: Use of Adjectives	Use adjectives extensively to create an interesting and entertaining reading experience.
Language Use: Grammar, Usage, Sentence Structure and Use of Linking Words	• You need to use the correct rules of grammar. • Make sure you avoid making Usage Errors (i.e. sentences which are grammatically correct, but a native speaker would not speak like that. For example: I became in love vs. I fell in love. • You need to vary your sentence structure and try to use both Simple, Compound and Complex sentences. • Use of Linking Words: Use linking words to combine sentences and create cohesion so that the sentences flow better.

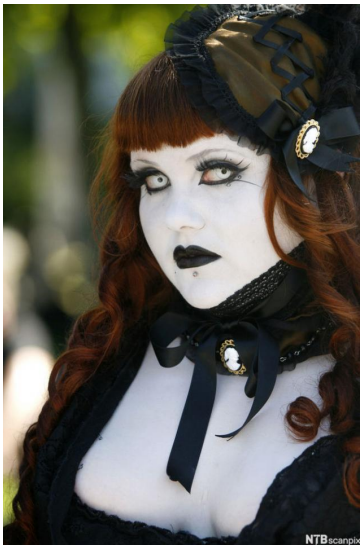
Make an Animation

Make an animation based on Erstad's short story or an animation of the story you have written yourself. Use GoAnimate.com or similar.

Further Reading

Everything Will Be Allright

by Stine Erstad



Gothic Festival

As the storm had gotten worse, she couldn't see much, but she was certain she saw the massive, dilapidated building through the piercing darkness. The howling wind forced the glaring snow off the rooftop and into the darkness. She could barely spot the moon among the thick clouds which had appeared about an hour earlier. Walking was not easy, but she knew they had to reach the building before the storm fully arrived.

"Where are we going? We should get back home, I believe there's a storm coming up," Samantha whined. Wanda paused and observed her younger sister as she was walking up the hill. She'd never been a good walker, Samantha. Wanda felt the rage rise inside as she studied her sister. She was young, beautiful and her life couldn't have been better. Her face with its pale, silky skin was lit up by two sparkling blue eyes, and deep red lips. Her long, caramel, wavy hair gracefully blew around her neck. The cold had made her cheeks turn pink, which made her even more beautiful. Wanda herself was a heavy set woman in her thirties. Her hair was short, untamed and had already turned grey. Her skin wasn't silky in any way, and it was covered in scars, as if she'd been burned. Besides, her life had never been nearly as good as her sister's life. Samantha had everything she could ever dream of. Unlike Wanda, Samantha grew up with constant access to money and wealth. Money their parents received fifteen years earlier. Filthy money. But Samantha didn't know.

"We will never make it home before the storm arrives. There's an abandoned building on top of the hills. We'll stay there until the storm is over." Samantha crossed her arms and stared at the building in a mixture of horror and excitement. "Whatever you say, I'm freezing!" They hastened up to the building, both breathless. Wanda found a broken window and they both climbed in. They couldn't see anything through the darkness, so Wanda turned on an old torch.

They were in a room with many switches for electricity. She tried some of them, and they heard a rasping sound followed by a flickering light. “I can’t believe they haven’t shut down the electricity yet!” Samantha gasped in astonishment. Wanda ignored her outburst and left the room. The corridors were just the way she remembered them; endless, cold and gloomy. “Don’t worry Wanda, everything will be alright now.” The men were all wearing long, white coats, and had masks covering their faces. “No, no! I don’t want to, leave me alone!” Nothing helped; the men had chained her to the chair. “Wanda, stop fighting. It will not help you.” “No, please stop!” “Did you say something?” Samantha stuck her head out the door. Wanda stared at the stairs. “Did you know this used to be a mental hospital? Look – I found an old paper in here. It says it was shut down 16 years ago. Apparently the doctors were not all good. You will never believe the dreadful experiments they did on the patients! Many patients died, and the so-called doctors are all in jail for life. They also gave patients medicine which made them more mental, if you know what I mean. The families received a great deal of compensation though, money of course.” She glanced at the thick metal doors in the corridor. “It is kind of cool, don’t you think? Maybe the ghosts of the mental psychos are haunting this place,” she said sardonically. Wanda was so furious it was hard to control her temper. “That ignorant child,” she thought, “She doesn’t know anything.”

Our House

“Wait here, I’ll be going upstairs, finding a warmer room,” said Wanda annoyed. The stairs creaked loudly as she slowly moved upstairs. The weather had gotten worse and the howling wind was bringing snow inside the building. The lights on the second floor were even more flickering than the ones on the first. Some of the doors were open, and there was a lot of snow in the corridor. She knew these corridors far too well.

The summer sun was shining through the dusty windows, while the songbirds were whistling their cheerful melodies outside. The chains were rubbing around her wrists; so tight she couldn’t feel her fingers. A penetrating scream from the first floor filled the building with horror. Then silence. All of a sudden she heard footsteps from the corridor, and as they approached she was certain there were at least five men out there, considering the voices and footsteps. As she’d feared, the voices stopped just outside the door, and the door slowly opened. In despair, she tried to wrench her arms out of the chains, but it was useless. The men had brought a chair this time, and they put it in the middle of the room. They were still talking, but she couldn’t really hear what they were saying. One of the men leaned towards the bed. “Everything will be alright” he said. She felt a sting, and everything went black.

The room was darker than it once was, just one of the fluorescent lamps, of which the light was rather blurry, was lighting the room. There was a thick blanket of dust on the floor, and apparently no one had entered the room for many years. The chains which hung hopelessly from the bed were all rusty and decorated by cobwebs. In the centre of the room, just as she remembered it, the massive brown chair stood in all its magnificence. Wanda started to rub the chair, getting all the dust away. “Everything will be alright,” she repeatedly whispered to herself. “Everything will be alright.” The chains on the chair were made of leather, and therefore they were not rusty like the ones on the bed.

Hazy Castle

All of a sudden there were slow-moving footsteps on the loudly creaking stairs. Wanda stopped rubbing immediately and listened carefully. As the footsteps came closer, she clearly heard the deep, cheerful voices of five men. They got closer, and their sharp, crazed laughs filled her with agony. But why did they walk so slowly? It was like they wanted to torture her before they ended it all, like they should have done 15 years ago. “Wanda?” Samantha was standing by the door, with a concerned look upon her face. In her right hand there was a piece of paper, which apparently had been lying around a few years. The more Wanda looked at her, the more certain she was that nothing could make that girl less beautiful. She gazed at her sister for a few seconds, before she continued rubbing, this time underneath the chair. “Wanda… I searched through some old files downstairs, and I found this.” She paused while she studied her sister’s attempt to clean the chair. Then she carefully moved closer and handed the papers to her. Wanda didn’t accept the papers, but seemed pretty engaged to what she was doing. “Clinical depression – open unit,” Samantha read. “Why hasn’t anyone told me? I had no idea, wha-”

She fell lightly to the floor. Wanda gently removed the shiny needle from her arm and used a piece of cloth to wipe the tiny, dark red stain of blood which appeared where the needle had been. Then she carefully put the rest of the anaesthetic back under the chair and turned for Samantha.

Thunderstorm and Lightning

Placing her in the chair didn't require a lot of strength; fastening the chains was the hardest part. All the chains were fastened really tight, making it impossible for Samantha to move. Wanda fumbled for something in the heavy bag she'd insisted on bringing on their trip. She pulled up a box of matches and five white candles, which she lit and placed in a circle around the chair before she switched off the electricity. The candles illuminated the room and threw tall gloomy shadows on the walls. By the door there was a six foot mirror, which Wanda placed in front of the chair. It was time for the unbearable perfection to disappear. Wanda once again opened her bag. This time she pulled out an old, rusty pair of scissors, a razor and a bottle of acid. Her hand smoothly went through the long gorgeous hair before she started cutting it into a short, triangle shaped form. Afterwards, she pulled the skin on Samantha's forehead up against the roots of the hair, and shaved the eyebrows. More work needed to be done before the beauty would be completely vanished; therefore Wanda leaned Samantha's head backwards and opened the bottle of acid. She pulled out a thin paintbrush and dipped it in the bottle before she used it on Samantha's perfect face. At the very second the brush touched the skin it turned red and swelled up. Wanda spent a few minutes admiring her work. The whole face was swollen and red; the beauty was finally gone.
After an hour or two, Samantha was slowly getting her consciousness back. A piercing scream of pain filled the room and Wanda slowly stepped out of the shadows. "Everything will be alright," she said. Samantha glanced at her own reflection in the mirror, her eyes wide open. "What have you done to me? What's the matter with you? It burns!" cried Samantha, clearly in great pain. "Don't worry. It is supposed to hurt. But it won't be long. This time there will be no mistakes. The pain will soon be over. Forever."

The panic spread in Samantha's face while the tears streamed down her cheeks. "Please Wanda. Please, I'm your sister!" Wanda pulled out a new syringe and filled it with the contents of a little bottle. "Don't worry," she said and left the needle in Samantha's skin. "Everything will be alright." She moved towards the bed, and lay down on her back. Then she took one more look at Samantha. The pulse in her veins was gone. Wanda opened the little bottle she'd used on Samantha and drank the last drops. A great pain spread through her whole body, like a thousand knives were stabbing her all at once. Her eyes slid through the room once more and stopped on Samantha's forehead. The skin wasn't swollen anymore, and she could clearly spot the red marks saying "Everything will be alright". Wanda smiled, and everything went black.

Popular Mechanics

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Popular Mechanics (117144)

Couple in conflict

Fotograf: Royalty-Free

Popular Mechanics by Raymond Carver

A man and a woman are fighting over their baby. They hurt each other, and they end up hurting the baby, the only thing they have in common and whom they both love. Or – do they? The short story "Popular Mechanics" is one of Raymond Carver's shortest stories, and was included in the collection *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981). The story is short, but its intense and compact plot makes a horrifying impression. Carver has been labelled a "dark writer" because in most of his stories he focuses on the base and primitive aspects of human nature. His protagonists are often individuals who in some way or other have reached the end of the line and turn to desperate actions to protect their dignity.

Follow the link and read the short story, then do the tasks below.

"Popular Mechanics" by Raymond Carver

Tasks and Activities

1. How can this story be read as an allegory? (If you don't remember what an allegory is, check Literary Terms and find out.)
2. How does the setting complement the plot?
3. The characters have no names; does that add anything to the way we understand the story?
4. What is the mood of the story, and how does the writer create this?
5. Comment on the style of the dialogue between the man and the woman.
6. How can we interpret the title of the story? (There is a slightly different meaning of "popular" than "liked by many people")
7. What do you think is the theme of the story? (Discuss "love" as a possible theme.)
8. The story has a somewhat open and enigmatic ending; what do you think happened?
9. How does this story fit Carver's classification as a "dark writer"?
10. Check YouTube for a dramatized version of the story.

Lispeth

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Lispeth (105467)

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in India to English parents who represented the British ruling class. He was sent to England for his education, but returned to India, where he later worked as a journalist. Kipling has a vast and varied literary production, and has more or less deservedly gained the reputation of being the cultural spokesman for British imperialism during the Victorian age. However, as you will see in this short story, he was in many ways critical of the way the native population was treated by the English colonialists. Follow the link below, and read more about Rudyard Kipling. When you have read the short story, go back to the top for tasks and activities.

Rudyard Kipling

Tasks and Activities

Lispeth by Rudyard Kipling

Hills in Northern India

Fotograf: Science Photo Library

She was the daughter of a Sonoo, a Hill-man of the Himalayas, and Jadèh his wife. One year their maize failed, and two bears spent the night in their only opium poppy-field just abover the Sutlej Valley on the Kotgarh side; so, the next season, they turned Christian, and brought their baby to the Mission to be baptized. The Kotgarh Chaplain christened her Elizabeth, and “Lispeth” is the Hill or pahari pronunciation.

Later, cholera came into the Kotgarh Valley and carried off Sonoo and Jadèh and Lispeth became half servant, half companion, to the wife of the then Chaplain of Kotgarh. This was after the reign of the Moravian missionaries in that place, but before Kotgarh had quite forgotten her title of “Mistress of the Northern Hills.”

Whether Christianity improved Lispeth, or whether the gods of her own people would have done as much for her under any circumstances, I do not know; but she grew very lovely. When a Hill-girl grows lovely, she is worth travelling fifty miles over bad ground to look upon. Lispeth had a Greek face – one of those faces people paint so often, and see so seldom. She was of a pale, ivory colour, and, for her race, extremely tall. Also,she possessed eyes that were wonderful; and, had she not been dressed in the abominable printcloths affected by Missions, you would, meeting her on the hillside

unexpectedly, have thought her the original Diana of the Romans going out to slay.
Lispeth took to Christianity readily, and did not abandon it when she reached womanhood, as do some Hill-girls. Her own people hated her because she had, they said, become a white woman and washed herself daily; and the Chaplain's wife did not know what to do with her. One cannot ask a stately goddess, five feet ten in her shoes, to clean plates and dishes. She played with the Chaplain's children and took classes in the Sunday School, and read all the books in the house, and grew more and more beautiful, like the Princesses in fairy tales. The Chapain's wife said that the girl ought to take service in Simla as a nurse or something "genteel". But Lispeth did not want to take service. She was very happy where she was.
When travellers – there were not so many in those years – came in to Kotgarh, Lispeth used to lock herself into her own room for fear they might take her away to Simla, or out into the unknown world.
One day, a few months after she was seventeen years old, Lispeth went out for a walk. She did not walk in the manner of English ladies – a mile and a half out, with carriage-ride back again. She covered between twenty and thirty miles in her little constitutionals, all about and about, between Kotgarh and Narkanda. This time she came back at the full dusk, stepping down the breakneck descent into Kotgarh with something heavy in her arms. The Chaplain's wife was dozing in the drawing-room when Lispeth came in breathing heavily and very exhausted with her burden. Lispeth put it down on the sofa, and said simply, "This is my husband. I found him on the Bagi Road. He has hurt himself. We will nurse him, and when he is well your husband shall marry him to me.
This was the first mention lispeth had ever made of her matrimonial views, and the Chaplain's wife shrieked with horror. However, the man on the sofa needed attention first. He was a young Englishman, and his head had been cut to the bone by something jagged. Lispeth said she had found him down the hillside, and had brought him in. He was breathing queerly and was unconscious.
He was put to bed and tended by the Chaplain, who knew something of medicine; and Lispeth waited outside the door in case she could be useful. She explained to the Chaplain that this was the man she meant to marry; and the Chaplain and his wife lectured her severely on the impropriety of her conduct. Lispeth listened quietly, and repeated her first proposition. It takes a great deal of Christianity to wipe out uncivilised Eastern instincts, such as falling in love at first sight. Lispeth, having found the man she worshipped, did not see why she should keep silent as to her choice. She had no intention of being sent away, either. She was going to nurse that Englishman until he was well enough to marry her. This was her programme.
After a fortnight of slight fever and inflammation, the Englishman recovered coherence and thanked the Chaplain and his wife, and Lispeth – especially Lispeth – for their kindness. He was a traveller in the East, he said – they never talked about "globe-trotters" in those days, when the P&O fleet was young and small – and had come from Dehra Dun to hunt for plants and butterflies among the Simla hills. No one at Simla, therefore, knew anything about him. He fancied that he must have fallen over the cliff while reaching out for a fern on a rotten tree-trunk, and that his coolies must have stolen his baggage and fled. He thought he would go back to Simla when he was a little stronger. He desired no more mountaineering.
He mad small haste to go away, and recovered his strength slowly. Lispeth objected to being advised either by the Chaplain or his wife; therefore the latter spoke to the Englishman, and told him how matters stood in Lispeth's heart. He laughed a good deal, and said it was very pretty and romantic, but, as he was engaged to a girl at Home, he fancied that nothing would happen. Certainly he would behave with discretion. He did that. Still he found it very pleasant to talk to Lispeth, and walk with Lispeth, and say nice things to her, and call her pet names while he was getting strong enough to go away. It meant nothing at all to him, and everything in the world to Lispeth. She was very happy the fortnight lasted, because she had found a man to love.
Being a savage by birth, she took no trouble to hide her feelings, and the Englishman was amused. When he went away, lipeth walked with him up the Hill as far as

Narkanda, very troubled and very miserable. The Chaplain's wife, being a good Christian and disliking anything in the shape of fuss or scandal – Lispeth was beyond her management entirely – had told the Englishman to tell Lispeth that he was coming back to marry her. "She is but a child, you know, and, I fear, at heart a heathen," said the Chaplain's wife. So all the twelve miles up the Hill the Englishman, with his arm round Lispeth's waist, was assuring the girl that he would come back and marry her; and Lispeth made him promise over and over again. She wept on the Narkanda Ridge till he had passed out of sight along the Muttiani path.

Then she dried her tears and went in to Kotgarh again, and said to the Chaplain's wife, "He will come back and marry me. He has gone to his own people to tell them so." And the Chaplain's wife soothed Lispeth and said, "He will come back." At the end of two months Lispeth grew impatient, and was told that the Englishman had gone over the seas to England. She knew where England was, because she had read little geography primers; but of course, she had no conception of the nature of the see, being a Hill-girl. There was an old puzzle-map of the World in the house. Lispeth had played with it when she was a child. She unearthed it again, and put I together of evenings, and cried to herself, and tried to imagine where her Englishman was. As she had no ideas of distance or steamboats her notions were somewhat wild. It would not have made the leas difference had she been perfectly correct; for the Englishman had no intention of coming back to marry a Hill-girl. He forgot all about her by the time he was butterfly-hunting in Assam. He wrote a book on the east afterwards. Lispeth's name did not appear there.

At the end of three months Lispeth made daily pilgrimages to Narkanda to see if her Englishman was coming along the road. It gave her comfort, and the Chaplain's wife finding her happier thought that she was getting over her "barbarous and most indelicate folly." A little later the walks ceased to help Lispeth, and her temper grew very bad. The Chaplain's wife thought this a profitable time to let her know the real state of affairs – that the Englishman had only promised his love to keep her quiet – that he had never meant anything, and that it was wrong and improper of Lispeth to think of marriage with an Englishman, who was of a superior clay, besides being promised in marriage to a girl of his own people. Lispeth said that all this was clearly impossible because he had said he loved her, and the Chaplain's wife had, with her own lips asserted that the Englishman was coming back.

"How can what he and you said be untrue?" asked Lipeth.

We said it as an excuse to keep you quiet, child," said the Chaplain's wife.

"Then you have lied to me," said Lispeth, "you and he?"

The Chaplain's wife bowed her head, and said nothing. Lispeth was silent too for a little time; then she went out down the valley, and returned in the dress of a Hill-girl – infamously dirty, but without the nose-stud and ear-rings. She had her hair braided into the long pigtail, helped out with black thread, that Hill-women wear.

"I am going back to my own people"; said she. "You have killed Lispeth. There is only left old Jadèh's daughter – the daughter of pabari and the servant of Tarka Devi. You are all liars, you English."

By the time that the Chaplain's wife recovered from the shock of the announcement that Lispeth had reverted to her mother's gods the girl had gone, and she never came back.

She took to her own unclean people savagely, as if to make up the arrears of the life she had stepped out of; and, in a little time, she married a wood cutter who beat her after the manner of paharis, and her beauty faded soon.

"There is no law whereby you can account for the vagaries of the heathen," said the Chaplain's wife," and I believe that Lispeth was always at heart and infidel." Seeing that she had been taken into the Church of England at the mature age of five weeks, this statement does not do credit to the Chaplain's wife.

Lispeth was a very old woman when she died. She had always a perfect command of English, and when she was sufficiently drunk could sometimes be induced to tell the story of her first love-affair.

It was hard then to realise that the bleared, wrinkled creature, exactly like a wisp of

charred rag, could ever have been “Lispeth of the Kotgarh Mission".

How the Garden Grows

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
How the Garden Grows (114514)

Surrogacy means to have a fertilized egg implanted into the womb of a woman who, usually for money, will carry out the pregnancy and give birth to the child. This may be an option for couples who for some reason are unable to have children. But the issue is ethically debatable and raises the question whether having a child can be considered a human right. Surrogacy on a commercial basis is illegal in many countries, including Britain. But in other countries, India for example, the service is offered and carried out in special clinics under surveillance of medical personnel.
Read the short-story "How the Garden Grows" and do the tasks which follow.

How the Garden Grows

By W B Jenkins

When she came home from the playground she picked up the form again. Name: Connie Moore, age 36. Married. No children. The cold formality of it made it look like the application it was. She put it down again, sighed, and sat down. She was tired. Her thoughts went spinning again and there was nothing she could do to hold back.

Timothy – four years older than her, had somehow always been there. Their marriage just grew out of an adolescent infatuation, and was not a success. Well, that would depend on how one measures a successful marriage. They were relatively happy and they were relatively fond of each other. They had safe jobs, money was sufficient if not plentiful, and the apartment nice enough. Their marriage was probably what most people would call happy.
But there was this thing that had come between them and gradually had turned their relationship into a dysfunctional concord between the lame and the blind.

She got up again and went to the window. The swing was empty now, but slowly swaying like somebody had just left it. There was a toddler sitting in the sand-box, and a woman on the bench, talking on her mobile. Probably the mother. Connie tried to imagine herself as the mother she so desperately wanted to be, but no - she wanted to hold back. She didn't want to go into the depressing deadlock of her misery once more. But her wayward thoughts were wandering off again, and she felt her utter existence being demolished like a little pebble in a grinder. It was eating her up. It was eating their marriage up. She picked up the form again.

The Swing

God knows they had tried, desperately and passionately. In the beginning, at least. But it soon became more like a loveless act of duty; a repeated and pointless performance. And the lack of result was like a self-fulfilling curse. They had been through all the phases – the figuring and calculating of the fertile periods, the uncertainty and secret blaming, the arguing, the tears and the envy of other couples. And the endless testing. There was nothing wrong with either of them – it was just that she was unable to get past the first ten weeks. She had lost count, and had stopped smiling when she came home after having seen the doctor. Her malfunction was not any ailment that could be cured by medication or on the operating table. If only. Tim had

been very understanding in the beginning, but now she felt his unspoken accusation because she was the one who could not complete their joint pursuit. They had come to the end, really – feeling that this inadequacy was corrupting their marriage altogether.

Tim came home and they dined in silence. He noticed the form, picked it up and looked at her.
“It’s illegal,” he said. “And it’s wrong.”

Oh, not again, Connie thought. How many times have we been over this? But she didn’t answer at first; she just sighed and looked at him.
There was a hard silence. And then after a while she said: “It’s not, really – it is a possibility for us, it is a – oh, I don’t know…”

She cleared the table and felt angry that she didn’t know what to say to him. Illegal? No – it may be disputable, she was fully aware of that, but did they have any option?
“Where…“ he started.
She cut him off: “On the net.”
He sighed.
She said: “God – we have been over this a hundred times, Tim – why can’t we just…”
It was getting edgier, and she felt this was going nowhere.

He raised his voice: "I say again: Why can’t we just go for an adoption?”
Her voice was shivering: “Because it wouldn’t be our child. I want it to be our own child, Tim – can’t you understand that? I’ve told you a hundred times. An adopted child would not be our own. We are perfectly all right both of us, there’s nothing wrong with our stuff, you know that – it’s just that…” she paused and looked away.
Timothy had suggested an adoption after her third miscarriage, but she had never seen that as a way. Every time it came up she had tried to explain why, but he did not seem to understand her at all. God – why was this so difficult?

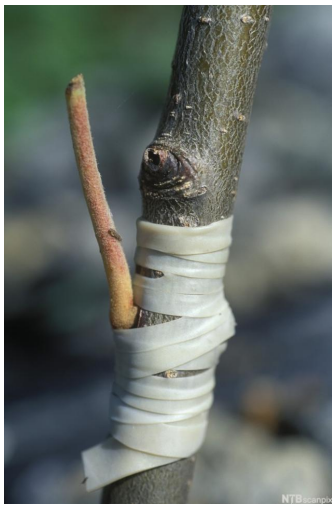
“But,” he started again – “a pregnancy in another woman’s womb? Our child starting its life inside a strange woman in a foreign country? We are talking of our own baby here, not some manufactured product. Can’t you see that it’s wrong? What do you know of this other woman? Her lifestyle, hygiene, what she eats or drinks – it all will influence the life of our baby, you know. There is a reason why it’s illegal here. Where would this happen?”
“India is an option,” she said feebly. “That’s the cheapest.”
She felt like she was fighting for a lost cause, but for her this was the last straw.
She said: “It is cheaper than an adoption, which also would take much longer time.”

He did not let go: “Yeah, I bet – quick and cheap. I tell you again – it’s illegal! Do you seriously mean that we are going to India to deliver our stuff – as you so charmingly call it, and have it implanted in some strange Indian woman, and hope for the best? It’s simply absurd! Besides, there’s the issue of citizenship – have you thought of that? Will the baby be Indian or English? Connie, this is simply not going to happen!”
Her head was spinning. She did not answer, could not, and they fell silent again. She was so tired.

The next day she told him that she needed a couple of days off – to breathe some fresh air, as she put it. She packed and set off to see her parents who lived in the countryside a hundred miles or so up north.
The train carriage was packed, but she found a seat and put her little suitcase on the rack and sat down facing an elderly couple who did not speak a single word to each other the entire journey. She tried to read, but it was hard to concentrate because of this woman across the aisle who was trying hard to calm down her screaming two-year old. Probably a single mother, Connie thought for some reason.

Her parents met her at the station, and they exchanged hugs and the usual “so-good-to-see-you” formalities. Then Connie found herself in the backseat of a car heading for the greenery of her youth. Her father was a keen gardener, and was running a little nursery on the outskirts of the little village.
At the dinner table the conversation stalled; the empty words seemed to be hanging in the air some time before they evaporated or died like little buds that were nipped off. Connie slowly realised that the visit was a mistake.

After dinner her father went into the garden and she and her mother were alone in the kitchen. “Everything OK with you and Tim?” her mother suddenly asked. Connie hesitated, and said, probably not very convincingly – “Yeah, just fine.” Her mother didn’t answer, just went over to the window and looked out at the garden where her husband was busy cutting some small twigs off a plum tree.


How the Garden Grows

In the evening they sat in front of the telly just like in the old days, only it was not. Connie was tired.
“There’s a gardening show on Channel Four I’d like to see,” her father said, “If the ladies don’t mind. It’s about grafting. You see, I have this problem with the two plum trees out there. The grafting doesn’t seem to work, the little scions just die. The scions are the little shoots I try to implant in the parent tree. I don’t know what I’m doing wrong.”
“Maybe it’s not right,” her mother replied, “meddling with nature like that. Just leave them alone, and they’ll be all right.” He ignored her remark, and reached for the remote.

Connie finished her glass of wine, said good night and went upstairs. Her old room seemed like a place long ago and far away, a place where she didn’t belong any more. As she lay staring into the darkness she could hear the faint murmur of the telly downstairs, like someone was whispering to her. Her mind was surprisingly blank. Sleep came at last and took her to that strange and unknown land between dream and reality, between life and death.
At breakfast the next day she told them that she had to go home, and she left on the afternoon train.

Tasks and Activities

Literary Analysis

1. In what way does the first sentence strike the theme of the story?
2. Wat does it mean that the narrative angle is a limited 3rd person point of view?
3. How does this angle limit the information we get about Tim's attitude? (See also p 5 under "Discussion" below.)
4. Comment on the composition of the short story.
5. Find examples of literary devices such as symbols, alliteration and repetition.
6. If you don’t know, check the Literary Terms and find out about “epiphany”. How can that term be applied on this short-story?
7. Check also the term “motif” and find an example in this story.
8. Can you think of a symbolic interpretation of Connie’s visit to her parents?
9. In what way does the episode on the train have any relevance?
10. Why does Connie think that her visit was a mistake? Was it really?
11. How would you characterize Connie and Timothy?
12. Comment on the title and the grafting issue raised at the end.
13. Where is the turning point of the short story?
14. Which elements of a typical short-story do you see in this story?
15. The story has a somewhat open ending. Why did Connie leave so quickly, and what was on her mind?

Topics for Discussion

1. Why is the issue of surrogacy so debatable?
2. Do you think that having a child is a human right?
3. Discuss Connie's view on adoption. Can you see her point?
4. When Connie's mother asks if everything is OK, why doesn't Connie tell her about her situation?
5. What are Tim's motives for not going along with Connie's plan? Is it fair to say that he has a "male" approach to the issue?
6. Why is having children often a sensitive and touchy topic for childless couples?
7. Discuss the line, "And the lack of result was like a self-fulfilling curse."
8. In what way does the story raise the issue of developing countries vs. the rich western world?

Research

Check the net for surrogacy or surrogate pregnancy and find out:

- Which countries offer the service?
- Are there certain conditions applied?
- What are the legislative views on surrogacy in Britain, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, India, and the USA? Why do you think there are differences?
- What does the service cost in India, and how much of that sum goes to the woman who carries the child?
- See if you can find other examples of literature, e.g. short-stories, that raise questions about ethical dilemmas.

The Drover's Wife

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Drover's Wife (105071)

Henry Lawson's authorship, and this story in particular, belong in the Australian national literary heritage. Henry Lawson (1867-1922) was of Norwegian descent (his father's name was Niels Larsen) and led a troubled life in poverty and sickness. He was deaf and was in and out of jail and institutions mainly because of alcoholism. Still, his literature was an inspiring force to the many who came to Australia hoping for a prosperous and good life, but ended up destitute and disillusioned. The Drover's Wife has become an iconic figure, symbolising those who toiled and struggled to get by in the hot and dry outback of Australia.
When you have read the story, go back to the top and follow the link for tasks and activities.

Tasks and Activities

The black snake
Fotograf: Sven Halling

The Drover's Wife By Henry Lawson

The two-roomed house is built of round timber, slabs, and stringy-bark, and floored with split slabs. A big bark kitchen standing at one end is larger than the house itself, veranda included.
Bush all around – bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilisation – a shanty on the main road.
The drover, an ex-squatter, is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone.
Four ragged, dried-up-looking children are playing about the house. Suddenly one of them yells: "Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"
The gaunt, sun-browned bushwoman dashes from the kitchen, snatches her baby from the ground, holds it on her left hip, and reaches for a stick.
"Where is it?"
"Here! Gone in the wood-heap;" yells the eldest boy – a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. "Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!"

“Tommy, come here, or you’ll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!”
The youngster comes reluctantly, carrying a stick bigger than himself. Then he yells, triumphantly:
“There it goes – under the house!” and darts away with club uplifted. At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake. He is a moment late, however, and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs just as the end of its tail disappears. Almost at the same moment the boy’s club comes down and skins the aforesaid nose. Alligator takes small notice of this, and proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him.
The drover’s wife makes the children stand together near the dog-house while she watches for the snake. She gets two small dishes of milk and sets them down near the wall to tempt it to come out; but an hour goes by and it does not show itself.
It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming. The children must be brought inside. She will not take them into the house, for she knows the snake is there, and may at any moment come up through a crack in the rough slab floor; so she carries several armfuls of firewood into the kitchen, and then takes the children there. The kitchen has no floor – or, rather, an earthen one – called a “ground floor” in this part of the bush. There is a large, roughly-made table in the centre of the place. She brings the children in, and makes them get on this table. They are two boys and two girls – mere babies. She gives some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into house, and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes – expecting to see or lay or hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children, and sits down beside it to watch all night.
She has an eye on the corner, and a green sapling club laid in readiness on the dresser by her side; also her sewing basket and a copy of the Young Ladies’ Journal. She has brought the dog into the room.
Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he’ll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.
His mother asks him how many times she has told not to swear.
He has his club with him under the bedclothes, and Jacky protests:
“Mummy! Tommy’s skinnin’ me alive wif his club. Make him take it out.”
Tommy: “Shet up you little – ! D’yer want to be bit with the snake?”
Jacky shuts up.
“If yer bit,” says Tommy, after a pause, “you’ll swell up, an smell, an’ turn red an’ green an’ blue all over till yer bust. Won’t he mother?”
“Now then, don’t frighten the child. Go to sleep,” she says.
The two younger children go to sleep, and now and then Jacky complains of being “skeezed.” More room is made for him. Presently Tommy says: “Mother! Listen to them (adjective) little possums. I’d like to screw their blanky necks.”
And Jacky protests drowsily.
“But they don’t hurt us, the little blanks!”
Mother: “There, I told you you’d teach Jacky to swear.” But the remark makes her smile. Jacky goes to sleep.
Presently Tommy asks:
“Mother! Do you think they’ll ever extricate the (adjective) kangaroo?”
“Lord! How am I to know, child? Go to sleep.”
“Will you wake me if the snake comes out?”
“Yes. Go to sleep.”
Near midnight. The children are all asleep and she sits there still, sewing and reading by turns. From time to time she glances round the floor and wall-plate, and, whenever she hears a noise, she reaches for the stick. The thunderstorm comes on, and the wind, rushing through the cracks in the slab wall, threatens to blow out her candle. She places it on a sheltered part of the dresser and fixes up a newspaper to protect it. At every

flash of lightning, the cracks between the slabs gleam like polished silver. The thunder rolls, and the rain comes down in torrents.

Alligator lies at full length on the floor, with his eyes turned towards the partition. She knows by this that the snake is there. There are large cracks in that wall opening under the floor of the dwelling-house.

She is not a coward, but recent events have shaken her nerves. A little son of her brother-in-law was lately bitten by a snake, and died. Besides, she has not heard from her husband for six months, and is anxious about him.

He was a drover, and started squatting here when they were married. The drought of 18— ruined him. He had to sacrifice the remnant of his flock and go droving again. He intends to move his family into the nearest town when he comes back, and, in the meantime, his brother, who keeps a shanty on the main road, comes over about once a month with provisions. The wife has still a couple of cows, one horse, and a few sheep. The brother-in-law kills one of the latter occasionally, gives her what she needs of it, and takes the rest in return for other provisions.

She is used to being left alone. She once lived like this for eighteen months. As a girl she built the usual castles in the air; but all her girlish hopes and aspirations have long been dead. She finds all the excitement and recreation she needs in the Young Ladies' Journal, and Heaven help her! Takes a pleasure in the fashion plates.

Her husband is an Australian, and so is she. He is careless, but a good enough husband. If he had the means he would take her to the city and keep her there like a princess. They are used to being apart, or at least she is. "No use fretting," she says. He may forget sometimes that he is married; but if he has a good cheque when he comes back he will give most of it to her. When he had money he took her to the city several times – hired a railway sleeping compartment, and put up at the best hotels. He also bought her a buggy, but they had to sacrifice that along with the rest.

The last two children were born in the bush – one while her husband was bringing a drunken doctor, by force, to attend to her. She was alone on this occasion, and very weak. She had been ill with fever. She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent Black Mary – the "whitest" gin in all the land. Or, at least, God sent King Jimmy first, and he sent Black Mary. He put his black face round the door post, took in the situation at a glance, and said cheerfully: "All right, missus – I bring my old woman, she down alonga creek."

One of the children died while she was here alone. She rode nineteen miles for assistance, carrying the dead child.

It must be near one or two o'clock. The fire is burning low. Alligator lies with his head resting on his paws, and watches the wall. He is not a very beautiful dog, and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea. He hates all other dogs – except kangaroo-dogs – and has a marked dislike to friends or relations of the family. They seldom call, however. He sometimes makes friends with strangers. He hates snakes and has killed many, but he will be bitten some day and die; most snake-dogs end that way.

Now and then the bushwoman lays down her work and watches, and listens, and thinks. She thinks of things in her own life, for there is little else to think about.

The rain will make the grass grow, and this reminds her how she fought a bush-fire once while her husband was away. The grass was long, and very dry, and the fire threatened to burn her out. She put on an old pair of her husband's trousers and beat out the flames with a green bough, till great drops of sooty perspiration stood out on her forehead and ran in streaks down her blackened arms. The sight of his mother in trousers greatly amused Tommy, who worked like a little hero by her side, but the terrified baby howled lustily for his "mummy." The fire would have mastered her but for four excited bushmen who arrived in the nick of time. It was a mixed-up affair all round; when she went to take up the baby he screamed and struggled convulsively, thinking it was a "blackman;" and Alligator, trusting more to the child's sense than his own instinct, charged furiously, and (being old and slightly deaf) did not in his excitement at first

recognise his mistress's voice, but continued to hang on to the moleskins until choked off by Tommy with a saddle-strap. The dog's sorrow for his blunder, and his anxiety to let it be known that it was all a mistake, was as evident as his ragged tail and a twelve-inch grin could make it. It was a glorious time for the boys; a day to look back to, and talk about, and laugh over for many years.

She thinks how she fought a flood during her husband's absence. She stood for hours in the drenching downpour, and dug an overflow gutter to save the dam across the creek. But she could not save it. There are things that a bushwoman cannot do. Next morning the dam was broken, and her heart was nearly broken too, for she thought how her husband would feel when he came home and saw the result of years of labour swept away. She cried then.

She also fought the pleuro-pneumonia – dosed and bled the few remaining cattle, and wept again when her two best cows died.

Again, she fought a mad bullock that besieged the house for a day. She made bullets and fired at him through cracks in the slabs with an old shot-gun. He was dead in the morning. She skinned him and got seventeen-and-sixpence for the hide.

She also fights the crows and eagles that have designs on her chickens. Her plan of campaign is very original. The children cry "Crows, mother!" and she rushes out and aims a broomstick at the birds as though it were a gun, and says "Bung!" The crows leave in a hurry; they are cunning, but a woman's cunning is greater.

Occasionally a bushman in the horrors, or a villainous-looking sundowner, comes and nearly scares the life out of her. She generally tells the suspicious-looking stranger that her husband and two sons are at work below the dam, or over at the yard, for he always cunningly inquires for the boss.

Only last week a gallows-faced swagman – having satisfied himself that there were no men on the place – threw his swag down on the veranda, and demanded tucker. She gave him something to eat; then he expressed the intention of staying for the night. It was sundown then. She got a batten from the sofa, loosened the dog, and confronted the stranger, holding the batten in one hand and the dog's collar with the other. "Now you go!" she said. He looked at her and at the dog, said "All right, mum," in a cringing tone and left. She was a determined-looking woman, and Alligator's yellow eyes glared unpleasantly – besides, the dog's chawing-up apparatus greatly resembled that of the reptile he was named after.

She has few pleasures to think of as she sits here alone by the fire, on guard against a snake. All days are much the same for her; but on Sunday afternoon she dresses herself, tidies the children, smartens up baby, and goes for a lonely walk along the bush-track, pushing an old perambulator in front of her. She does this every Sunday. She takes as much care to make herself and the children look smart as she would if she were going to do the block in the city. There is nothing to see, however, and not a soul to meet. You might walk for twenty miles along this track without being able to fix a point in your mind, unless you are a bushman. This is because of the everlasting, maddening sameness of the stunted trees – that monotony which makes a man long to break away and travel as far as trains can go, and sail as far as ship can sail – and farther.

But this bushwoman is used to the loneliness of it. As a girl-wife she hated it, but now she would feel strange away from it.

She is glad when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children.

She seems contented with her lot. She loves her children, but has no time to show it. She seems harsh to them. Her surroundings are not favourable to the development of the "womanly" or sentimental side of nature.

It must be nearing morning now; but the clock is in the dwelling-house. Her candle is nearly done; she forgot that she was out of candles. Some more wood must be got to keep the fire up, and so she shuts the dog inside and hurries around to the woodheap. The rain has cleared off. She seizes a stick, pulls it out, and – crash! The whole pile collapses.

Yesterday she bargained with a stray blackfellow to bring her some wood, and while he

was at work she went in search of a missing cow. She was absent an hour or so, and the native black made good use of his time. On her return she was so astonished to see a good heap of wood by the chimney, and she gave him an extra fig of tobacco, and praised him for not being lazy. He thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King; but he had built that wood-heap hollow.

She is hurt now, and tears spring to her eyes as she sits down again by the table. She takes up a handkerchief to wipe the tears away, but pokes her eyes with her bare fingers instead. The handkerchief is full of holes, and she finds that she has put here thumb through one, and her forefinger through another.

This makes her laugh, to the surprise of the dog. She has a keen, very keen, sense of the ridiculous; and some time or other she will amuse bushmen with the story.

She has been amused before like that. One day she sat down “to have a good cry,” as she said – and the old cat rubbed against her dress and “cried too.” Then she had to laugh.

It must be near daylight now. The room is very close and hot because of the fire. Alligator still watches the wall from time to time. Suddenly he becomes greatly interested; he draws himself a few inches nearer the partition, and a thrill runs though his body. The hair on the back of neck begins to bristle, and the battle-light is in his yellow eyes. She knows what this means, and lays her hand on the stick. The lower end of one of the partition slabs has a large crack on both sides. An evil pair of small, bright bead-like eyes glisten at one of these holes. The snake – a black one – comes slowly out, about a foot, and moves its head up and down. The dog lies still, and the woman sits as one fascinated. The snake comes out a foot further. She lifts her stick, and the reptile, as though suddenly aware of danger, sticks his head in through the crack on the other side of the slab, and hurries to get his tail round after him. Alligator springs, and his jaws come together with a snap. He misses, for his nose is large, and the snake’s body close down on the angle formed by the slabs and the floor. He snaps again as the tail comes round. He has the snake now, and tugs it out eighteen inches. Thud, thud. Alligator gives another pull and he has the snake out – a black brute, five feet long. The head rises to dart about, but the dog has the enemy close to the neck. He is a big, heavy dog, but quick as a terrier. He shakes the snake as though he felt the original curse in common with mankind. The eldest boy wakes up, seizes his stick, and tries to get out of bed, but his mother forces him back with a grip of iron. Thud, thud – the snake’s back is broken in several places. Thud, thud – it’s head is crushed, and Alligator’s nose skinned again.

She lifts the mangled reptile on the point of her stick, carries it to the fire, and throws it in; then piles on the wood and watches the snake burn. The boy and the dog watch too. She lays her hand on the dog’s head, and all the fierce, angry light dies out of his yellow eyes. The younger children are quieted, and presently go to sleep. The dirty-legged boy stands for a moment in his shirt, watching the fire. Presently he looks up at her, sees the tears in her eyes, and, throwing his arms around her neck exclaims:

“Mother, I won’t never go drovin’ blast me if I do!”

And she hugs him to her worn-out breast and kisses him; and they sit thus together while the sickly daylight breaks over bush.

What do you read?

Comics and Cartoons

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Comics and Cartoons (95333)

The word “literature” comes from Latin “littera” which means letter or character. Accordingly a comic strip will hardly qualify as literature since it has few letters, strictly speaking. Still a comic may have its literary qualities as a narrative in the combination of pictures and text. And it certainly is good entertainment. Who has not at one time enjoyed a comic strip or a cartoon? Comics are mandatory reading training for children, but many young people and also grown-ups enjoy comics and cartoons, and admit it openly…

Make sure you know these words and expressions before you read the article

mandatory, exaggerating, educational, legacy, cutlery, spin-off, heroism, albeit, to provide, hegemony, protagonist, credibility, alter ego, to recur, motif, sketch

Walt Disney

He called them “Silly Symphonies”, his little animated short films with “human” animals.
Mickey Mouse was the first (1928) and Donald Duck appeared six years later. It is not an exaggeration to claim that Walt Disney had a ground-breaking significance for the development of comics and cartoons. His characters are familiar and popular all over the world. His universe consists of funny animals with human qualities, and his stories are harmless and educational with a good moral. Clever Mickey Mouse is the hero for many children, while the short-tempered duck in his navy shirt and funny voice has many human qualities, which is probably why we love him. Disney’s cartoon versions of Cinderella, Bambi, and Snow White are classics that have been enjoyed for generations. The Disney Empire grew and became big business in America. The first Disneyland amusement park was opened in Los Angeles in 1955; later a similar park, Disney World was opened in Orlando, Florida (1971) and Euro Disneyland in France (1992).

Comics are Fun
Fotograf: Kerstin Mertens

Today the Disney industries employ several thousand people. Walt Disney’s partner Carl Barks contributed to the success by creating some of the characters and by writing and drawing some of the classic Donald Duck stories. Disney died in 1966 and Barks two years later, but their legacy is well taken care of. The Donald Duck magazine is still published weekly, and there are even special Disney channels on TV that present new (and old) Disney cartoons and feature films for children.The Disney spin-offs meet us everywhere – cutlery, blankets, wrapping paper, food, toys; there is no end to it.

American Values

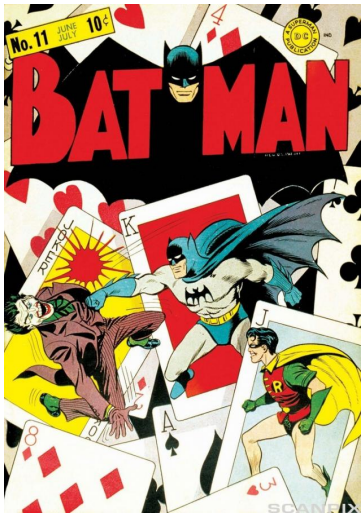
Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse are American icons that have conquered the world. For a long time the comic and cartoon market was dominated by American productions. What we got was American values and qualities, and a dose of American heroism, like in the westerns. Strips about the classic Wild West heroes like Davy Crockett and Roy Rogers introduced many children to American history, albeit in a rather single-sided presentation. Usually the native population, the red Indians, were presented as savages who were rightfully hunted down by white, heroic freedom fighters. The Wild West provided loads of dramatic material for creative writers and drawers, and many boys have played cowboys and Indians inspired by what they had read in an American comic strip.
There is also a European comic tradition mainly represented by French authors such as Hergè (TinTin) and Goscinny / Uderzo (Asterix), but the comic market is still dominated by American comic production. An interesting and recent trend in the USA are the so-called "fusion comics" which combine elements from traditional super-hero comics with serious literary qualities and inspiration from French and Japanese comic tradition. These comics are published as hardback issues and not in the traditional magazine form. The Seattle-based Fantagraphics publishing company is fronting this ambitious trend of serious comics as an art.

The Cartoon

Watching Tom and Jerry leaves you with the question: Why don't they give up their endless fight and simply be friends? Well, the answer is simple – because then there would not be any cartoon about them. So it goes on and on with one deadly stunt after another. This is what cartoons are all about. The universe of a cartoon is not limited by credibility or the laws of physics. In a cartoon anything goes. This is most likely why children love this kind of entertainment, because whatever they might imagine is possible in a cartoon, and the protagonists always survive no matter what they are up against. An interesting new-comer was the combination of cartoon and real film in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" in 1988 with British actor Bob Hoskins starring with cartoon figure Roger Rabbit. Traditionally cartoons have provided safe and harmless entertainment for kids, but times have changed. Digital animation has opened for new possibilities, such as fascinating "documentaries" about e.g. dinosaurs or dramatic disasters in a sci-fi setting. In a modern animated film it is in fact hard to tell if the actors are real and just badly made up, because the animations are so close to real-life figures. The future of animated film, with 3D effects seems to offer an even more "realistic" thrill, for example what we have seen in "Avatar".

Superheroes

Perhaps there is a human need to believe that if something awful is threatening the earth or a dangerous criminal is on the loose, someone will take action and save us. This has brought on the American super-heroes like Flash Gordon, Superman, Batman and Spiderman. These figures are ordinary men, but have the secret ability to turn into a superhuman that will come to rescue people in danger, bring the bad guys to justice and restore law and order. This kind of double-life or alter ego is a recurring motif in literature; two individual and opposite identities living within the same body. Victorian writer Robert Louis Stevenson's "The strange case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" is an example, albeit with a somewhat more disturbing development and ending than we see when Superman alias Clark Kent saves the world in his superman costume and cape. Superman was in 2011 ranked number one in an international rating of top 100 comic book heroes.



Batman
Fotograf: Jerry Robinson

Serious Fun

Traditionally a cartoon or a comic strip is pure fun and entertainment. But some creative authors and animators have entered the cartoon scene with a different approach. *The Simpsons* and *South Park* have become enormously popular TV-series with their satirical comment on topics or phenomena taken from real life. The drawings are more like sketches, but their universe and topics are clearly recognisable, and their ironic twist is both striking and sharp. The kids in *South Park* pick up elements in the news or in society in general and present them in a satirical and often provocative manner. It looks harmless because they are only children, but innocent as they may seem, beneath there is a serious message in both *South Park* and *The Simpsons*. For example – what does Homer Simpson imply with his remark: "I did nothing at work today, and I still got paid!"?

Comprehension

What is meant by the expressions "spin-off" and "a sci-fi setting"?

Discuss

1. Do you think comics should qualify as literature?
2. What is your favourite cartoon? Do you still enjoy cartoons? Why / why not?
3. Comment on the Homer Simpson remark in the last line of the article.
4. What is your opinion about the superhero tradition in comics and cartoons? Why is this tradition mainly American?

Presentation

1. What are your favourite episodes from *South Park* and *The Simpsons*? Find them on YouTube, play them for the class and explain why these are your favourites.
2. Analyse the episode with respect to stereotypes, attitudes, structure, etc.

Create a Cartoon

1. Create your own cartoon story. You can use your favourite novel, film, comic as a starting point or create your own setting and characters. You might find the digital tool Toondoo useful. You need to create an account (free).
2. What potential and limitations did you experience with the cartoon genre?

Crime - Disturbing, Dark, and Delightful

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Crime - Disturbing, Dark, and Delightful (94684)

Why are we so fascinated by crime? Ever since Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), which is claimed to be the first genuine crime story, the genre has been immensely popular with the reading audience. Is it because we have a secret desire for the dark and disturbing nature of man, or is it because we want to confirm our belief in the good forces in society that fight the evil? We feel safe when law and order are restored. Let us look a bit at the different sub-categories of crime stories (and films) and speculate a bit on our morbid fascination for criminal activity.

These words appear in the article, check that you know them all.

predictable, mandatory, delinquent, violation, protagonist, antagonism, narrative, to deploy, intricacy, deduction, counterpart, to obstruct, to complement, to enhance, hassle, unsettling

The Rules of the Genre

It is an interesting fact that crime literature never achieved any due respect or acclaim by literary scholars and critics. It is considered a simple and trivial genre without much literary merit. One reason may be that the universe of a traditional crime story is displayed within a fairly predictable framework. When you pick up a crime story you to some extent know what you will get. Certain elements are mandatory ingredients of the genre; number one is evident – there has to be a crime committed. Number two - there must be a criminal, and number three - there must be someone who goes after him. Within this basic framework there are a number of different approaches for a crime writer to create suspense and make the story a good read. The challenge is to include the expected elements and avoid too many structural clichés. The creative bit is the nature of the crime and how the police or the detective goes about to solve the case, the rest is more or less familiar elements. But it is hard to come up with an original and intricate plot and a credible story within the required cliché-like basics. One original twist could for example be to start with the crime and reveal the murderer; then the plot could focus on how the police or detective tries to figure out what we already know. But for a devoted crime-fan such an approach most likely would not work, since it would be a violation of the traditional rules of the genre. So the critics may have a point, the crime genre is a fairly fixed sort of literary universe, and, as we shall see – there are more recurring elements than just the basic narrative frame.

Pistol

Fotograf: Sindre Ellingsen

The Police Story

There are roughly two main categories of crime stories: The police story and the detective story. In the first category we usually follow an inspector and his partner in their investigation. Examples are the British Inspector Morse, the German Derrick, the French Maigrèt, and the Swedish inspectors, Martin Beck and Kurt Wallander. In real life this is not how it works. Solving a case takes team work often from an entire department. But even if a book or a film takes that into account, and present a team of investigators, there is usually some leading character that is in charge of the case, and who will be the protagonist of the narrative. Another usual element in the police story is the antagonism the investigating officer has to face from his boss, who wants results, both for the press and for his superiors. His boss will also in many cases disapprove of the methods deployed by the inspector, but he knows he has to trust him, since he has a good record. We will also in most cases be informed about the inspector's more or less sad private life; a broken marriage, alcohol, loneliness and so on.

The Detective Story

The detective story will to some extent follow the same lines, but the private detective is in most cases a loner, maybe a former police officer with a dodgy past. His private life is also usually a bit in the grey-zone with drinking, woman trouble, and kids from a broken marriage. In some cases he will cooperate with the police, but mostly he is a pain in the neck because he is in their way and also because he usually is smarter and solves the case before the police do. There are numbers of famous private detectives in crime fiction, from Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlow via Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, to Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Most of the private investigators work alone on a mission from some client who often will be unable to pay his fee in time. Poirot and Holmes are eccentric and highly intelligent detectives who

are able to figure out the intricacy of the plot by deduction and intuition. They both have been filmed, and some film versions of Sherlock Holmes show a detective with abnormal tendencies and with a drug addiction.
Both the police and the detective relentlessly fight the criminals time after time. There is always a new case, which is why these stories always appear in series. And as long as there are bad guys out there the crime writers will never run out of material.

Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson
Fotograf: Henrik Laurvik

The Partners

Traditionally the police inspectors work with a partner. These partners are not there only to assist the inspector in solving the case; they have a literary and narrative effect on the plot. In most cases the partner works as a counterpart and contrast to his boss, and the difference between them will cause communication problems and obstruct their cooperation. This is a good drive for the narrative because their different approaches eventually will complement each other in order to crack the case. If the inspector has a female partner, like for example in “The Inspector Lynley Mysteries”, there will often be romantic or sexual undertones in the relationship between them, which is an element that also will add to the narrative drive. But the partners also have another important role; they are there to ask “stupid” questions which, in turn, gives the inspector the opportunity to display his intelligence. Sherlock Holmes’s standard reply to these questions says it all: “Elementary, my dear Watson”, after which he in a somewhat patronising manner explains his deduction to an impressed Dr Watson. The same goes for the way Inspector Morse communicates with Sergeant Lewis. However, both Lewis and Watson contribute to the investigation brilliantly exactly because they think more simply and are more down-to-earth than their bosses.

Three Theories

Basically there are three theories that may explain the popularity of this kind of literature. One is that the crime story is a relaxing pastime and will put your mind off your everyday hassles. It provides action-filled and delightful entertainment. It will probably give you a thrill and a surprise ending, but in a way that you feel at home in the familiar universe of a crime story. Secondly, many like to read such stories to challenge their own intellect; they find it amusing to try and figure out “whodunit” before the detective or the inspector can come up with a solution. Some readers are so eager that they have to check the last page before they have read the whole story. The last theory is a bit unsettling, as it will claim that our attraction to stories about violence and crime rises from our secret affinity for the dark instincts and urges within ourselves. If so, it is a good thing that most of us can compensate by reading about violence and watching films about crime instead of practising it. In any case, it is good for our mental health to see and read about clever detectives and police inspectors who catch the bad guys and bring them to justice, which is actually what happens in the real world.

Comprehension and Discussion

1. What do you think is meant by "structural clichès"? (As opposed to verbal clichès.)
2. Can you come up with more examples of police or detective stories / films that are drawn along the same lines as in the article?
3. What is the narrative function of the police inspector's partner?
4. What is in your opinion the reason why crime is such a popular genre?
5. The article mentions two main genres of crime fiction, but there may be more (organised crime, mafia, poliitical thrillers, spy stories, corrupt police, investigating journalists) Can you think of typical elements of such genres?

Match Detective with Author

MyTask - Click icon to open task!

Forfatter: Amendor

Find Out

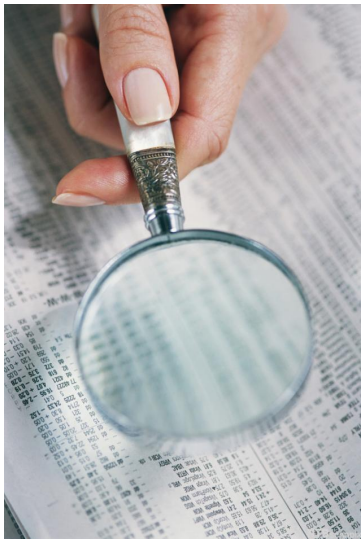
1. Choose one of the detectives and find out more about the character and his/her creator. (Most authors have their own website.) Make a short presentation. Include the following points:
   - setting of novel(s) (place, time)
   - background of main character
   - personality of main character
   - does he/she have a partner
   - titles of some of novels
   - author's background
2. One of the most famous detectives is Sherlock Holmes, created by Arthur Conan Doyle at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. What was special about Sherlock Holmes and his method of detection?
   A new BBC series, *Sherlock*, based on Conan Doyle's character, was first shown in 2010. Compare the new*Sherlock* with the original story (setting, characters, style, etc.) and make a short presentation. Here is a short trailer for the TV series, *Sherlock*. You can find more information about Sherlock Holmes and the novels at these links:
   - sherlockian.net
   - Sherlock Holmes

Fact or Fiction - or Both

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Fact or Fiction - or Both? Historical Facts as Source for Fiction (103174)

Many people enjoy historical novels. It gives an extra thrill to a story when we know it is based on historical facts, in the same way as films that are “based on a true story” seem to have a stronger impact than film plots that are pure fiction. However, writers who base their fiction on historical material must tread carefully because history is an established science and historians will certainly frown upon amateurs who set out to rewrite history.

Three Approaches


Looking for Facts or Fiction?

History is an interesting and at the same time difficult subject. Researchers spend their time studying source material, and then draw their conclusions after having presented theories and discussed with colleagues. Our knowledge of history is based on extensive and collective research by historians and archaeologists. So an author of fiction has to respect what these scholars have established as historical facts.

One way for the author to go is to “fill in” what history does not tell us, that is, to create a story about what “might have happened”. As long as the author steers clear of established historical facts this might work, but as soon as a character or a setting can be identified as factual history, he cannot tamper with it. For example, changing the fate of Napoleon or Hitler, or introducing hand guns in the Middle Ages would simply be a falsification, even if it is presented as fiction.

Another approach for writers of historical material is to use a factual setting and create one or more characters who take their places in a plot developing against a historical backdrop. This will give the author a framework that will be historically correct while his character(s) are purely fictional; they may even relate to and communicate with historical and factual characters. This has been done successfully by the Norwegian writer Kjartan Fløgstad in *Grense Jacobselv* where he creates a plot about how ex-Nazis were so smoothly re-established as clean and respectable citizens after the war. Another prime example of this approach is Victor Hugo’s *Les Miserables* which is the story of a failed insurrection during the French Revolution.

Still another interesting approach was the American feature film *Forrest Gump* (1994) starring Tom Hanks. The director (Robert Zemeckis) has inserted black and white clips showing the protagonist in historical settings, for example shaking hands with President John F. Kennedy and being present at the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington DC. It is a bit confusing in a fictional feature film, but it works to give the plot a documentary effect and historical authenticity. It is done quite skilfully, and the viewers are manipulated into thinking that this must be real.

The Kindly Ones

The Kindly Ones by French novelist Jonathan Littell was published in 2006 in France and became a huge success internationally, and was also acclaimed by historians. In an introductory note the author states, “This book is a work of fiction. References to real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales are intended only to provide a sense of authenticity, and are used fictitiously. All other characters, and all incidents and dialogue, are drawn from the author’s imagination and are not to be construed as real.” Littell’s voluminous book is dedicated to “the dead”, and the first lines read: “Oh, my human brothers, let me tell you how it happened.” It is the story of former Nazi officer Maximilien Aue, a learned and cultivated intellectual, and at the same time a cold-blooded murderer serving the Reich. We follow him through the horrors of the Second World War and the genocide of the Jews. He is there in the Ukraine and the Caucasus, experiences the Battle of Stalingrad and lives through the chaotic final days of the Nazi regime in Berlin. His tale is a disturbingly precise and detailed narrative where the atrocities are calculated and necessary for a new world. Maximilien is a high ranked Nazi officer and bureaucrat, and he meets and communicates with factual Nazi leaders such as Joseph Goebbels, Hermann Goehring and Reinert Heydrich. And, like Fløgstad’s main character, Max Aue reinvents himself after the war as a respectable middle-class man leading a decent life with his family. It is a study of how fiction deals with factual human evil, and it raises the intriguing issue of history and fiction – where do they meet, and where do they separate? It is a difficult fusion, but Jonathan Littell seems to have found the formula for credible fiction set in a historically correct context.

History and Fiction

Reading stories set in history gives us a feeling of truth and authenticity. Such books (and films) may also bring about a sense of unification with the past and a rooting in our national identity. This is why historical novels were so popular during the Romantic Period. Stories about national heroes, chivalry and bravery would spark the feeling of national pride and the urge for independence. Good examples are the historical plays of German playwright Friedrich Schiller and Scottish Sir Walter Scott’s stories about *Rob Roy* and *Ivanhoe*.
Historical material may be an excellent source for fiction as long as the writer knows how to deal with it respectfully.

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension

1. Mention some reasons why historical novels are so popular.
2. What effect does it give when a film or book is “based on a true story”?
3. Why will historians usually be sceptical of historical fiction?
4. What problems would be raised if “The Kindly Ones” was to be turned into a feature film?
5. What do you think it means when a film is presented as “semi-documentary”? Why is this a somewhat questionable genre?
6. Why was historical fiction so popular during the Romantic era?

Research

You may have seen the film “Forrest Gump” (if not, you certainly should, or you may check YouTube for certain scenes). What do you think of the “authentic” effects used in the film? Present some clips in class and discuss whether this works or it is falsification of history.

Can you come up with examples of books or films where historical facts have been misplaced or used in a false context? Go on the net and find examples and present them in class.

Vocabulary

These words and expressions appear in the article. Explain them in English or find a suitable synonym. (If you don't know them, you may be able to figure out their meaning by finding them in the text and studying the context they are used in.)

- impact
- genocide
- steer clear of
- collective
- falsification
- to tamper with
- backdrop
- atrocities
- chivalry
- insurrection

- impact - effect or impression (in this context)
- genocide - murder of an entire people
- steer clear of - avoid
- collective - in cooperation, joint or combined
- falsification - fake, forgery
- to tamper with - to meddle with, change
- backdrop - background, setting
- atrocities - brutality, cruelty
- chivalry - heroic or gentlemanly behaviour
- insurrection - rebellion, revolt

Grammar

Change the sentences below from direct speech into reported speech. (Example: "I can't come", he said. / He said that he could not come.)

1. "Avatar is my favourite film," he said.
2. "Don't take him seriously," she said to me.
3. "Do you want another cup of tea," she asked me.
4. "Please turn the volume down," he said to me.
5. "Can you come over tonight?" he asked her.
6. "We can do it tomorrow;" they said.
7. "Wipe that grin off your face," she said angrily to him.
8. "You can't park here," the officer said to me.

1. He said that Avatar was his favourite film.
2. She told me not to take him seriously.
3. She asked me if I wanted another cup of tea.
4. He told / asked me to please turn the volume down.
5. He asked her if she could come over that night (tonight).
6. They said that they could do it the next day.
7. She told him angrily to wipe that grin of his face.
8. The officer said that I could not park there.

Note that in reported speech the tense is changed, which is logical since the reported phrase refers to the past. Note also the other small changes (here-there, tomorrow-the next day) and how imperative and interrogative sentences are reported.

Science Fiction

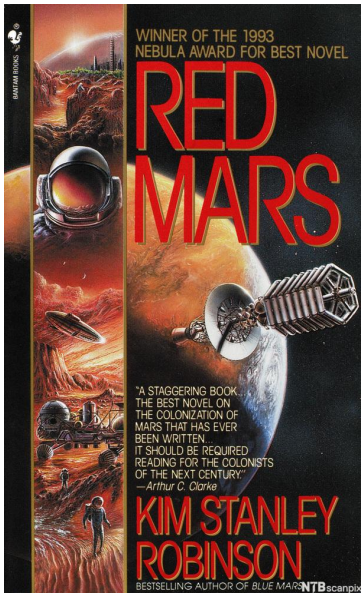
Forfatter: Karin Dwyer Løken
Science Fiction - Genres and Sub-Genres of Sci-Fi Literature (100525)

One of the characteristics that separate homo-sapiens from the animal world is that animals seem to be equipped only to survive in their environment. Home-sapiens, on the other hand, have the ability to change their environment; for instance through technology and science.

Science Fiction is the fiction genre that more than any other deals with man's technological and scientific development. At the same time, it reflects our need to ponder the potential consequences of these developments.

What is Science Fiction?

Science fiction literature revolves around science and technology that does not yet exist and may never exist. But to keep the attention of most readers, it has to be plausible; therefore the science and technology described is based on the principles of science. These stories are most often set in the future. Sometimes they are about life on a changed Earth, but they also often deal with aliens, life on other planets, parallel worlds or even time travel.



The Invasion of Mars

Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The main concern for many science fiction authors is not the scientific and technological developments themselves, but how they affect mankind. In fact, some science fiction stories depict situations arising mainly from the social or political change resulting from these developments. In other words, a lot of science fiction can also be seen as comments on important societal issues.

It was the editor, Hugo Gernsbach, who coined the expression "science fiction" in the 1920s. Not very successful himself as an author, he launched the first science fiction magazine in 1926, in which he published the works of other science fiction authors. Since then, the science fiction genre has become increasingly more popular and has developed into several sub-genres. These sub-genres are not, however, surrounded by impermeable genre borders; most sci-fi stories cross over into other sub-genres - and even other genres.

Hard Science Fiction

Most of the classic science fiction literature belongs to the genre of hard science fiction, in which the plot revolves around the science and technology itself. Isaac Asimov, a Russian-American professor of bio-chemistry, was a prolific writer of both fiction and non-fiction. He is best remembered for his science fiction short stories and novels. Many of his short stories were eventually published in collections, most notably I, Robot (1950) and Nightfall and Other Stories (1968).

Another writer of hard science fiction was Robert A. Heinlein, often called the “dean of science fiction writers.” His most famous novels include Methuselah’s Children (1958) and The Moon is a Harsh Mistress (1966), both having to do with space travel and the technology involved. Both of these novels cross into the sub-genre of space exploration.

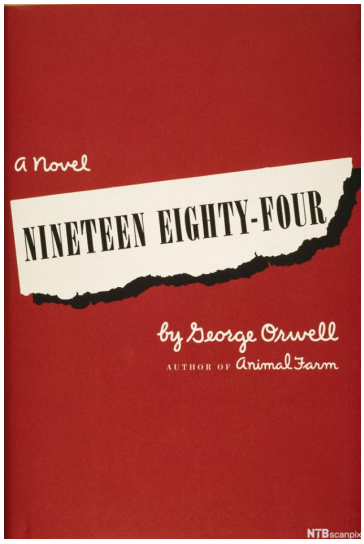
Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Worlds

Apocalyptic science fiction focuses on the end of the world, while post-apocalyptic stories focus on the world that develops after the end. In The Road, Cormac McCarthy tells the story of a father and son walking through a bleak landscape ravaged by an unnamed catastrophe that has destroyed most of life on Earth. Their most dangerous threat is from other human beings, who, in their desperation for nourishment, have resorted to cannibalism. In Stephen King’s novel, The Stand, most of human life is wiped out by the release of a man-made virus. The surviving human beings have to contend not only with their personal losses, but also with the confusion of a completely new kind of existence and the violence that this existence entails.

In Margaret Atwood’s novels, Oryx and Crake (2003) and The Year of the Flood (2009) the plot is about life after man’s fatal abuse of science and technology. These novels tell the stories about some of the survivors in a world having succumbed to “the waterless flood” – a world run to ground by biotechnology corporations; a world in which human life has been all but obliterated, while genetically engineered life-forms are proliferating.

Dystopian Societies

Dystopian science fiction tells stories about nightmare societies, usually states controlled by rulers who abuse the available technology to repress the population. One such dystopia was depicted by Aldous Huxley in Brave New World (1932). This story takes place in 2540 A.D. Political boundaries no longer exist, and the world is run and controlled by World Controllers. In this society, human beings are created in laboratories and conditioned, both as embryos and as babies, to be happy. The theory is that happy people create a stable society. Individualism is discouraged. Monogamy is looked upon with suspicion – close bonds between individuals may result in rebellion. The authorities provide everyone with Soma – a happiness-inducing drug. But the stability of this society is threatened when two men begin to ask questions.



Front Cover of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty Four (1949)
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

George Orwell's 1984 (1949) depicts the totalitarian society, Oceania, where the ruling party and its leader, Big Brother, is present in every aspect life. Political dissent in any form is forbidden and heavily punished. In this society, sex is forbidden, as is individuality. The novel explores the fate of one man who is critical of his society and who allows himself both to fall in love and to join a group of people who oppose the Party.

Time Travel

Time travel science fiction is based on the concept of travelling backward or forward in time. Sometimes this travel through time involves travelling through space, to a parallel world or universe. As early as in 1895, H.G. Wells wrote The Time Machine, which tells the story of a scientist who invented a machine that would take him to whichever point in time he wished to go. We follow him on his adventures as far as 30 million years in the future. Audrey Niffenegger's debut novel, The Time Traveler's Wife (2005), tells the love story between a young woman and the love of her life: a man suffering from a disorder that causes him, involuntarily and without warning, to travel to different points within his own life span.

Space Exploration and First Contact

Space exploration sci-fi is about space exploration – the physical travel through space. In 1865, Jules Verne, often called the father of science fiction, wrote about space exploration in From the Earth to the Moon. In C.S. Lewis' Cosmic Trilogy (1939 – 1945), the protagonist, Dr. Elwin Ranson, travels to Mars and Venus before returning to Earth. Poul Anderson's novel, Tau Zero (1970) is about the journey of fifty men and women to a planet thirty light-years away.

First contact stories describe the first meeting between humans and aliens from outer space. Written as early as 1898, H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds has attracted the interest of radio- and television producers for nearly a century. A typical first contact story, The War of the Worlds, is about how Earth is invaded by hostile Martians looking for a new planet to settle down on, since their own planet is dying. They fail in their attempt, collectively succumbing to bacteria indigenous to Earth.

Space Opera

The space opera has a more pompous content than other sci-fi sub-genres: they deal lightly with the science and technology they are based on. Plausibility is of little consequence. These stories take place on space ships that travel around outer space, and the characters meet various exotic life forms on strange planets. Both the heroes and the villains have uncontested strength and intelligence. The main theme the plot revolves around is the battle between good and evil. Space operas are very visual and are therefore often adapted for TV, for instance Robert E. Heinlein's Starship Troopers and Frank Herbert's Dune. Others are created especially for TV – for instance Lost in Space, Star Trek, Star Wars, Babylon 5 and Battleship Gallactica.

On the Light Side

With all this concentration on abused science and technology, scary worlds and life forms, natural and unnatural disasters and the end of the world as we know it, it is difficult to imagine that science fiction can in any way be funny. Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is a delightful blend of imagined technology, space travel, and both subtle and hilarious humour. This novel and Adams' subsequent four novels defied the reputation of science fiction as a genre for originals and geeks and stand as proof of the versatility of the science fiction genre.

Tasks and Activities

1. Read through the text again and see if you have ever heard of any of the books, films or TV series mentioned. Perhaps you have read some of them or seen the film version? Tell the class if any of them looks familiar.
2. Google one of the books or films mentioned and write a short synopsis of it. Then present it to the class or in a group.
3. The text tells about some of the sub-genres of science fiction. Look up another sub-genre and make a presentation of one of it, much like the presentations in the text. Then read your presentation in groups or to the class. The following websites may be useful:
    - Science Fiction - Genres and Sub Genres
    - Genres of Science Fiction
    - Know Your Science Fiction Sub Genres
4. Read the blog entry: "Science fiction: the genre that dare not speak its name"
   Science Fiction: The Genre that dare not speak its name
    - What does this blog entry say about how people have looked upon the science fiction genre?
    - What does it say about where the genre stands today and about its future?
    - What does it say about categorizing books into genres in general?
5. A number of science fiction awards are given annually to authors whose works are considered outstanding within the genre. Look up the authors mentioned in the text. Have any of them received any such awards? What kinds of awards have they won?
6. Do you have a favourite science fiction book, film or series? Explain why you believe it belongs to this genre. Does it cross into other genres? Which sub-genre of science fiction does it belong to? Does it cross into other science fiction sub-genres?

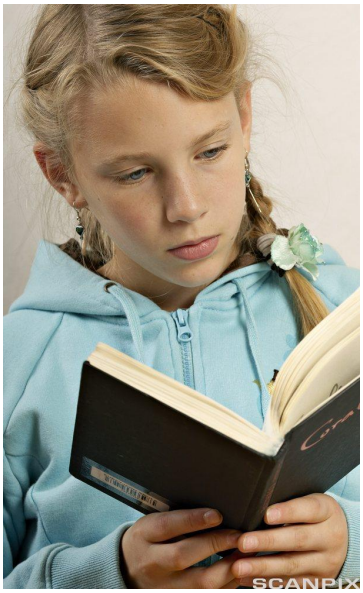
Kids' Stuff

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Kids' Stuff (95895)

Literature for children was for a long time considered unimportant, and it was not regarded as proper and serious literature. Up until mid-19th century it was practically non-existent, and it was well into the 1920s before writing for children was acknowledged as an adequate literary form. Today we know how important it is to introduce children to the world of literature. Reading is food for thought; it develops your intellect and social understanding. Hence it goes without saying that this process should start as early as possible. A child who has discovered the joy of reading will most likely retain a love of books later in life as well.

adequate, hence, retain, apt, to adapt, versatility, legitimate, suspense, to deem, applicable, mischievous, escapism, phoney, alter ego

From Alice to Pippi



Girl reading
Fotograf: Kerstin Mertens

The first English literature intended for children appeared during the Victorian age. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1872) have become classics of fantasy literature for children. The characters Alice encounters in her underworld adventure have become immortal, like the Rabbit, the Mad Hatter and the Walrus, who is behind the famous quote - "The Time has come, the Walrus said, to talk of many things." Much of the literature produced for children at the time was meant to be educational with a clear moralist Christian motive. Children were seen as small people apt to a sinful life if they were not taught the correct ways. Moral education may be good, but it is not entertaining. So literature for children had to be more than that. Towards the turn of the century writers like Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Rudyard Kipling contributed with books for children that are still read and cherished today. Who has not read or seen the animated film version of Kipling's *The Jungle Book*? Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* have also gained their positions as classics and have been successfully adapted to film. During the first half of the 20th century literature for children gradually established itself as a genuine and fully recognised literary genre; and now one celebrated fiction writer after another came up with memorable and great literature for children. Examples include J.R.R. Tolkien's substantial epic *The Lord of the Rings* (1937-49), C.S.Lewis's wonderful *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-56), A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, the magical world of Harry Potter created by J.K Rowling, and the popular stories by Roald Dahl and the Swedish Astrid Lindgren. In today's fiction it is seen as sign of an author's versatility to be able to write both for children and for a grown-up audience.

Through the Eyes of a Child

How then should we define a “good” book for children? Are there any literary criteria that define a children’s book as good literature? Like we all do, children want literature they can relate to and recognise themselves in, but compared to the literary universe designed for grown-ups there is one big difference – credibility and realism. In a child’s imagination anything is possible; fantasy and magic are counted as legitimate elements that will enrich the narrative of a children’s book. The principles of physics and the realism of the plot are not important to children. A child gladly believes that the protagonist has a secret ability to fly or a gift of seeing what other people think (in most cases grown-ups). Alice, Narnia and Harry Potter are brilliant examples of this, which is mainly why they are so successful. Fantasy opens the door to a child’s own imagination. But there is more - a child must have action from page one or the book will not work. To capture the attention of a child reader the text has to create immediate suspense and excitement. All these elements are essential if we want to evaluate good literature for children, because a “good” book for children will simply be one that a child will enjoy. An adult may well deem the book as good, but as long as a child does not bother to read it or is bored with it, it simply is not a good book. There are a number of approaches to categorise and map literature for children, but in general the common elements of literary analysis and criteria for “good” literature are simply not applicable. Good literature for children is what a child finds entertaining; it is as simple as that.

Naughty Heroes and Secret Friends

Most children love the mischievous protagonist, the little trouble-maker who dares to speak up to grown-ups, and they love to see the authorities of the adult world ridiculed. This escapism into a sort of upside-down world is an important element of popular literature for children. In Roald Dahl's stories for children most of the grown-ups, either parents or teachers, are simply made fools of, and if you look at the literary universe created by Astrid Lindgren you will find the same elements. Emil's father (*Emil i Lønneberget*), the stupid police officers or the teacher in *Pippi Longstocking* are all representatives of the phoney and laughable adult world. Typically, in "Pippi" the only positive adult is a pirate, Pippi's father. Successful authors of books for children know that this is what works: To create a universe where the children come out on top and the adult authorities remain the losers, this is simply the dream world of most children. A popular newcomer in this tradition is Horrid Henry, created by Francesca Simon, a series of so far twenty story books published between 1994 and 2011. Horrid Henry is extremely popular with children, most likely because he lives up to his name. This trend is a break with the basic and long-established "it-pays-to-be-nice" morale of traditional literature for children. Both the books about Pippi and Henry have been criticised for having bad influence on children and for giving them ideas. Roald Dahl was also criticised for his horrible and often violent characters in his children's books, and the Library Journal concluded "not recommended". But Dahl did not care, he replied: "I must keep reminding you that this is a book written for children and I don't give a bugger what grown-ups think about it."

Emil i Lønneberget
Fotograf: Morten Holm

In general children have a vivid imagination where they can make up all kinds of characters and incidents. Secret or imaginary friends are a common feature of a child's make-believe world; rag dolls or teddies that come alive when the children need someone to give them needed support or comfort. This element is also brought into children's literature, for example in A.C.Vestly's "Lillebror og Knerten" and Swedish Gunilla Bergstrøm's Albert Åberg. This raises a slightly more psychological issue; the secret friend may not only be the faithful companion of a lonely child, he may also be the kid's alter ego when he is up to something mischievous. Then the naughty child will have someone else to blame for his own misbehaviour, like in the somewhat disturbing short story *If Big Brother Says So* by Canadian Alice Rudoski.

The success formula of books for children is to know the universe of the child, and to take the child seriously. Educational, moralist stories will simply not work as entertainment for children. They will see through that kind of hidden adult instruction. What they want is a literary world with magic, mystery, and mischief – a world that can spur and match their own imagination.

Comprehension and Research

1. In what way can we say that literature for children reflects the status of children in society?
2. You have probably seen the Walt Disney adaption of *Winnie the Pooh*. Check out the original text and illustrations by A.A.Milne, and compare and comment on the difference.

3. Why do you think fantasy literature is so popular with children and young people?
4. The books about Narnia and the Lord of the Rings were written nearly eighty years ago but are still enormously popular both as storybooks and films. What does that tell you?
5. You may not have heard about Horrid Henry. Find him on the net or read one of his stories, and make a small presentation for the class.
6. See if you can find the short story *If Big Brother Says So*, by Alice Rudoski. Read it and comment on the ending. Do you think this is literature for children?

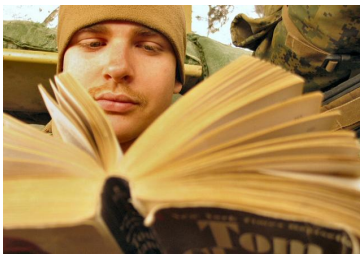
Life on Record - Biographies

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Life on Record - Biographies (95700)

Biographies are an extremely popular genre. In general people are interested in other people's lives, a fact that may explain the popularity of talk shows where more or less famous guests are invited to talk about themselves. Actors, writers, film stars and musicians are all sought-after targets for this somewhat indiscrete and tabloid mission. This may also be why the biography is an all-time winner both in literature and on film. Ordinary people seem to have a secret desire to find out what lies behind the fame and success of these people.

appreciation, snooping, insatiable, approval, intriguing, profound, to pen, dodgy, impact, potent, casting, impersonation, posture

Facts – not Fiction


Caught Reading
Opphavsmann: Jayel Aheram

Strictly speaking a biography is no more than a record of a person's life, and is in literary terms classified as non-fiction. But the facts recorded may still be of value when we want to understand fiction, because getting insight into a writer's life may give us a broader appreciation of his writing. The circumstances that influenced the author during his life either on a personal or a social level will most likely be reflected in his writing. Much of the European fiction from the mid-1930s was, for example, heavily influenced by the rising Nazi movement in Germany and the overhanging threat of a new war. But one must remember that once a literary text has left the author, it is dead until its universe comes alive in the encounter with the reader; what made the author write it is in most cases of secondary interest. So in that respect a biography is only interesting as a documentation of someone's life. There are numerous biographies published every year about all kinds of celebrities, and they sell by the million. People look for intimate revelations and juicy details from the private lives of people that in some way have become famous. One reason for this rather snooping curiosity may be that people simply want to get more intimately acquainted with someone that means a lot to them and they feel they know, but only from a distance. Writing a full biography takes enormous research, but the work will probably pay off as the market seems insatiable. If the biography is unauthorized, that is if the person portrayed has not given the biographer his approval, the story will probably sell even more.

My own Story

The autobiography is a slightly more intriguing sub-genre of this kind of literature. When a person relates his own life it becomes even more intimate and personal. When some famous person wants to tell his own story we listen. The personal memoirs of famous people will not only include the biographical facts, but also private reflections which may lead to a more profound understanding of the artist or the politician behind their glamorous façade. But writing a good autobiography takes narrative talent, so often the "writer" will work with a professional author or journalist to pen his story. But that is not always the case. Rock stars like Bob Dylan (*Chronicles*) and Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards (*Life*) display surprisingly good narrative talent in their autobiographies. The memoirs of retired politicians may have the potential to be explosive as they may reveal dodgy dealings within the political system, such as corruption. But usually an experienced politician will know how to go about tactfully in order not to stir the opposition, and to preserve his own reputation and integrity.

Famous Figures on Film

Charlie Chaplin

We have seen them all – J.F. Kennedy, Picasso, Gandhi, Chaplin, Hitler, to mention a few. The filmed biography is in a way more potent than a written biography, because, first of all, film has in general a stronger impact than literature due to its visual effects, and secondly, seeing is believing. What we can see tends to become truer than what we read, even though we know that it is an enacted feature film and not a documentary. This leaves the film director with a huge responsibility; the way his protagonist is presented will go down in history as the truth. Many of these filmed biographies are heavily criticised afterwards; critics claim that they present the person in an either too flattering light or in a way that does not correspond with reality and historical facts. So the film director has the power to manipulate the audience and to rewrite history, which is a somewhat questionable project. And we must remember that if this is a Hollywood production, which it usually is, it has to comply with the rules of the trade to become a box office winner. This is probably why the film about Picasso was called *Picasso's Women* and the film about Chaplin focused more on his affairs with women than on his films and artistic talent. Another challenge for the makers of biographical films is the casting. For the film to be trustworthy it is crucial to find an actor whose physical features are as close to the "real McCoy" as possible. A true re-enacting of the face and figure of a historical person is essential for such a film to work and to be seen as the historical document it pretends to be. Ben Kingsley was a good Gandhi lookalike, and Robert Downing jr gave life to Charlie Chaplin in a most credible way. Other examples are Helen Mirren as Queen Elizabeth II and Meryl Streep as Margaret Thatcher. Stephen Fry as Oscar Wilde (*Wilde*) with his long hair and extravagant style is also a brilliant impersonation, and so is Bruno Ganz as Hitler in *Der Untergang*. The make-up crew on the film set really can work miracles, and when the actors do their job on deportment and accent, these films actually come close to good documentaries and are acclaimed both by the audience and the reviewers.

Comprehension

1. Why do you think an unauthorised biography would sell more than an authorised one?
2. Why is an autobiography more intriguing than a biography?
3. Do you know examples of political memoirs that have caused a stir when they were published?
4. What does it mean that a Hollywood production has to comply with “the rules of the trade”? What are these rules?

Research

1. Go on the net and find trailers or clips from film biographies of famous people, for example those mentioned in the article, and compare the looks of the artist to pictures of the real person. What do you think?
2. Check the net for reviews of the biographical films about Margaret Thatcher or J. Edgar Hoover. What do they say about the way these political figures are presented?

Text Appeal

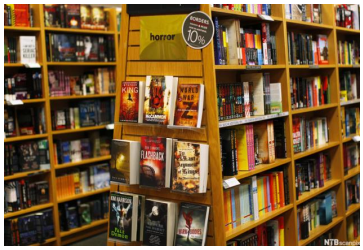
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Text Appeal (94268)

What is it that makes you pick up a certain book, and put another one back on the shelf? Publishers and writers constantly ask themselves this question, because what is the point in writing or publishing a book that will never be sold or read? Thousands of books are published every year, so why do some of them catch on while most of them sink into oblivion? In the publishing world they say that “green books never sell”, which sounds funny when we know that “one never should judge a book by its cover”. Let us look at some of the incentives that make us choose one book before another.

oblivion, incentive, enigmatic, hunch, enticing, to perceive, prestigious, benchmark, to unfold

The Title

To some extent the title of a book is the bait that is supposed to hook you, but there is more to it than just that. A good title must spur your interest; it may be intriguing and enigmatic, like *A Hitch-Hiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* or *The Crimson Petal and the White*. Such titles will appeal to your curiosity and you may want to find out what the book is about, but in general you should not rely too much on the title. In the past they thought that the title should be an introduction to the whole narrative, which resulted in titles like *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner, Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been Cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With an Account how he was at last as strangely delivered by Pirates. Written by Himself.* Such an wordy title actually tells you more than you want to know, but the readers at that time were probably intrigued by this. These books would also often have headings for each chapter which would briefly sum up what was coming up in that chapter.



Books

Fotograf: Mike Blake

But the title is only the outside, and the truth is that in most cases the title of a book tells you nothing. You will have to read the book for the title to make any sense. So the conclusion should perhaps be: Don’t trust the title, but keep it in mind and reflect on it during and after the reading process.

The Cover

The dust jacket of a hardback or the cover of a paperback will usually be your first visual encounter with the book, and if this is an eye-catcher your interest is spurred. Publishers are well aware of this and put much effort (and money) into the layout and design of a book cover. The cover illustration is the first impression and (even if it is green) may well be what gives you the hunch that this is an interesting book. The cover will also in most cases present an appetizer, “the blurb” which sums up the story’s theme or its plot in a brief and enticing manner. This information is carefully composed, in most cases by the author himself. The purpose is to tempt you into reading the book, but at the same time not give away too much of the plot.

The Opening

Once you have decided on the book, you sit back in your armchair and start on page one. This is the crucial point where the author’s project really must prove it is worthwhile. Many people put down a book after having read the first couple of pages, because the narrative simply does not communicate anything to them. This is of course quite legitimate, but once you have set your mind on reading a book, you probably should try a little harder, because in many cases the narrative will grow on you once you give it a chance. The author knows perfectly well how this works, and puts much effort into an opening that will pull you into his story. His aim is to make you want to read on. Some examples:

Recommended summer reading. What is your most memorable reading experience? Sit in pairs and discuss the importance of books in your lives.

Fotograf: René Reichelt

> “It occurred to me later that I must have registered their approach a minute or so before the first stone struck the window”. (Jem Poster: *Rifling Paradise*.)
>
> “Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him” (Graham Greene: *Brighton Rock*).
>
> “If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you’ll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don’t feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.” (J.D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye*)

The two first examples invite you directly into some dramatic “medias res”, and make you want to go on to find out more. The last example uses a different technique as it addresses you as the reader, which is a somewhat surprising approach. Such a narrative angle can be a daring literary style, because it is a one-way communication where the protagonist supposes what “you” want to know, while he himself is in full control of the narrative.

Reviews, Prizes and Bestsellers

If you pick up a book because it has been recommended by a friend, you should remember that reading is a very private and individual experience and it will normally turn out differently from person to person. So even if your best friend finds a book enjoyable, the chances are that you may find it a bit of a let-down. Virginia Woolf put it like this (in *How One Should Read a Book*, 1926):

"The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading, is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions."

A book review is to some extent also a subjective presentation of how a book is perceived, but a review is usually written by a professional and experienced reader and will give you a more substantial commentary on many aspects of the book. Many newspapers have a weekly literary supplement, which may be well worth browsing into if you want to follow what goes on in the literary world. Every year there are a number of literary prizes awarded to successful books. Many of these awards are prestigious and are perhaps the best benchmark if you want to find a book with that certain literary quality, because the panel behind the award usually consists of a combination of experts - publishers, book-sellers, critics and writers. Still another guide for many readers are the best-seller lists which are published from time to time. However, one should remember the fact that a book that is sold in millions of copies does not necessarily mean that it is a good book by literary standards. The book charts will give you a hint of what many people like to read, but quality and quantity are not the same thing. There are many examples of books that have topped the best-seller lists for months on end but were never awarded any literary prize and were butchered by the critics. And at the same time, books that are highly acclaimed by critics, may not give you that much of a reading experience.

So how do you spot a good book? Well, there certainly are some basic characteristics that will define literary quality, but people are different and at the bottom line a good book for you is simply one that you enjoy. So whatever you read and whatever makes you pick up just that particular book, what is important is that you allow the universe of a good story to unfold in your mind. Let yourself be thrilled, provoked, sad, angry, surprised, happy, entertained – it all comes with the joy of reading.

Discussion

1. What are your incentives when you choose a particular book that you want to read?
2. In the modernist movement, writers and artists launched the slogan: “Art for art’s sake”. What do you think they meant by that?
3. Discuss what happens when a book presents a narrative style that addresses the reader as “you”?
4. What happens when a book becomes digitalised? Discuss what is won and what is lost if the e-book conquers the market of the traditional paper book.

Research

1. Carry out a survey and then make a chart of the most popular books in your class, your school, or your family.
2. Go on the Internet and find book titles and cover illustrations that you think are intriguing. Present your findings for the class.
3. Consult your local library and find out which book(s) are borrowed most frequently.

"Whodunit" - The Classic Crime Plot

Forfatter: George Barker
"Whodunit" - The Classic Crime Plot (95765)

The title of this article is a bit funny; it is also grammatically incorrect. It should read “Who did it” or “Who has done it”. It is an American label of a certain genre in crime literature. The classic plot is a crime committed, an investigator, and his ways of finding out “whodunit”. The genre is recognised by a fairly fixed set of ingredients, and it has a history which is closely linked with certain aspects of Victorian England.

assignation, sibling, perpetrator, deduction, pertinent, to clamour, instalment, to violate, illicit, fabric, sanctuary, to embed, to titllate, ominous, atrocity

The origin of a genre revealed

An English country house; an extended, dysfunctional family. Eccentric visitors, an inscrutable butler and a pretty maid. A tangled web of jealousy and ambition; assignations and conspiracies. And, of course, a corpse.

All the evidence points to the classic English whodunit: an art form that, despite sometimes seeming lifeless on the drawing room floor, still manages to emerge from the shadows when we least expect it. Almost 150 years on from the first recognisable whodunit – Wilkie Collins’ The Moonstone – one of the biggest hits on British TV this winter has been Sherlock: a series of modern reworks of Conan Doyle’s classic tales.

Jack The Ripper
Forfatter: Corbis

So, what is behind the formula’s success? And where did the genre come from?

A story that is no story

Answers to those questions were provided by Kate Summerscale's The Suspicions of Mr Whicher (2008) – a book that ingeniously manages to be a whodunit whilst explaining the genre's social and historical background. Summerscale tells the story of a murder committed in a well-to-do household in nineteenth-century rural Wiltshire. The family wakes one summer morning to discover that its youngest member has been brutally killed in the grounds, yards from the windows of sleeping parents, siblings and servants. As if that were not awful enough, they soon have reason to fear that the perpetrator is still amongst them.

Enter Jack Whicher of Scotland Yard: a whiskered, uncompromising man, with a fearsome reputation for solving crime by logical deduction. What Whicher encounters is a household where everyone seems to have something to hide, and several people had opportunity and motive to murder. Our sleuth discerns flaws in the suspects' stories, uncovers hidden clues and methodically closes in on the truth.

You would be forgiven for thinking that it isn't a very original plot. However, the events recounted by Summerscale are not the product of a novelist's imagination, but a matter of historical record. The murder in the village of Road really happened; and it happened a full eight years before The Moonstone was published. The story told by Summerscale is not an example of, but the blueprint for the classic whodunit.

Media revolution

Gruesome killings are mercifully rare; but they are frequent enough to make it pertinent to ask why this particular crime should have given rise to an entire body of literature. Authors apparently picked up the formula because of the profound impression that the real-life drama made on the public. Victorian England was gripped by the events that unfolded at Road in 1860. Summerscale suggests several reasons why.

One was the "dizzying expansion of the press". In the middle of the nineteenth century, the electric telegraph and the development of a nationwide rail network brought a revolution in the gathering and distribution of information. For the first time ever, news from every corner of the land was immediately and cheaply available to all. And people clamoured to hear it. In response to the demand, countless national and regional dailies sprang up. Crime reports became the 'soap operas' of the day, read by instalment at breakfast tables from Cornwall to the Highlands.

Contemporary significance

Two features of the Road murder particularly appealed to the Victorian imagination. First, the role of the detective. The Metropolitan (i.e. London) Police – the world's first modern force – was formed in 1829, and it did not acquire a detective division until 1842. Most of the UK had no police force at all – let alone detectives – until significantly later. In other words, policing was still something of a novelty to most people in 1860, and detectives were practitioners of a mysterious art. The involvement of a metropolitan detective will have caught the attention in a way that cannot be underestimated.

Second, what happened at Road shook at the foundations of Victorian morality and convention. The notion that "an Englishman's home is his castle" is an expression of nineteenth-century thinking amongst the middle and upper classes. The Road murder violated this most secure and reassuring of sanctuaries. If the family home was the bedrock of a stable society, the brutal killing of a small child by someone close to him – and the illicit activities and dark emotions from which the act must have stemmed – threatened the very fabric of the community.

English Country House

Fotograf: Science Photo Library

Murder most foul

The characteristics of the Road murder were therefore particularly resonant in Victorian society. Consequently, in the years after 1860, writers distilled those characteristics to create a formula that was used repeatedly to capture public attention, just as the original crime had done. Many of the authors concerned, particularly the later ones, probably knew little or nothing about Road, but that didn't matter; the formula was embedded in the nation's literary culture.

It should not be imagined, however, that crime writing was invented by the Victorians. There is no shortage of black deeds in the literature of all periods. Shakespearean crime can be shocking. American essayist S. Clarke Hulse memorably said that Titus Andronicus was a play with "fourteen killings, nine of them on stage, six severed members, one rape … one live burial, one case of insanity and one of cannibalism – an average of 5.2 atrocities per act." Yet there is something very matter-of-fact about it all. Hamlet stabs his prospective father-in-law and more or less says "Whoops: wrong man." The focus is very much on emotions and motivations, and the crimes are merely the means by which feelings are made visible on stage. One senses that Elizabethan audiences were familiar with death and didn't need or want the details spelt out.

Fear as a literary device

By the Victorian era, authors were routinely using horror to titillate a gentile public comparatively safe from blood-letting in everyday life. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein appeared in 1818 and, in the middle of the century, serialised 'penny dreadfuls' such as Reynolds' trilogy Faust (1846), Wagner the Wehr-wolf (1847) and The Necromancer (1857) enjoyed great popularity. Few of these works included graphic violence, but they played on the reader's natural fear of violence and fascination with the fate of those exposed to it.

In the whodunit, the tactics of Gothic horror writing were adapted. The ominous shadow was cast, not across some exotic location, such as a Transylvanian castle, but across the reader's own world: the comfortable homes of Middle England.

While other factors – the suspense and intellectual puzzle elements, for example – contribute significantly to the appeal of the genre, it is surely the tingle for fear that the whodunit brings to a trusted setting that has exercised such a hold on successive generations.

Comprehension

What made the story about the murder at Road so special?

How did the media influence the development of crime literature in the mid-19th century?

What was the state of police and investigation of crime in the mid-19th century England?

What is, according to the article, the difference between the atrocities performed in many of Shakespeare's plays and what we can read in modern crime literature?

What are "the tactics of Gothic horror writing"?

What is meant by "penny dreadfuls"?

Research

Sherlock Holmes is mentioned in the article. Search the net for information about the London super-detective and make a brief presentation for the class. You may want to include some film-clips to compare the classic Holmes to the modern Sherlock 2011 version.

Humour - a Serious Matter

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Humour - a Serious Matter (95203)

The use of humour in film and literature has many aspects, and its effect will largely depend on the context and the reader or viewer, because we respond differently to it. There is an old hospital joke that goes: “Does it hurt? Only when I laugh.” The joke has its subtle irony because humour can actually work like that; the distance between laughter and tears is often shorter than we think. Humour is a striking and powerful means for writers and film makers to get their message across, because we love a funny story or a good comedy.

Irony and Satire

Rowan Atkinson - Mr Bean
Fotograf: Mark Earthy

Famous writers often use humour in their works, and they do it quite deliberately. For example, Charles Dickens often chose to highlight the comical sides of characters he wanted to criticise. Ridiculing certain characters or institutions is a skilful way of manipulating the readers. In general it is liberating to laugh at authorities, and in that way humour can be an effective literary technique. Both irony and satire are widely used by writers to make a point and to lead the readers to draw their own conclusions. Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels*, was a classic master of satire and humour. He had many friends, but his writing certainly made him some enemies as well. The ultimate aim of a satire is to present a certain phenomenon in a way that makes the readers laugh but at the same time respond to the serious issue behind the text. But for writers there is pitfall here, because humour may distort the thematic message in a text and move the readers’ focus and intellectual understanding of the text. So a writer with a message must pick his method carefully and will often have to make a choice – because being funny and serious at the same time is not easy.

Black Humour

We call it black humour when we laugh at things that we know we should not laugh at, but in a certain setting it can be quite comical. An example of black humour is the famous car-scene in the Tarantino film *Pulp Fiction* when somebody is shot in the head by accident. To kill someone is not funny, but we laugh because the killer is just distracted and nervous and does not mean to shoot him. Tarantino is a master of black humour, mixing violence with unexpected and funny situations. But it is a dangerous mixture – because violence and crime are not a laughing matter, it takes some distance to see the absurdity in it and not be too emotionally influenced by such effects. Another example is the Stanley Kubrick movie *Dr Strangelove* which makes fun of the threat of nuclear war. Black humour is like balancing on a tight-rope, because it is very easy to step over the line. Most people will agree that there is a limit somewhere when it comes to making fun of things. Many comedians seem to want to push that line to the extent that they become provocative and end up hurting people's feelings. Both in literature and film there are many examples of this and in some cases it has caused the book or the film to be banned. Blasphemy is a usual inducement for such a reaction because religion is for many too sacred to make fun of. Monty Python's *Life of Brian* ended in that category and was banned for some years after it came out for being offensive to Christians. The war is another example that used to be a non-target for humour, because it was so closely associated with suffering and death. After the war it would for example be impossible to launch a comedy show like *'Allo, 'Allo*, and to make jokes about Jews would be most inappropriate. But in this respect times have changed. The line between what is comic material and what is not has moved over the years; many things that caused uproar some years ago will today be seen as ok to make fun of.

Human is Funny

In most cases humour is quite harmless. Laughing promotes good mental health, and making people laugh is a highly commendable mission. The interesting issue is what makes us laugh and why. In literary theory there are volumes of studies on the subject of comedy. The comic potential of a scene or a situation will depend on a combination of ingredients that in sum make us laugh. Shakespeare knew this, and so did Charlie Chaplin. If we take a closer look at some of Shakespeare's comedies or Chaplin's black and white films there will often be some recurring elements, for example a disguised character and a mistaken identity, or a clumsy protagonist who causes trouble for himself. The basic comical elements are to some extent timeless, we still laugh at the gags of classic comedies, and people have always found it amusing to see authorities ridiculed.

In the old days bodily defects and disabilities were laughed at and were common ingredients in comedy shows. This is fortunately not so usual today, but if it is done tactfully and with a certain amount of self-irony there is quite some comic potential in for example blindness. In the film *The Blues Brothers* there is a scene where blind Ray Charles notices that a little poster is upside-down, which is quite funny. The stuttering Michael Palin in the comedy *A Fish called Wanda* is another example where a handicap is used as a comical element. But in general we do not laugh at disabled people. But why do we laugh at Mr Bean or Basil Fawlty in *Fawlty Towers*? They certainly have some physical attributes, with their face and gestures, and their posture and body language are also rather quirky, to put it mildly. Rowan Atkinson and John Cleese most certainly have a talent for comedy, but there must be more to it than a funny face and a funny walk.

A comic figure has to be human. He must have some recognisable features that we can see as human qualities and in a way can identify ourselves with. We can recognise Mr Bean's meanness with money or Basil's talent for making a mess for himself because of his unfaltering belief in his own superiority. He is afraid of his wife, and he has a job he is totally unqualified for. Most people will be able to see themselves (or someone they know) in some of these features. Donald Duck would not have been funny if he did not possess all his familiar human qualities; he is short-tempered, unlucky, jealous, envious, and like Basil, he also has a talent for making a mess of things completely of his own accord.

John Cleese as Basil Fawlty
Fotograf: NTB scanpix

The setting and the combination of otherwise not-so-funny elements will often give a comic effect. A classic example is the final scene in Monty Python's *Life of Brian* where the crucified lot join in and sing "Always look on the bright side of life". On its own the song is a nice cheerful tune to whistle to, but not exactly funny; and a crucifixion certainly is no laughing matter, but the combination of the two elements is what makes the scene so hilarious. This combination technique is also what makes black humour work.

American humour is usually a bit louder than British comedy and perhaps slightly more overacted. But comedians like Chevy Chase and Jim Carrey certainly make us laugh, and there is no doubt that Jerry Seinfeld and his friends have a talent for creating great comedy out of everyday situations and familiar circumstances.

Making fun of things can be quite serious. A comic approach may open up for unwanted reactions because people respond differently and have a different sense of humour. To some the killing scene in *Pulp Fiction* is just appalling and tasteless, and there are many who react negatively to the humour in *Life of Brian*. But in general a good comedy is safe and harmless, and sets us in a good mood. So the old hospital joke may well work the other way round: "Do you laugh? Yes – only when it hurts."

Topics for Group Discussion

- Discuss your personal sense of humour. Explain to each other what makes you laugh and why.
- Do you agree that there is a limit for what one can make fun of? If so, where should we draw the line? Give examples.
- Can you mention other examples than those given in the article of comedies that use a handicap or disability as a comical element? What do you think of such a humour?
- Why does a comic figure have to human qualities?
- Search the net for examples of good and bad comedy acts and explain why one is good and the other one bad.
- Do you agree that there is in general a difference between British and American humour? Give examples that support your opinion.

Suggestions:

Black Adder - black humour

Match person and film/series

Film clip

Find out: British humour/American humour Why so different?

Good Bad Books

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Good Bad Books (98643)

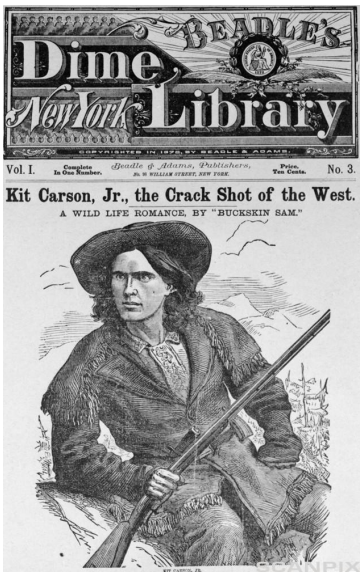
The title of this article is taken from an essay written by British author George Orwell in 1947 where he raises the question whether “bad” literature can still be readable. The issue may seem somewhat far-fetched and may also indicate a rather highbrow attitude to literature in general, because who will be the judge of what is good and bad literature – is it the literary scholar or is it the reader? We would probably agree on the latter even though some critics may classify "bad" books as sub-standard writing that does not appeal to the intellect. They would probably claim that taste and popularity are not the same as quality. They may have a point, but it seems a bit pretentious to discard the literary preference of millions of readers just like that.

far-fetched, highbrow, pretentious, discard, mandatory, relish (v), pecking order, molest, somber, intestine, insatiable, repulsive, reciprocate

Let us take a look at some of the most popular sub-genres of what is staple reading for the masses. These books will be available at a newsagent or in the supermarket rather than a book store. And this kind of literature has been and still is enjoyed by millions who just seek the pure entertainment of a reading experience.

The Western

The western used to be immensely popular reading up until some decades ago, but today the market seems to have outgrown this particular genre. The master of western fiction was Zane Grey (1872-1939) who had a vast production of novels about the heroes and villains of The Wild West. It is an interesting fact that Norwegian Kjell Hallbing alias Louis Masterson also had great success with his series about cowboy hero Morgan Kane, also in America. The heroes are many – Davy Crockett, Kit Carson, Buck Jones, Roy Rogers, all of them quick gunslingers, fighting fearlessly against outlaws and savage redskins. The western soon became popular film material starring famous Hollywood actors like John Wayne and Clint Eastwood and even Ronald Reagan. The genre, in both literature and film, is characterised by certain mandatory elements, such as the loner or the passing stranger, the saloon with drinking, card playing, fist fighting and loose women, the useless sheriff and his even more useless deputy, the bad guy(s) who is eventually rounded up after a shoot-out or killed in a duel in the dusty main street, after which the stranger mounts his horse and rides off into the sunset. Some elements may be historically correct, but most of this literature is pure fiction built up around the romantic image of the Wild West.



Kit Carson, Crackshot of the West

The Hospital Romance

Intrigues at the hospital ward are the basic features of this genre. Unreciprocated love, romance and affairs between the members of the staff are common ingredients. A typical situation is the tension at the operating table between the surgeon and his assisting nurse who is secretly in love with him, or there may be edginess because they have just broken off an affair. The doctor is usually a handsome and very professional bachelor, and will be bossy with the nurses in an arrogant but often flirting manner. In this universe we meet the traditional sex roles; the female nurses flock around an attractive male who relishes his position and status. We will also get a glimpse of the natural pecking order in a hospital ward. In recent times this genre has had spin-offs in a number of hospital series produced for TV. There is of course a massive drama potential in this setting, which is easily exploited commercially.

The Family Chronicle

Usually this literature has a historical setting where we follow a certain household through generations. The books come in series that go on and on, because the universe of such literature is literally inexhaustible. The characters usually live at a remote farm with little or no contact with the outside world. We follow the intrigues and conflicts connected to love, marriage, jealousy, traditions and expectations, class, inheritance, and friction with neighbouring freeholders. The narrative often has an element of supernatural or mystic events and perhaps some issues related to religion and superstition. These books have an amazingly large audience; they clearly outsell any other genre, and a series may contain up to one hundred volumes.

Science Fiction

Alien spacecraft

The development of rocket science and the idea of possible extra-terrestrial life have opened a market for fiction that is evolving around space missions and encounters with aliens from outer space. This started out as literary genre and had a huge audience, particularly in America, but the genre was gradually taken over by a spectacular Hollywood film production. Some of the most famous film narratives are *2001 – A Space Odyssey*, *Alien*, *E.T.*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and the extremely popular *Star Wars* series. There is also a more “serious” type of science fiction literature that points a finger at certain questionable features of our modern society and works as a warning of a disturbing future; examples are Gorge Orwell’s *1984* and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*. Follow the link below for a more in-depth study of the genre and its sub-genres

Science Fiction

Crime and Horror

This genre is also very popular; many people find it relaxing to chill out with a thrilling crime story. However, diving into a dark and disturbing universe with killing, torture, and molesting is far from what one should think most people would find relaxing. But for some reason people are thrilled by this sombre universe of bloodshed and death. And it seems they crave even more - the current trend in international crime literature is quite unsettling. The killings are becoming increasingly cunning with detailed descriptions of mutilation and torture. The gory details fill page upon page and the killer shows no restraint in his horrid proceedings, leaving behind severed body parts and bloody intestines.There seems to be no limit as to how far the writer will go to shock the reader. But the reading audience is apparently insatiable however brutal and repulsive the narrative may be. Like the western, this genre also has a frame of familiar and basic ingredients. Follow the link for a more in-depth analysis of the genre.
Crime - Disturbing, Dark, and Delightful

Conclusion

The writers of mass-literature have never been accepted by the scholars as genuine and legitimate authors. Most of them are not even accepted as members of the Society of Authors, because they represent what the critics would call “non-literature”. The question is purely of academic interest. It is of course fully legitimate to read whatever gives you an enjoyable reading experience, which is also George Orwell’s conclusion in the mentioned essay. After all, “bad” literature is a label that is helpful only to categorise literature by strictly academic standards. Such a label says absolutely nothing about the reader. We are different people, and our cultural preferences differ, it is as simple as that.

Comprehension and Discussion

1. Why and by whom are these books referred to as "non-literature"?
2. To what degree is the Western based on historical facts?
3. Discuss the possible connection between the laws of the Wild West and today's weapon legislation in the USA.
4. List some of the TV series you have seen that are based on intrigues at a hospital. Why do you think these series are so popular?
5. Do you know any examples of a long series of Family Chronicles? Why are these series so long, and why do so many people love this genre?
6. Why do you think that horror literature has become more explicit? Is there a limit to how far this trend can be developed in literature and film?

Find Out

1. This kind of literature is characterised by what we call clichès. How would you define a clichè? Try and make a difference between structural and verbal clichès. If you don't know you may follow this link for information. Literary Terms
2. Check the books on offer at your nearest supermarket. Do you recognise any of the genres mentioned in the article? (You could also check if the same titles are for sale at a book store.)
3. Google "mass literature" and see what you can come up with for a definition and a survey of its reading public.
4. Check with some libraries and make a list of the most popular genres and books borrowed. Can you place any of them in some of the categories mentioned in the article?

One for the Ladies

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
One for the Ladies (105476)

From time to time, we are reminded by the media and research that girls and boys have different preferences and values in many aspects of life. The issue is sociologically very interesting; we will see equality as an optimal target politically and socially, but at the same time it is generally accepted that we simply do have some qualities that are defined by our gender. What qualities might that be? Physical strength is probably not the only difference. What about choice of entertainment and cultural preferences? Is it, for example, possible to think of a kind of literature specially written for a female audience, without being accused of being prejudiced? Well, it seems that the issue is not as far-fetched and predisposed as we may think.

In an inquiry published in the Norwegian paper, *Bergens Tidende*, seven randomly chosen readers of different age and gender were asked what they associated with "female literature". They mentioned such characteristics as romance, intrigues, happy ending, emotions and love. The design and colour of the cover were also suggested as typical indications of a book written for women. If this is true, it would perhaps be equally feasible and legitimate to identify literature designed for men. So it seems likely to assume that our reading habits to some extent really are defined by our gender. But do the authors think of this when they compose a plot and write a novel? Are some writers consciously addressing a female audience with their books?

The American writer Cecilia Samartin puts it like this: *"I am well aware of the fact that most of my readers are women, and I am proud of it. But I don't aim to write about what we may call female interests; I try to focus on general issues like what is important in life and the ambition to have a good life."* She admits that her books are commercial entertainment, but adds that as long as her literature can provide some self-insight and reflection for the reader, female or male, she has succeeded. If she should come across a male reader who has picked up one of her books, she would admiringly say that he must be very safe with his own masculinity.

American Author Cecilia Samartin
Fotograf: Trond Solberg

Another American female writer, Jennifer Cody Epstein, says that she does not think of her books as aimed at a female audience in particular. *"I was a bit surprised when my last book was labelled "female literature", but I can understand why the book appeals to female readers because it is about a strong woman who is up against hard times."* She sees that the American publishing business is hyping the female touch by giving what they consider books for women a very female lay-out and presentation, with certain illustrations and colours on the dustcover.
What the two writers have in common is that they don't write for women specifically, but appreciate that their books are read by a female audience. Traditionally, books for women were about home, family and romance, but according to the two American authors, this is not the case any longer. They both see the limitations of categorising a certain literature as female, since it suggests that a woman is only occupied with herself and the little things around her. They want to expand the focus, because women are also interested in social and political issues, not only romance and emotions.

Literary sociology is an interesting field for theorists and literary scholars. They follow the market and do in-depth studies to find out who reads what. Their research and conclusions are important material for the publishing industry, which must be aware of the trends to meet the commercial demands of the market. But when it comes to our gender-related reading habits, the question remains if this kind of research manifests attitudes that we actually would rather have ditched.

Interview material used with kind permission from journalist Siri Økland, Bergens Tidende, Norway

Tasks and Activities

1 Comprehension

- What does Cecilia Samartin mean by saying that a man who reads her books must be safe with his own masculinity?
- In what way can the “female label” be an obstructive classification?
- Explain what is meant by the last sentence of the article.

2 Discussion (Groups of both boys and girls…)

- Discuss what qualities we have that are defined by our gender.
- Is feminist literature the same as female literature?
- Are the differences between the genders still reflected in film and literature, or is that just an outdated issue?
- Can you mention examples of books or films that you think are aimed at a female or a male audience? Discuss the characteristics that will identify such books / films.

3 Research

- Google “female literature” and see what you can come up with as a definition.
- Ask the school librarian if there is a difference between what books boys and girls borrow.
- Visit the nearest bookstore and check if you can spot some typically female books. Do you see any similarities in the way books by female writers are presented? (Design, illustration, colour, title.)

Words from the Good Book

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Words from the Good Book: Three Biblical Texts (112251)

The Bible is the most read and most quoted book of all times; it belongs to our cultural heritage, and many would say that its values and ideals have defined our national identity. People usually read the Bible for religious reasons, however, in this article we will look at how the biblical texts also represent literary qualities.

The Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan

Now a jurist got up to tempt him. “Teacher,” he said, “what am I to do to inherit eternal life”? Jesus asked, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” The jurist replied, “You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole strength, and with your whole mind. Also love your neighbour as yourself.”

“A right answer!” said Jesus, “do that and you will live.” Anxious to make an excuse for himself, however, he said to Jesus, “But who is my neighbour?”

Jesus answered, “A man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers, who stripped and attacked him and then went off, leaving him half-dead. Now it so chanced that a priest was going down the same road, but on seeing him he went past on the opposite side. So did a Levite who came to the spot; he looked at him and passed on the opposite side. However, a Samaritan traveller came to where he was, and felt pity when he saw him; he went to him, bound his wounds up, pouring oil and wine into them, mounted him on his own steed, took him to an inn, and attended him. Next day he took out a couple of shillings and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, “Attend to him, and if you are put to any extra expense, I will refund you on my way back.”

“Which of these three men, in your opinion, proved a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?” The jurist said, “The man who took pity on him.” Jesus said to him, “Then go and do the same.”

From the Gospel of St Luke chapter 10, verses 25-37

From The Sermon on the Mount

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

From the Gospel of St Matthew chapter 5, verses 38-48

To Everything there is a Season

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

From Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verses 1-8

Tasks and Activities

1. What would you say are the main differences between these biblical texts?
2. Which one of the texts is from the Old Testament?
3. What is the difference between the Old and the New Testament?
4. Which one of the texts could also be called an allegory?
5. The first text is a parable; what is that?
6. The teachings of Jesus are quite uncompromising; find some examples in the second text.
7. In the second text Jesus says “You have heard that it was said” – what is this reference to in particular? (See also question 3.)
8. “Turn the other cheek” is a familiar quote from the Sermon on the Mount. What does it really mean?
9. What do you think is the general message in the last text?
10. Can you point out any poetic elements in the last text?
11. "Whoever loves money never has money enough” is another famous quote from Ecclesiastes. Explain, and state whether you agree or not.
12. Where do you see traces of a Christian cultural heritage in our modern day society?
13. Where does humanistic ethics link up with Christianity?
14. Do you know your biblical history? Why is it a point that the good person in the first text is a Samaritan? Search the net and find out. (At that time Palestine was divided into three parts, Samaria was in the middle, between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north.)
15. The texts above are taken from the Authorised or King James Version of the Bible. Who was King James, and when was his Bible version authorised?
16. Check the drawer of your bedside table next time you stay at a hotel. You probably will find a copy of Gideon’s Bible. Go on the net and find out - who is Gideon, and why has he left a Bible in your hotel room?

Poetry in Touch with Life

A Brief Guide to the Menu

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Poetry in Touch with Life (103657)

In a way reading poetry is like sky diving or bungee jumping. Jumping off a plane or a high bridge certainly takes some guts – putting one's trust in a length of rubber band or some strings attached to a piece of fabric. But once you let yourself go, you may be in for the kick of a lifetime. In the same way poetry may present you with a challenge to start with, but if you give it a chance it may offer you a ride into a different dimension where you may see things in a new perspective.

On this menu we will present poems that in some way are closely connected to real-life incidents and recognisable situations. We aim to demonstrate how poetry can be relevant and "in touch with life", whether it is about human relations, emotions, ethical dilemmas, political issues or social and environmental conditions.
In addition to the poem, there will be a brief biographical note about the poet, a bit of the story behind the poem, and some tasks or issues for you to consider.
Enjoy.

Moonstruck and Dazzled

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Moonstruck and Dazzled (109605)

Who has not felt the maddening sensation of falling in love; and had that sweet intoxicating feeling that turns your whole existence upside down? It is like a drug that suffuses you entirely and occupies your mind night and day; it can even make you go without food. And – it may possibly also turn you into a poet. In fact, most people have been there, secretly writing poems about this overwhelming sensation of being moonstruck and dazzled.

Three Love Poems

Love has throughout the ages been the most common theme of poetry, and it still is – just look at most of today's rock and pop lyrics. The language that works when it comes to describing the strong emotions running through you is poetry. Many love poems are written just to be presented to the loved one, perhaps not even that, and may later be lost and forgotten. But some love poems have survived, firstly, because they so beautifully put into words a situation we all can recognise. Secondly, a love poem speaks to us in a very personal manner; someone invites you to his or her intimate confession – it is as if they are opening a door to their inner and private passion.
The following three poems were written long ago, but that only demonstrates how timeless and universal this theme is; the feelings are the same no matter when the poem was written.

A Love Letter in the Sand
Fotograf: Luca Kleve-Ruud

To My Dear and Loving Husband

By Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee.
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold
Or the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay.
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persever
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

She Walks in Beauty

By Lord Byron (1788-1824)

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

First Love

By John Clare (1793-1864)

I ne'er was struck before that hour
With love so sudden and so sweet,
Her face it bloomed like a sweet flower
And stole my heart away complete.

My face turned pale as deadly pale.
My legs refused to walk away,
And when she looked, what could I ail?
My life and all seemed turned to clay.

And then my blood rushed to my face
And took my eyesight quite away,
The trees and bushes round the place
Seemed midnight at noonday.

I could not see a single thing,
Words from my eyes did start -
They spoke as chords do from the string,
And blood burnt round my heart.

Are flowers the winter's choice?
Is love's bed always snow?
She seemed to hear my silent voice,
Not love's appeals to know.

I never saw so sweet a face
As that stood before.
My heart has left its dwelling-place
And can return no more.

A Closer Look at the Poems

To My Dear and Loving Husband

1. What comparisons does she make to describe her love for her husband?
2. How does she describe this as a divine love?
3. What makes this poem so personal?
4. Why do you think this rhyming pattern is called couplets?

She Walks in Beauty

1. In what respect is this poem different from the other two?
2. Where does the poem speak of internal as well as exterior beauty?
3. Comment on the title of the poem.
4. Where can you spot examples of alliteration in the poem?

First Love

1. Where does the poem describe the physical symptoms of being in love?
2. What does it mean that "Words from my eyes did start"?
3. The heart is a common icon and symbol of love. Where in this poem do you find an indication of why?
4. Where can you spot examples of alliteration in the poem?

Extra: How do you interpret the illustration?

Die For Your Country

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Die For Your Country (103730)

One might not think that war has poetic potential. War is systematic and calculated killing and destruction; people become expendable pawns in a big and ruthless gamble. On the battlefield or in the trenches the soldiers are faced with death as a likely outcome, and the noble idea of dying for your country gradually becomes pointless and absurd. War has poetic potential for the poet who wants to express his resent, and no poet can do that more truthfully than the one who has been there himself.

Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen

If we assume that a poet is a sensitive and emotional person, it is a peculiar fact that the Welsh poet Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) was also an army officer. He had thought of himself as a pacifist, yet when the First World War broke out, he was one of the many young idealists who volunteered to fight for their country. WWI – or The Great War - has gone down in history as one of the bloodiest and most gruesome wars ever. Weapons were inaccurate, molesting and mutilating more than they killed, and gas warfare was introduced. Owen was one of the desperate soldiers fighting in the trenches on the Western Front in France. He was wounded and hospitalised, suffering from shell shock, but was sent back to the front as soon as he was seen fit. When he was in hospital, he started to write some poems and was encouraged by friends to keep on writing and have his poetry published. However, only a few of his poems were published while he was alive. The tragic irony is that Wilfred Owen was killed by enemy fire only a week before Armistice Day in November 1918. A collection of his poems was published posthumously. His poems tell the tale of suffering and disillusioned soldiers willing to sacrifice their lives for a cause they no longer believed in.

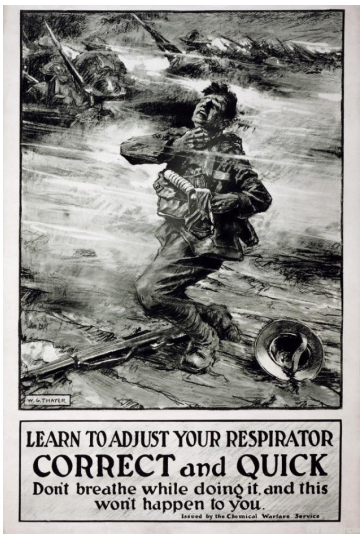
The title and the last two lines of the poem are Latin and mean: “It is sweet and noble to die for one’s country.”

Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime. -
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, -
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.



Gas warfare poster, World War I

Fotograf: Library of Congress

A Closer Look at the Poem

- The poem is visually strong and full of sense impressions. Find some examples of the poem's observing or reporting style.
- Explain the line "Of gas-shells dropping softly behind."
- "Many had lost their boots" probably has a literal meaning – or can it be interpreted symbolically?
- What do the two last lines of the second stanza imply?
- Who are the "children ardent for some desperate glory"?
- In what way is the last stanza different from the two first ones?
- Does the poem in any way carry signs of being written about WWI specifically?

Research

1. Search the net for more poems by Wilfred Owen. Choose one or two and present them for the class.
2. Find information or maybe even footage from the trench war in France during WWI. Key words: new weapons, gas, manner of combat, movement of the front, casualties.

All You Need is Love

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
All You Need is Love (103191)

No, this is not about the famous Beatles' classic, in spite of what the title may suggest. This is about an English poet and one of his most famous poems. Love is doubtlessly the most common theme of poetry of any age or period. It can be parental love, national love, love of nature – and, of course, love between a man and a woman. The background of this poem is not unique, and it is easy to identify with even today. And in Arnold's poetic language his conclusion is so touchingly clear and simple: No matter what the world puts you up against – all you need is love.

The Story

The situation is this: Matthew has done so-so on his exam, and feels that he is a bit of a let-down to his parents, especially to his father, who, on top of everything, is the headmaster of the school where he has studied. He turns to religion as an alternative for recognition, inspired by a travelling charismatic preacher. But he ends up feeling even more guilty and inadequate both towards God and his father. Then he falls head over heels in love, and after some effort (which at the time meant getting a decent job and being accepted by her father) he can marry the girl of his dreams. But he is still haunted by thoughts of shortcoming, and when his father dies, it only increases his feeling of loss and despair.

Dover Beach

On their honeymoon the young couple end up at a hotel in Dover in a room overlooking the sea. Matthew goes to the window and he takes it all in - the view of the calm sea, the stars, the lighthouse flashing in the distance, and then it suddenly comes to him that peace of mind is not found in religion or in living up to other people's expectations. It is found in the real and true love for the girl he has found.

Dover Beach

The sea is calm to-night
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand;
Glimmering and vast, out of the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! You hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing by its distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! For the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for the pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Consider this:

- Is the poem easier to understand when you know the story behind it?
- Do you think poets are especially sensitive and emotional people?
- How does the line structure influence our understanding of the poem? (For example – "Of human misery; we" and "The Sea of Faith")
- What is "The Sea of Faith" – and why is it capitalized?
- Find references to light and darkness in the poem. What do they mean?
- Sophocles was a playwright from ancient Greece. In his play,*Antigone,* human suffering is referred to as the sound of waves on the sand. Explain this comparison.
- What does the last stanza say about the poet's view of the times he lives in?
- The attitude to religion has changed over the 150 years since the poem was written? How can this change be explained?
- Do you agree with the poet's conclusion about love? Is it that simple?
- Matthew Arnold (1822-88) was living in turbulent times when it comes to religion and science. Can you give examples of clashes and new theories?
- How do you think this turbulence may have influenced Matthew, and how does it shine through in this poem?
- Look at the picture of Dover Beach; do you think the place and scenery have any symbolic significance in this poem?

The Bitter Taste of Success

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Bitter Taste of Success (106283)

How can we measure or define success? For some, success means fortune and fame. Being somebody in other people's eyes is the ultimate dream for many people. But does success equal happiness? In some cases it may, but in most cases material success does not necessarily lead to happiness. Fame and prosperity come at a cost, and what we see of so-called succesful people is only the outside. A glittering and glamorous facade may, in fact, be a shiny disguise to cover the unhappiness underneath...

Edwin Arlington Robinson

American Poet Edwin Arlington Robinson
Fotograf: Bettmann

It seems that suffering and depression is a common phase for many poets to go through. If so, Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935) is no exception. He had a difficult boyhood and was a shy and quiet child. He grew up in a time identified by the rise of big business in America, and the material success of his elder brothers made him conscious of the different aspects of capitalism. During the last decade of the 19th century, both his parents and his two brothers died; and with no family ties, Robinson moved to New York City. He lived in bohemian Greenwich Village, where he was inspired by friends to continue his writing in spite of the fact that no editors wanted to publish any of his work. His first volumes were published at his own expense and partially sponsored by his friends.
He had different stray jobs, but was dedicated to his poetic vocation and wrote when he had time and inspiration. In 1905, a magazine published some of his writing, and after more than ten years of dedicated work he received his first pay check for the work he really wanted to do. His article was accidentally read by Kermit Roosevelt, the son of the President of the United States, who liked his writing and offered him a job at the Customs House in New York harbor. This was the turning point for Robinson, who now had a small salary and also time and energy for poetry. His first collection of poems won the Pulitzer Prize in 1921, and so did his long narrative “The Man who Died Twice” in 1924. Robinson was a versatile writer who produced not only poetry, but prose and critical essays as well. He is among the most cherished American poets of the 20th century.

“Richard Cory” was written in 1897 and is one of Arlington’s most famous poems. Read it carefully a couple of times and reflect on the issues below.

Richard Cory by Edward Arlington Robinson

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
“Good-morning” and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich – yes, richer than a king -
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
went home and put a bullet through his head.

Some Issues to Consider

1. If you look at when the poem was written and Arlington’s situation at the time – do you think there may be a connection?
2. In what way is the poem a comment on the classic American success story?
3. What is implied by "the different aspects of capitalism"? (See introduction.)
4. Does the expression “We people” ring a bell?
5. How do you see a man who is “imperially thin”?
6. What does it mean that he “fluttered pulses”?
7. How does the poet increase the effect of the last line of the poem?
8. What would you say is the theme of the poem?

Research

- In 1966, the American pop duo Simon and Garfunkel made their own version of “Richard Cory” (with apologies to E. A. Robinson). Follow the link below and read the lyrics of the song, then compare with the original poem – what do you think?
  Richard Cory by Simon and Garfunkel
- Follow the YouTube link on the lyrics site and watch a live performance of the song by Simon and Garfunkel.

Vertical Slum

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Vertical Slum (109606)

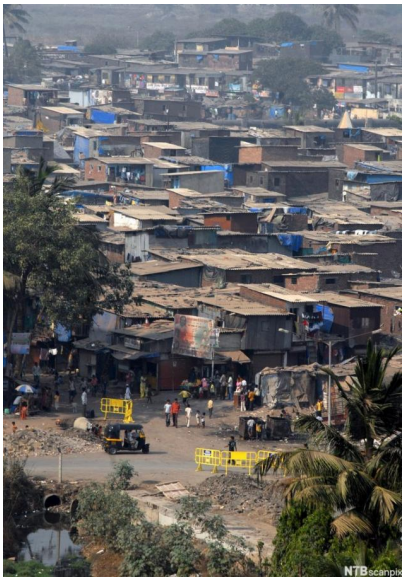
Millions of people in the world live in slum areas on the outskirts of big cities like Rio de Janeiro, Johannesburg and Mumbai. To outsiders the motley buildings in the shanty towns are an eye-sore, and the authorities want to clear the areas altogether and remove the inhabitants. Usually we pity the poor people who end up in the slum maybe never to get out of it; it looks unhygienic, filthy and overcrowded. But seen from the inside the slum may look a little different. And if the alternative is a flat on a council estate or a tower block the “slumlums” may in fact prefer the slum.

Vertical Slum

Dharawi -
Some say you are ugly
Dharawi;
But they don’t see that the
Corrugated iron
Shelters our babies,
They don’t see the
Human beauty among the shanties and
makeshift sheds.
And now they will come
Like lizards and geckos in the night and
Tear down our homes
And move us to tower blocks
That are big and ugly
And the elevator out of order.

We are slumlums and we take care of
One another;
We live side by side by side
So close
So close because it is safe.
Safer than a tower block;
There will be blood on the stairs
Of our vertical slum
Blood on the stairs

Jamalik Singh



View of the Dharawi Slum Area

Fotograf: STR

(Note: Dharawi is a big slum-area in the suburbs of Mumbai, one of the biggest cities in India.)

A Closer Look at the Text:

1. What is the general message in the text?
2. Comment on the title.
3. Who are "they" in the poem?
4. What is the effect of the line structure?
5. Can you point out some poetic elements in the text? (E.g. simile, repetition, alliteration, emphasis, metaphors, symbols.)
6. How does the writer present the slum and what it is like to live there?
7. What is a “slumlum”?
8. Go on the net and find out about Dharawi and other slum areas in Mumbai. Is there an official policy to tear down the slums and

replace them with tower blocks?

(Note: The Dharawi slum was made famous as the location of the film "Slumdog Millionaire".)

Lynching and Hanging - and all that Jazz

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Lynching and Hanging - and All That Jazz (103772)

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was signed after a long struggle for freedom and equality for African Americans. Thanks to the Civil Rights Movement fronted by Dr Martin Luther King and other activists, equality and integration were now secured by law, also in the South. But some decades earlier, it was a different story: the USA had been a segregated country where Black Americans, particularly in the southern states, had been discriminated against and treated as second class citizens.

Jazz and Racism

In America, the second decade of the 20th century is usually referred to as “The Roaring Twenties,” both because people were enjoying a booming economy (until the bubble burst in 1929), and because of the new swinging musical trend – jazz. The music was initially called Dixieland, since it emerged in “Dixie”, which was a common label of the South. The jazz-fever soon spread all over the American continent; people went wild about this new and catchy rhythm played by horns, clarinet, a double bass and banjo. Black band leaders like Duke Ellington and Count Basie were the masters, who also achieved international fame for their big band jazz music. The bands had both black and white players; this cultural integration was possible in the North, where people had a more liberal attitude to the race issue.

But in the South, segregation still prevailed; the Ku Klux Klan was raiding the communities and spreading terror. Lynchings and burnings were commonplace incidents to deter the black population from voting or protesting. Gradually, people in the North became aware of the situation for Black Americans in the South, and one day a New York jazz musician, Abel Meeropol, saw a photograph of a black man hanging from a tree, strung up by the Klan. The picture inspired him to write the song, “Strange Fruit”, which was a strong protest against the racism in the southern states. The song was performed by the black jazz singer, Billie Holiday, as a regular last number of her stage acts during the 30s and 40s. “Strange Fruit” is an example of how poetry can address political and social issues and perhaps even make a difference.

Strange Fruit

Southern trees bear strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant south,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh.

Here is fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Southern Trees Bear Strange Fruit
Fotograf: Bettmann

Activities

- Point out some metaphors in the poem.
- Can you find examples of irony in the poem?
- How do you think the song was received in the different populations of America (Black, White, North, South)?
- Read other critical poems on this menu (*Die for Your Country or Ethnocentrism*) and compare with this one. Do you think poets and poetry with a political and critical agenda can make a difference?
- Search the net for information about the Ku Klux Klan. (When was it founded? How many members did they have at the beginning of the 20th century? Why do they burn crosses, wear white robes and cover up their faces? Are they still active?)
- Check out YouTube for Billie Holiday performing Strange Fruit.

Dixieland

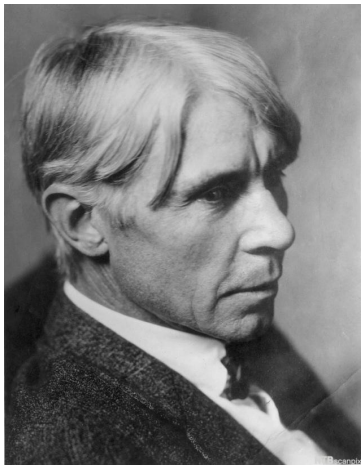
In the early 19th century, the USA was a mixture of populations with different languages and currencies. Some areas in the South were inhabited by French immigrants, both from France and Canada. They spoke French and their counting included the French word for ten – "dix", which is why the region came to be called "Dixieland".

Ethnocentrism

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Ethnocentrism (103478)

If you have seen *Globe Trekker* on *The Travel Channel* you have seen him in the intro scene: the black man drawing a circle in the sand. To many viewers, it may just be the catchy opening of the program, but the fact is that the scene is inspired by a famous poem by the American poet, Carl Sandburg. It is a brilliant intro because the poem, as well as the program,are about cultural awareness: knowledge about and respect for other cultures.

Carl Sandburg



Carl Sandburg
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) was the son of poor Swedish immigrants and had to drop his education at thirteen to go to work. Young Sandburg's encounter with the harsh working conditions in a new and industrialised America had a strong impact on him, and was to form his character and influence his writing. He tried his hand at different jobs and gradually started a career as a newspaper reporter. He knew he would need a higher education to earn a good living, and he was admitted at college, but did not complete his studies. Instead, he travelled about working for different newspapers, refining his writing skills all the time. He was also, for some time, a political organiser for the new reform party, The Social Democrats. But he did not aim for a political career; he was a writer, first and foremost, and had started to publish some poems in different newspapers - none of which got much attention. But he continued writing and was finally accepted by a publishing company. His first successful volumes manifested his position as a poet for the common man confronted with the tough reality of working class America. Sandburg's style is clearly influenced by the modernist tradition; free verse with the absence of a rhyming pattern; at the same time close to epic in its form.

Ethnocentrism

Cultural misunderstandings are often caused by the fact that we lack awareness of how people from other cultures feel, think and behave. Most people tend to see their own culture as "normal", and compared to their own culture other cultures, come out as different or strange. The belief in one's own cultural superiority is quite normal, and is called ethnocentrism. Through history, white people have demonstrated their ethnocentrism on numerous occasions and treated people with a different culture quite disrespectfully, to put it mildly. Carl Sandburg's poem is a reminder of how we still tend to judge other people and different cultures by our own cultural standards.

Circles by Carl Sandburg

The white man drew a small circle in the sand
And told the red man “This is what the Indian
Knows” and drawing a big circle around the
Small one, “This is what the white man knows.”
The Indian took the stick and swept an immense
Ring around both circles: “This is where the
White man and the red man know nothing”

A Closer Look at the Poem

1. The Poem
   - What makes this a poem and not a prose text?
   - Does the line structure mean anything for how we understand the poem?
   - Do you see any metaphors in the poem?
   - Is the poem a historical setting, or do you think it has a more present and universal meaning?
   - How does Sandburg’s position as a “working class poet” shine through in this poem?
   - Does the conclusion say anything about ethnocentrism?
2. Research
   - Check out YouTube for the intro scene of the *Globe Trekker* program and see the man drawing the circle in the sand. Why does this scene work so well as a good opening of the program?
   - Search the net for more poems by Carl Sandburg. (Tips: "Washerwoman", "Prayers of Steel", "A Fence", "Fish Crier")

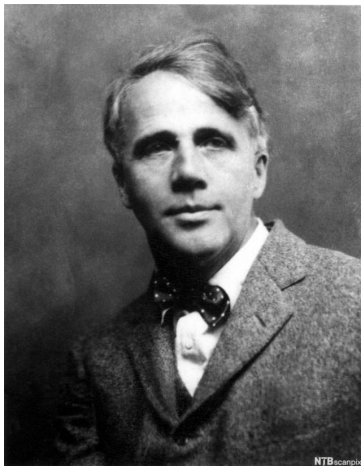
Choices

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Choices (103458)

Poetry is a literary form that may be a bit more demanding for the reader than straightforward prose. Many people find the poetic language, the metaphors and symbols, and line structure obstructive elements; and they claim that poetry simply is hard to understand. In some cases this may be true, particularly of modernist poetry. But poetry can also be a way of putting simple things in life in a perspective that opens up for a new reflection and understanding. This is such a poem: "The Road Not Taken" by the American poet Robert Frost.

Robert Frost

Robert Frost (1874-1963) grew up in California, but when his father died he moved with his mother to Massachusetts. After an unfinished education, he tried journalism for a time, and then attended a teaching academy to become a teacher. He wrote poems continuously, but his poetry was not very successful; the editors turned him down time after time. After his breakthrough, however, his popularity grew; and he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize four times between 1924 and 1943. Critics have called Frost the first American master-poet by world standards. He is, today, one of the most popular and cherished American poets.


Robert Frost

Even though Frost belongs to the modernist tradition, his poems are clear and accessible to everyone, unlike much of the poetry of his contemporaries. Frost is known as a New England poet, since many of his poems use material from the natural beauty of the New England states. Main elements of his poetry are familiar objects and everyday situations (like in "The Road Not Taken"). Titles like "The Wood-Pile", "After Apple Picking", "Blueberries", "The Axe-Helve" and "Birches" tell the tale of a poet who was inspired by his natural surroundings and everyday things. That is most likely why his poetry is so popular; because in our hectic and busy lives, we need to stop a minute to look around and appreciate the simple things in life.

Making Choices

Every day we are faced with a number of choices and options; most of them are easy and made quite unconsciously (Should I go to school today or not? Milk or orange juice? Tea or coffee? Cash or credit card?) We usually don't spend much time considering the pros and cons of these everyday choices.

However, there are situations in which we are faced with a choice that holds more serious consequences, maybe even for other people. Then we must take time to consider, weigh pros and cons, and perhaps even consult a close friend for advice. Most of us have at one point been there – choice of career, commitment to a partner, spending big money, and moving for a new job opportunity are examples of choices that have to be considered carefully.

And once you have made a choice, the course is set; but it is an intriguing thought that the course of your life is just as much determined by what you did not choose – the road not taken…

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in the wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The Road Not Taken

Opphavsmann: HappyHorizons

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Point out some metaphors in the poem.
- Where do you see references to Frost's love of nature?
- What does it mean that "I took the one less traveled by"?
- Discuss an interpretation of the two last lines of the third stanza.
- Explain the last line of the poem.
- Describe the rhyme pattern of the poem.
- Read it out loud, and see if you can find the rhythm pattern of the poem.
- Why do you think so many people have this as their favourite poem?

On the Outside Looking in

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
On the Outside Looking In - Immigrant's Lament (111470)

Can you imagine what it is like to come to a country as an immigrant or an asylum seeker? Those who come have often suffered war and terrorism, and seen their home and family torn apart. So even if they come with little or no baggage, they certainly carry a load on their shoulders and have a difficult and traumatised past.
A lament is not really a poem; it is the more sorrowful reflection of a person in a down-and-out situation, but it may still have its poetic elements.

Immigrant's Lament

By Omar Shalik

So now I am here, knocking on your door
Alone and afraid, trying to look so calm
Officers are looking at my papers
Suspiciously, like police – maybe I done something wrong?
Maybe is wrong to come to your country?
So I try to look calm and cool – but inside I am shivering
I want to go home, but that is all lost now
Hateful men came in the night,
Killed my father and brother, I don't know why
My mother and sisters are gone, I don't know where
I long for them and I long for my lost home

But now I am here, in your strange country
With your strange talk and spiteful eyes
Where will I sleep tonight with my eyes open?

You look at my poor clothes and pity me
You look at my black hair and my black eyes
You look at me with troubled face, like I am problem
You look at me like the alien that I am

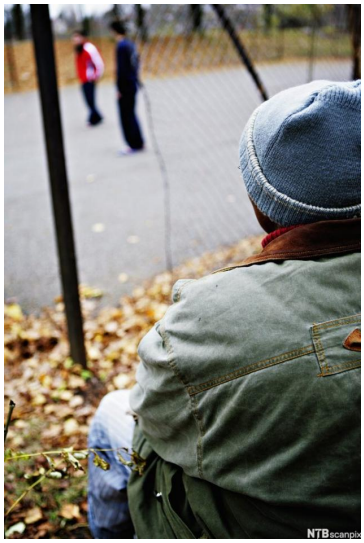
Humble and humiliated
And with fear in my big immigrant eyes.

So now I am here at your doorstep
Hoping that you will let me in, please

I will go where you take me, do what you say
I will not let you know how lost I feel
I will cover my eyes so you won't see the tears
I will not let you see I am shivering inside

What is my future – where will I go?
If I could go where I want – that would be home.
Home, like it was -
To live with my family in the hot and dusty sun
Get water for my mother and look after my sisters
Help my father with the goats and the fence
Play with my friends in the warm afternoon
See the big white moon over the hills
And not fear tomorrow
Like I do now

If I survive tonight
I may live tomorrow
Please to open your door
I have nowhere else to go



On the Outside Looking in

Tasks and Activities

1. Point out some poetic elements in the text (contrasts, repetition, rhythm, metaphors, alliteration).
2. Which country do you think this immigrant comes from? (Give reasons for your answer.)
3. What age do you think this immigrant is? (Give reasons for your answer.)
4. How does the language reveal the person's foreign origin?
5. Comment on the lines: "Where will I sleep tonight with my eyes open?" and "And with fear in my big immigrant eyes."

6. Check the Internet for information about asylum seekers and the demands they are faced with to get a residence permit.

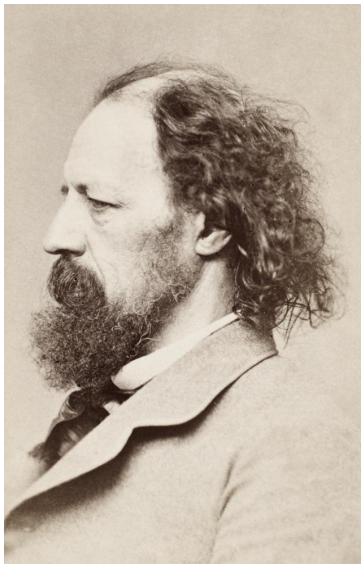
Expendables

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Expendables (111573)

War is calculated killing and destruction. Human dignity and civilisation are sacrificed, and soldiers become expendable pawns in a game of life and death. The pecking order of a military system means that the soldiers have to follow the orders of their officers. No matter what the private may think, his only option is to obey the orders of his superiors who make the strategic decisions. But military history holds many examples of situations where officers for various reasons have made the wrong decisions and sent their soldiers to a certain death.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Like so many writers and poets Tennyson took little interest in his school work and studies. He went to Cambridge, but he idled through his studies and never took a degree. He sought company with friends who inspired him and encouraged him to follow his poetic vocation. However, his early writing was not given much esteem by his contemporary critics. But Tennyson was determined to succeed and worked indefatigably to perfect his art. During the 1840s he gradually won the acclaim of the reading public, and in 1850 he was appointed Poet Laureate by Queen Victoria; a prestigious honour bestowed on a living poet. (Tennyson succeeded William Wordsworth as Poet Laureate). Tennyson was very productive during his later life; he was a versatile writer with a wide horizon, his writing includes poems, drama, essays and religious and philosophical reflections. His popularity and his contribution to Victorian literature have given him an indisputable position in English literary tradition.



Alfred Lord Tennyson
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Story

The Crimean War (1854-56) was a result of French-British intervention to prevent Russia from invading Turkey and gaining access to the Black Sea areas. It was a slow and gruesome war, fought on horseback with sabres and with primitive guns and cannons that mutilated and maimed more than they killed. British land troops were badly organised and had not been in any major battle since the Napoleonic Wars. On top of that, some of the British officers were headstrong, old warmongers whose main interest was to protect their own reputation and authority.

The Crimean town Balaklava was held by British, French and Turkish forces, but the Russians mobilised a large unit and charged to recapture the town. The Russians were defeated, but both sides suffered great losses. During this battle there was an incident where a small British cavalry unit, a light brigade, was sent into a valley to attack a Russian position. It was quite obvious that they did not stand a chance against the strong Russian unit, but the attack was launched anyway due to stubbornness and rivalry between high-ranking British officers. The brigade was nearly wiped out; less than a third of the 600 men of the Light Brigade survived.

The Crimean War was the first war that was given day-to-day coverage in the newspapers due to the newly invented telegraph. This information may have inspired Tennyson to write the poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade".

The Charge of the Light Brigade by Alfred Lord Tennyson

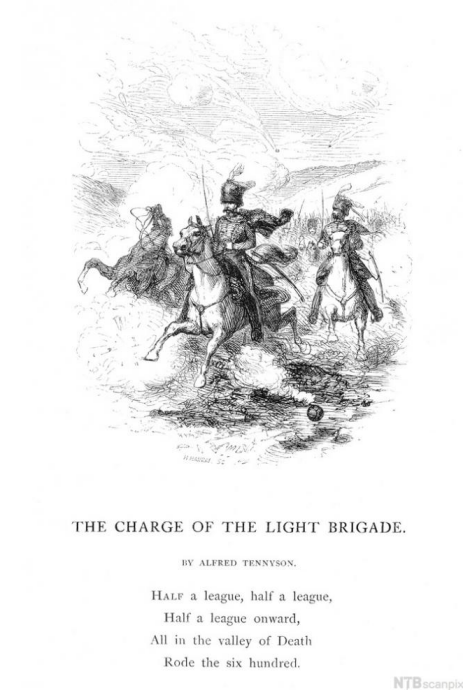
Half a league, half a league
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the Guns, he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred
.
Forward, the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Someone had blunde'd
Theirs not to make reply
Theirs not to reason why
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly the rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Hell,
All that was left of them
Left of the six hundred.

When can their glory fade
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred.



The Charge of the Light Brigade

Tasks and Activities

1. Where in the poem does it shine through that some officer made a mistake and the soldiers only had to follow orders?
2. Point out some metaphors that are used in the poem.
3. What does it mean that the Russians "reel'd from the sabre-stroke"?
4. Where is the turning point in the poem?
5. What elements of the charge does the poet describe, and what elements does he leave out?
6. What is the poet's conclusion?
7. Do you think the Light Brigade made a noble effort?
8. The Crimean War was when Florence Nightingale appeared as "The Lady with the Lamp" caring for the wounded soldiers. Go on the net and find out about Florence Nightingale.
9. Check the net for information about the Crimean War and the Battle of Balaklava.
10. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" has been made into a film version (1968, director Tony Richardson), check YouTube for footage and clips from the film.

An Endless Pursuit

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
An Endless Pursuit (115979)

Money and success are for many the ultimate and only way to happiness. The value of any enterprise is measured by profit and loss, and motivation is defined by “What’s in it for me”. Even though we know that material success is only a shiny surface that does not say anything about happiness, many people carry on in the daily rat-race, obsessed by the glimmering prospect of more profit, and the hope that one day they will strike the big jackpot.
This little poem by Edgar Allan Poe may offer a different perspective on the endless pursuit of material wealth.

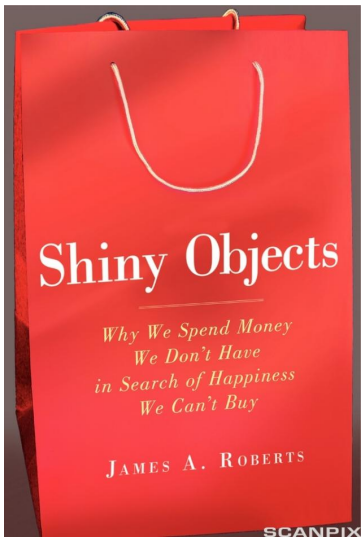
Eldorado by Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song
In search of Eldorado

But he grew old -
This knight so bold -
And o’er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow -
“Shadow,” said he,
“Where can it be -
This land of Eldorado?”

“Over the mountains
Of the moon,
Down the valley of the shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,” -
The shade replied, -
“If you seek for Eldorado.”



Shiny Objects

A Closer Look at the Poem

1. What would you say is the theme of the poem?
2. Why do you think “shadow” is a recurring element in the poem?
3. The composition is typical of Poe. Compare with "Annabel Lee" and "The Raven" and spot the similarities.
4. The name Eldorado is originally Spanish; find out what it means.

5. What is the conclusion in the last stanza?
6. Do you think that we live in a materialist and commercialised society?
7. Read more about Edgar Allan Poe.

Book Reviews

Why I Love Reading (audio)

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Why I Love Reading (107481)

Picking up a new book is always interesting. The title may have caught your attention as an enigmatic invitation, you may have read the review in some newspaper supplement on books, or it was recommended by a friend.

Then you sit back and dive into a universe where you gradually get to know the characters and their relations to each other, and follow the plot as it develops. And when you for some reason have to put the book down and then pick it up again, the plot and the characters will be there waiting for you like true and devoted friends. Reading may give you an opportunity to get away from your everyday stress, or it may appeal to your intellect when you work out the complexity of the plot, in fact – reading a good book can broaden your horizon as it may teach you something about other people and life in general.
Listen to what Emily Barker (18) says about reading, and answer the questions below.

Why I Love Reading (audio) / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/107478

1 List the three or four reasons she gives at the beginning of why she enjoys reading.
2 What does she say about the book not being just an object?
3 Why does she consider herself an unusual reader?
4 What are her reasons for re-reading books?
5 According to Emily a book “can suspend your disbelief” – what does she mean by that?

One to Read

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
One to Read (96633)

One should think twice before one recommends to others what to read. Reading is a private and individual experience and the reading process will most likely turn out differently from person to person. There most certainly are some basic criteria that will define “good literature”, but what is important is to follow your own instincts and decide for yourself what you like to read. Bearing this in mind we present some titles that many people have enjoyed, both classics and contemporary literature. Click on the title and read the short introduction – and if your curiosity is stirred, pick it up, read and enjoy.

This novel (by J.D.Salinger) was published in 1945, and was for a period of time banned in the USA. However this tells us more about the moral standards in the USA at the time than about the book. There is direct and rude language, and the protagonist is definitely not a good role model for young people, but in a modern perspective banning the book seems strange. But a ban works as good promotion, and “The Catcher” has been read by millions and is a classic in modern literature. It is the story of 17-year-old school drop-out Holden Caulfield who struggles to come to terms with himself and the adult world. He is bewildered and inconsistent, and his only clear notion is his antagonism towards what he calls the phoney world of grown-ups. He is lonely, and his only companion is his little sister, who adores him, but also puts him straight when that is needed. Holden has many plans and ideas, but never really achieves anything. Don’t let the title confuse you or keep you from reading the book, it will be explained during the story.

Sebastian Barry is a contemporary Irish writer, whose “The Secret Scripture” was published in 2008. The story is told by old Roseanna McNulty who is nearly 100 years old. She is living in a mental hospital where she was committed as a young woman, and keeps her secret journals as a documentation of her life. She grew up in rural Ireland in the 1930s, a country marked by civil war, poverty and social unrest. She gave birth to a child which disappeared mysteriously. Now the old mental institution is to be knocked down, and her therapist has to decide whether the old lady is fit for a life outside the hospital. So he starts to look for her family or relatives who can take care of her. The book is beautifully written; the fate of this unfortunate girl really grips you. And – as the narrative unfolds you are in for a surprise…

This novel was written by Matthew Kneale and published in 2000. It is a fantastic story about the priest who gets the idea that The Garden of Eden is to be found in Tasmania. The year is 1857, and the reverend collects a team and sets out on a voyage on a smuggling vessel with a crew from Man, fleeing British Customs. In Tasmania the aboriginal people have been fighting a desperate battle against British invaders, and, as the English passengers will discover, the island is far from paradise on earth… The narrative technique is original, as all the characters are presented in a 1st person angle, and relates the events as they see them personally. This also goes for the aboriginal protagonist Peevay, which gives an interesting perspective of how the natives see the white invaders. The book is funny, dramatic and very well written.

Joseph Conrad belongs to the late Victorian writers, and his famous "Heart of Darkness" was first published in 1902. His style, however, is more that of the upcoming modernist tradition. This novel is an example of his somewhat experimental literary technique, as it is told as a story within a story. The frame story is what goes on on the deck of "Nellie", anchored on the Thames, where Captain Marlowe tells his story of what happened to him on the Congo River some years earlier. On a voyage up the river in search of the mystic Mr Kurtz who is doing dodgy deals with the natives for his own profit, Marlow sees (and Conrad describes) what the British Empire brought on the native populations of its colonies. The novel is the framework of Francis Ford Coppola's spectacular film about the Vietnam War – "Apocalypse Now", where we meet Captain Willard who is sent on a mission up the river to assassinate a certain Colonel Kurtz, a renegade green beret, who has set up his own private army in the Cambodian jungle. If you have seen the film, it is a must to read the book, and vice versa.

"Always the Sun" is written by Neil Cross and published in 2004. It is the story of 13-year-old Jamie and his father, who have moved to a new place after Jamie's mother died. They are ready for a fresh start in life, Jamie at a new school, and his father at a new job in his old home town. But Jamie is bullied at his new school, and his father wants to protect his son, and takes action. But things turn out rather differently from what he has planned, and gradually it gets out of hand… It is a dramatic and gripping novel about a father's love and care for his son, and the way he tries to deal with the situation. Read the story – the end will hit you like a punch…

This is far more than a boy's adventure story. Mark Twain's Huck Finn was published in1884 and is a classic in world literature. It is the story of the two escapees, Huck Finn and the run-away slave Jim and their voyage on a raft down the Mississippi river. The book is loosely related to "Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (1876), but has a more profound and universal message. Both the books were banned from libraries when they were published, because the protagonists were not considered as good role models for children. But the realism with which Huck Finn is portrayed is what lifts the narrative and gives him credibility. Huck has moral doubts about what he is doing – helping a Negro slave escape, and stealing to survive, both considered serious crimes. But Huck is struggling with his conscience, which is what gives the novel a moral perspective and adds to its literary value. It is Mark Twain's masterpiece, and has been enjoyed by generations because it simply is good literature. (Check out the article "Mark Twain" for more information.)

This is a must. If you are going to read one classic – it should be “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Brontë. The novel was published in 1845 and is still acclaimed as one of the best love stories in world literature. The story is set on the windswept moors of Yorkshire in the late 1700s. Heathcliff is brought into the Earnshaw household as an orphan, and is raised as a family member along with Mr Earnshaw’s two other children Catherine and Hindley. Soon Catherine and Heathcliff are inseparable, roaming the moors together, and gradually they fall in love with each other. But the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff is far more than a romantic love story; it is a tale of passion, jealousy, hate and revenge, and a love so absorbing and obsessing that it becomes destructive. The novel has been filmed many times, the ITV-version from 2009 is highly recommended. You may also want to check out the British pop singer Kate Bush’s dramatic song “Wuthering Heights”, particularly the “red dress” video version which you will find on YouTube.

Revolutionary Road is written by Richard Yeates and was published in 1961. It became an immediate success and is today a standard classic in American contemporary literature. It is Yeates most famous novel by far and it was acclaimed by contemporary writers such as Nick Hornby, Tennessee Williams and Kurt Vonnegut. The novel tells the story about the young couple Frank and April Wheeler, both talented and good-looking with dreams and hopes for the future. But beneath the surface of suburban America we see failure, alcoholism, adultery and betrayal. One by one their dreams and ideals are broken, what is left are emptiness and despair, and gradually we watch this once promising and seemingly successful family fall apart. The film version, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet (2008, Sam Mendes) received good reviews and was nominated to three Academy Awards.

“Pigeon English” is an extraordinary piece of literature. It is written by Stephen Kelman and was published in 2011, and has received more acclaim than what is usual for a debutant novel. It was even short-listed for the Man Booker Prize 2011, the most prestigious literary award in Britain. The story is told through eyes and mind of the 11-year old Harrison Opoku who has moved from Ghana to England with his mother and sister, while his father and baby sister stay back home, but they communicate on Skype. Harrison is trying to adapt to his new life in the rough and often dangerous inner-city London environment. A boy is stabbed one day, and Harrison and a friend starts an investigation on their own, a perilous undertaking… From a cultural aspect the story is very interesting, as it reveals the conflicting sets of values between the immigrants and the local population, but Harrison is observing and eager to learn. His first visit to the London underground is both funny and thought-provoking. The style and language is quite original, dialogues are in 1st person, like a manuscript (Me: “I’m all right.”), and the language is “pigeon” – the somewhat broken English spoken by West Africans. (E.g. “asweh” instead of “I swear”.) But also the real pigeons play an important role in Harrison’s life, and they even communicate with him. The narrative is more a line of episodes than a chronological plot. The book even comes with a reading guide, with topics for discussion and an interview with the author, which also is an original concept. But – a book for adults narrated by an 11-year-old? Well, it really works – check it out and see for yourself.

A Close Study of the novel The Help by Kathryn..

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
A Close Study of the Novel The Help by Kathryn Stockett (89541)

A newcomer to the literary genre of Southern fiction, Kathryn Stockett, was born in 1969 and raised in Jackson Mississippi. Her geographical birthplace and firsthand knowledge of the South and its historical legacy of slavery and racism have provided her with the background needed to follow the Southern tradition of literature.

Afro-Americans rallying for civil rights (1960)

As with Southern female writers of the past, i.e. Kate Chopin, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, Harper Lee and Alice Walker, to name just a few, Kathryn Stockett focuses her attention on strong female protagonists. Like her predecessors she uses the oral tradition of storytelling and Southern dialects. In her debut novel published in 2009; The Help, we find many elements inherited from past Southern novels: the historical significance of the town, its landscape and local customs, traditions, pride of heritage, respect for family, the emphasis on community and the role one plays in it, religion, humor, eccentricity, race, the interaction between blacks and whites, and the connection between the past and the present. In The Help the stories of three dynamic women deal with the problems of segregation and race relations taking place in Mississippi in the 1960's. The African-American Civil Rights Movement and the momentous historical events taking place at this time create a backdrop for a tale of loving compassion and sacrifice. A young, eccentric, white woman, Eugenia Phelan, and two black maids, Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson, speak out against inequality, institutionalized racism, cruelty and the lack of human rights. They risk isolation and brutal violence but choose to cross lines and tear down the old barriers between blacks and whites built up from the time of slavery and the establishment of the rigid Jim Crow laws. The publication of their book of interviews demonstrates their unyielding courage and rebellion against old Southern etiquette and traditions in a time of social change.

Comprehension - Close Reading

Chapters 1 and 2 Aibileen
Chapters 3 and 4 Minny
Chapters 5 and 6 Miss Skeeter
Chapter 7 Aibileen
Chapters 8 and 9 Miss Skeeter
Chapter 10 Minny
Chapters 11, 12 and 13 Miss Skeeter
Chapters 14, 15 and 16 Aibileen
Chapters 17 and 18 Minny
Chapters 19, 20 and 21 Miss Skeeter
Chapters 22 and 23 Aibileen
Chapter 24 Minny
Chapter 25 The Benefit
Chapter 26 Minny
Chapters 27 and 28 Miss Skeeter
Chapter 29 Aibileen
Chapter 30 Minny
Chapter 31 Aibileen
Chapter 32 Minny
Chapter 33 Miss Skeeter
Chapter 34 Aibileen

Discussion

Discuss the following with a partner

a) *Child neglect and abuse*

• Mae Mobley is an example of a child neglected and abused.
• Psychological brain washing

b) Conflict or tension

• The main conflict in the story
• Other conflicts taking place between the various characters
• Discuss the relationship between Skeeter and her Mother. Why do you think she is forced to lie to her? How are they examples of two different worlds?
• Discuss the scene between Mrs Phelan and Lulabelle Bates. Could the scene have been avoided in any way? How?

c) *Comic relief*

• Which scenes or episodes can be said to be both comic and tragic?

d) *Suspense*

• How does Kathryn Stockett build up suspense in the novel?
• Which scenes are the most exciting?

Literary Analysis

Setting

a) Where and when does the story take place?
b) Kathryn Stockett juxtaposes historical and political events with the everyday lives of the characters. Why is this significant?
c) Why does she pay so much attention to seasonal changes and the weather?

Characterization

a) Make a character table using the character traits below of the following characters: Aibileen Clark, Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan, Elizabeth Leefolt, Hilly Holbrook, Minny Jackson, Celia Foote, Mrs Charlotte Phelan, Stuart Whitworth, Constantine Bates. Then discuss with a partner why you think a character may be put into the category of stereotype, static or

• Age and physical appearance developing.
• Personality traits
• Language patterns
• Stereotype
• Static character
• Developing character

Plot and Structure

a) Sum up the plot of the story
b) How is the plot structured?
d) Turning points

There are many small turning points in the novel that Kathryn Stockett uses to stir our interest. i.e., In Chapter 7, Robert Brown is beaten at the same time Skeeter decides to persuade Aibileen to be interviewed.
• Can you find other such examples?
• What chapter would you consider as THE turning point or climax of the novel? Why?

Narrators and Point of View

a) Who are the narrators of the story?
b) How does their storytelling differ from one another?
d) Does the author speak through them?

Theme

a) Many of the themes in The Help revolve around the story of human suffering and social grievances of Afro-Americans in the 60's. Choose one of the following themes and write an essay where you discuss and exemplify how the theme is developed in the novel.

• love and compassion
• crossing the lines
• change
• cultural codes

Style

a) Language

• Kathryn Stockett belongs to a Southern oral tradition of storytelling where the protagonists use rich dialects to tell their narratives. What is characteristic of the way the three protagonists use language? Can you find any stock phrases or expressions that are individual to our narrators?

b) Symbols

• Minny's chocolate pie in Chapter 2, and the azalia bush and mimosa tree in Chapter 4 are symbols we find in the novel. What do you think they symbolize? Can you find other symbols?

c) Irony

• Irony is a manner of expression where the author says one thing but means the exact opposite. Can you find any examples of this in the book?

Writing

a) Using your character table, write a character portrayal of two of your favorite characters. Discuss
• How have their family backgrounds influenced their actions?
• What do they symbolize?
• What is it that you like or dislike about them?

b) The Jim Crow Laws in the South were examples of institutional discrimination enacted in the USA from 1876- 1965. They supported the “Separate but equal” status of American blacks. Equally discriminatory is the ignorant prejudice we find in the novel. Do the following:

• Read through the novel and pick out examples.
•Then write an essay where you discuss the concept of ignorant prejudice.
• What must be done to change peoples’ opinions and attitudes towards racism?

Project Work

a) Go online and find material on the history and conditions for African-Americans during the 50’s and 60’s. Give a brief outline including the following aspects:

• The Civil Rights Movement
• the bus boycotts – Rosa Parks
• school segregation – Little Rock Arkensas
• demonstrations and non-violent action
• protests against Jim Crow laws
• Martin Luther King jr.
• The march on Washington D.C.
• The Civil Rights Act
• The Voting Rights Act
• Black Power

Then make a digital presentation of your findings to the class including the music of the times, historical photos from magazines and newspapers found online.

Art with an Agenda

More than Entertainment

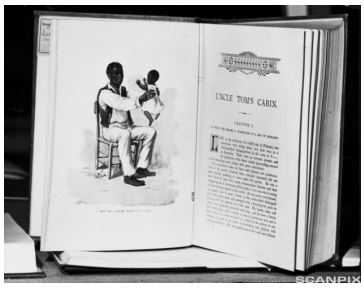
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
More than Entertainment (90725)

A narrative, either it be in a book, a film or a theatre play will work on us in different ways. Somehow, the film or book will give impulses and bring about a reaction. Primarily we are entertained, and many books and films aim for no more than that; the thrill of a crime story or an action film is good fun. But there are also many books and films that seek to give us more than just an entertaining pastime.

These words appear in the article, check that you understand them all.

trait, symbiosis, deliberately, to perceive, to embrace, ruthless, squalor, vexed, misrule, enlightened, scuffle, to ruffle, intrusive, patronising, adequate

Emotional Appeal



The novel Uncle Tom's Cabin created a wave of revultion towards slavery among Americans in the 1850s and 60s. However its long term effects on integtration are disputed. Everyone agrees though that it created change and thus was far more than an entertaining book.
Fotograf: Pressens bild

Basically all reactions are emotions, or emotionally controlled. Some people are more easily moved than others, depending on individual circumstances and personal traits. But everybody will at some point be emotionally influenced by what they see or read. So when we watch a sentimental scene or some tragic event in a film, we most certainly feel something. Film will of course be a stronger impulse and have more emotional potential than a book, because it is a symbiosis of techniques used deliberately to manipulate us. But a book can definitely be both moving and emotionally stirring as well. It may be interesting to reflect a bit on this – for example, will our emotions stand in the way for other elements that we are supposed to perceive?

Feelings or Intellect?

Note that the authors' and film makers' first aim is to entertain, which is a clearly legitimate intention. However, many directors and writers want their works to be embraced as more than pure entertainment, and they will have to be quite conscious of how to achieve that. Charles Dickens has been called a sentimentalist, perhaps quite rightly so, when we for example see how he uses child protagonists in many of his works. But Dickens also had a different agenda with his writing; he wanted to display the squalor of industrial England during the mid-19th century and raise criticism against greedy mill owners and a ruthless ruling class. So the question is – will the readers' sympathy for poor Oliver Twist or Little Dorrit simply stand in the way for an understanding of Dickens's political agenda? It is hard to say; many people at the time were both moved and vexed by Dickens's writing, whereas we today probably react a bit differently to his social criticism as we see it in a more historical perspective. But nonetheless, the question is both general and intriguing: Can we have a distanced intellectual understanding of a film or a book and at the same time be emotionally moved by what we see or read? The answer is probably yes, but there are film makers and playwrights who don't think so, and go to quite some lengths to stop us from being carried away by our emotions.

Special Effects

Many writers and theatre and film directors want to influence the audience politically, and they are quite clear about it. Their work is not direct propaganda for some left wing or right wing direction, but the aim is to inform their audience about some sort of political misrule or abuse or power, so that the audience will leave the theatre or put the book down enlightened and ready to take action to put things right. To achieve that they need to remind the audience of the fact that this is just a play or a film – reality is out there. Political writers in the 1930s developed certain techniques to sort of “wake up” the audience and remind them. One way was to use singing, not like a musical or an opera where the actors sing their lines instead of saying them, but more like an outside comment on what was going on in the film or the play. There would for example be a choir or a band with a singer off stage that would break into the action and explicitly tell the audience what this really was about, and what should be done about it. Political playwrights like Berthold Brecht and the Norwegian Nordahl Grieg were both using this sort of theatrical effect. Grieg would even go so far as to place an actor or two in the audience who would break into the play by shouting loud comments about what was going on on the stage, and perhaps even initiate a scuffle among the audience. Another technique was to break into the action with suggestive comments on big posters that either were carried across the stage at a play, or popped up during the film. British film director Lindsay Anderson used both musical comments and posters in his films. Most viewers would see such effects as intrusive elements which would ruffle the entertainment and spoil the fun. Besides, most of the audience probably would find it a bit patronising to be taught and openly instructed like this. Such techniques are not common today; perhaps because writers with an agenda trust their audiance to get the message without these instructions.

To conclude – to write a book or make a film for entertainment is a completely adequate ambition, we love to be entertained. But authors and film makers who want to address an audience with more than entertainment must be aware of the possible conflict between an emotional reaction to and an intellectual understanding of their work, and they will have to consider carefully how to get across their message without being too intrusive and patronising.

Comprehension and Discussion

How can there be a possible conflict between an emotional reaction and an intellectual understanding of a literary text or a film?

Do you think it is all right for a writer or a film maker to put his or her political views into their work? Is it freedom of speech or is it abuse of power?

There are many examples of regimes that have used film or literature to instruct the people and teach them the "correct" political view. (Can you mention some?) What will be a natural consequence of such an ambition?

Find out more

Below are listed four names of artists with a political agenda. Choose one of them and do some research on the net and present your findings for the class.

1. British film director **Ken Loach** openly has a political message with his films. His approach is a close-to-life presentation of the conditions for working class people struggling to get by in a tough reality defined by the people in power. His films are a good example of how an emotional reaction may clash with an intellectual understanding of his work. Sugggested titles: *"Ladybird, Ladybird", "Raining Stones", "Riff Raff".*
2. The American playwright **Arhur Miller** was accused of "un-American activity" during the "McCarthyism" in the 1950s, mainly

because of his play *"Death of a Salesman"*. The play clearly puts The American Dream into a critical perspective. Watch the film (directed by Volker Schlöndorff, starring Dustin Hoffman and John Malkowich) or seach the net for information about Miller's political agenda and his clash with the American establishment.

3. British **George Orwell** is another central figure in literature whose writing clearly has a political tendency. He wants to alarm people about oppressive and undemocratic political systems, e.g. in his famous fable *"Animal Farm"*, which is a sharp satirical comment on the communist regime in The Soviet Union. Another standard example of literature with a political message is his *"1984"*, which is a science fiction presentation of a totalitarian society where surveillance and brainwashing are ways to control the population, not unlike some communist regimes we know. Do some net reseach and find out about Orwell's writing in a politcal context.
4. The British film director **Lindsay Anderson** is mentioned in the article. His approach is mostly interesting because of the way he uses music and other effects to comment on the plot and to clarify his political message. Suggested titles: *"Oh, Lucky Man"* and *"If"*.

Songs of Discontent

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Songs of Discontent (112700)

During the mid-1960s the Scottish poet and pop-folk singer, Donovan, had a slogan in bold letters across the front of his guitar that read: **This Machine Kills Fascists**. This may seem a bit extreme, but is nonetheless an unmistakable and candid manifesto.
Many singer-songwriters have more or less explicitly declared their political agenda both from the stage and in their songs. No one can blame a performing artist with a message for using his songs as a channel to express what he thinks is important to communicate to the audience.

Woody Guthrie

The American working man song tradition developed among the toiling labourers working for a-dollar-a-day on the railroads or in a mine. The songs were about harsh working conditions and exploitation by employers, or they could be teamster songs to spur the union spirit and advocate the right to organise. This tradition was kept alive by folk singers leading a hobo life, doing odd jobs and singing for a living. One of them was Woody Guthrie (1912-1967) whose songs have inspired many folk singers who later rose to fame. One of Guthrie's most famous songs is "This Land is Your Land", which has become an anthem celebrating the diversity and greatness of the American nation. However, when the song is sung or performed, some stanzas from Guthrie's original version are usually left out:

Woody Guthrie
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

One bright Sunday morning in the shadows of the steeple
By the Relief Office I seen me people,
As they stood there hungry, I stood there whistling:
This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking, I saw a sign there.
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing".
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That land was made for you and me.

Protest

During the 1960s many folk and protest singers took up Guthrie's critical agenda. This was the time of the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, the Cuba Crisis and the Vietnam War – issues that evoked protest in people in general and also in many singer-songwriters. The most prominent representatives of this new wave of folk singers with a political message were Pete Seeger, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Though Dylan never proclaimed any political standpoint and refused to be called a protest singer, many of his songs, particularly during this period were clearly about political issues. These songs gave voice to the fears and thoughts of many young people. These are some stanzas from his "Masters of War" (1963):

Come you masters of war
You that build the big guns
You that build the death planes
You that build the big bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks
(…)
You fasten the triggers
For others to fire
Then you sit back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud
(…)
And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch when you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead

Bob Dylan

Fotograf: Corbis

During his long career and vast production Dylan has from time to time continued to make personal comments on political matters in his songs. These are two stanzas from his "Union Sundown" (1983):

Well you know, lots of people complainin' that there is no work
I say, Why you say that for
When nothin' you got is U.S-made?
They don't make nothin' here no more
You know, capitalism is above the law
It say, It don't count less it sells.
When it costs too much to build it at home
You just build it cheaper someplace else.
(…)
Democracy don't rule the world
You'd better get that in your head
This world is ruled by violence
But I guess that's better left unsaid
From Broadway to the Milky Way
That's a lot of territory indeed
And a man's gonna do what he has to do
When he has a hungry mouth to feed

Well, it's sundown on the union
And what's made in the USA
Sure was a great idea
'Til greed got in the way

Northern Ireland

English occupation and the persecution of Irish Catholics through the centuries have given rise to a protest song tradition that is an important part of Irish / Celtic culture. These are two lines from "The Wind That Shakes the Barley", written by Robert Dwyer Joyce in the mid-19th century:

‘Twas hard the woeful words to frame
To break the ties that bound us
But harder still to bear the shame
Of foreign chains around us

The Irish question has stirred many contemporary pop and rock artists to state their opinion about the troubles. Even Paul McCartney, who is not primarily known for political songs, wrote "Give Ireland Back to the Irish". His former partner John Lennon wrote the ironical "The Luck of the Irish", from which the following lines are taken:

If you had the luck of the Irish
You’d be sorry and wish you were dead
You should have the luck of the Irish
And you’d wish you was English instead
A thousand years of torture and hunger
Drove the people away from their land
A land full of beauty and wonder
Was raped by the British brigands. Goddamn! Goddamn!
(…)
Why the hell are the English there anyway?
As they kill with God on their side
Blame it all on the kids the IRA
As the basters commit genocide. Aye! Aye! Genocide!

john lennon
Fotograf: AP

During the conflict in Northern Ireland, the 30th of January, 1972, has gone down in history as “Bloody Sunday”. At a peaceful demonstration 13 unarmed civilians were shot and killed by English soldiers. This incident is the background of the Irish rock group U2's song, "Bloody Sunday":

Broken bottles under children’s feet
Bodies strewn across the dead end street
But I won’t heed the battle call
It puts my back up
It puts my back up against the wall
(…)
And the battle’s just begun
There’ many lost, but tell me who has won
The trench is dug within our hearts
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters
Torn apart

Whenever U2 perform the song, Bono introduces it by saying that “this is not a rebel song”. This provoked the Irish performer Sinèad O’Connor to write a song, "This IS a Rebel Song", calling attention to the political message in her song:

Ah, please talk to me English man
What good will shutting me out get done
Meanwhile crazies are killing our sons

Satire and Irony

The American singer-songwriter Randy Newman has a slightly different approach in his political lyrics. Though his songs are in some way ironic his political message shines through quite clearly. In his song "Rednecks" (1974) he addresses racist attitudes in general and the “mind of the south” the way he sees it:

We talk real funny down here
We drink too much and we laugh too loud
We’re too dumb to make it in any northern town
And we’re keeping the niggers down
(…)
We’re Rednecks, we’re Rednecks
We don’t know our ass from a hole in the ground
We’re Rednecks, we’re Rednecks
And we’re keeping the niggers down

Now your northern nigger’s a Negro
You see, he’s got his dignity
Down here we’re too ignorant to realize
That the north has set the nigger free
Yes he’s free to be put in a cage
In Harlem in New York City
And he’s free to put in a cage on the
South-Side of Chicago and the West-Side
And he’s free to be put in a cage
in Hough in Cleveland
And he’s free to be put in a cage
In East St. Louis
And he’s free to be put in a cage
In Fillmore in San Francisco
And he’s free to be put in a cage
in Roxbury in Boston
They’re gatherin’ ‘em up from miles around
Keeping the niggers down

American singer-songwriter Randy Newman
Fotograf: Tim Mosenfelder

Randy Newman has had many critical reactions from people who don’t get his ironic meaning, which in a way proves his point. In a more recent song, "A Few Words in Defence of my Country" (2008), he leaves no doubt as to what he thinks of the political leadership of his country:

I’d like to say a few words in defence of my country
Whose people aren’t bad, nor are they mean
Now the leaders we have,
While they’re the worst that we’ve had
Are hardly the worst this poor world has seen

(He then goes on to mention some really bad political leaders throughout history, such as the Caesars of Rome, Spanish Kings during the Inquisition, Hitler, Stalin and King Leopold of Belgium.)
(…)
We don’t want your love
And respect at this point is pretty much out of the question
But in times like these

We sure could use a friend
(…)
The end of an Empire is messy at best
And this Empire is ending like all the rest
Like the Spanish Armada adrift on the sea
We're adrift in the land of the brave and the home of the free

Sticking Your Neck Out

"Killing fascists" certainly is an extreme declaration of a political ambition, and in general artists with a political message may want to think twice before they state their views so outspokenly. In a democracy where freedom of speech is respected, it will be unproblematic for artists to pronounce their message as explicitly as e.g. Randy Newman, but in other contexts it could be quite risky to stick one's neck out and openly criticise the political leadership. The Chilean singer-songwriter Victor Jara was arrested, tortured and killed by the junta police after the coup in Chile in 1972. Political leaders fear the influence these artists may have, particularly on young people. In the early 1970s, the CIA and the Nixon administration went to quite some lengths to have John Lennon thrown out of the country because of his left-wing political views, and the influence he might have on first-time voters.
Political artists are not a new phenomenon. During the Romantic Age poets like Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley were exiled for their radical views and immoral conduct. But in a way, that is the fate of artists with a political message; the risk of consequences will not keep them from writing or singing.

Tasks and Activities

1. Why do you think the two stanzas of Woody Guthrie's "This Land is your Land" are usually left out?
2. What is a "relief office"?
3. Working man songs would be in the language of the working class. Do you see any examples of that in Guthrie's song?
4. What is the general message in "Masters of War" by Bob Dylan?
5. Explain "outsourcing" in connection with Dylan's "Union Sundown".
6. Pick one or two lines from "Union Sundown" that sum up the whole message of the song.
7. Why do you think Bono introduces "Bloody Sunday" like he does? (If you look carefully at the lyrics you will probably understand.)
8. Randy Newman is from California. What happens when he replaces "they" with "we" in his song "Rednecks"?
9. Explain the irony of the last stanza of "Rednecks".
10. Explain the satirical element of Randy Newman's "A Few Words…"
11. How does the last line of "A Few Words…" connect with the title of the song?
12. Go on the net and find the lyrics of" A Few Words..." Do you think it is fair to compare the old despots with the leadership of a modern democratic society?
13. Can you come up with examples from our time where artists are arrested for criticising the political leadership?

Suggested Further Activities

1. Follow the link and read more about John Lennon's career and his struggle for American citizenship.John Lennon - Working Class Hero
2. Check this link for more information about Bob Dylan and his poetry.Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen - Rock Poets
3. Follow the link below and read more about Percy Bysshe Shelley and why he was exiled from EnglandPercy Bysshe Shelley - A Romantic Rebel
4. Check YouTube for clips or performances of the songs mentioned in the article.

2 Cultural Aspects

Anglo-American Culture

Crime on TV - To Catch a Killer at all Costs

Forfatter: Eli Huseby, Anne Scott Hagen, Carol Dwankowski
Crime on TV - To Catch a Killer at all Costs (77014)

Pre-reading: Long running series like *CSI*, *CSI Miami*, *CSI New York*, *Bones*, *NCIS*, *Criminal Minds* and their British equivalent *Silent Witness*, or the long-running, Scottish series *Taggart* have captured the attention of viewers all over the world. Watch 2 or 3 of the trailers for *CSI New York.* How would you describe the action? How many suitable adjectives can you find to describe it

CSI New York - trailers

Make sure you understand these words before you read the text. Use the dictionary in the link collection to look up new words:

1. addictive
2. passionately
3. ruthless
4. perpetrator
5. squeamish
6. entrails
7. gallon
8. forensic
9. lanky
10. mellow-voiced
11. tight-fitting
12. bullet-proof
13. equipment
14. prop(theatre)
15. nickname
16. abducted
17. grizzly
18. imagery
19. petty crime
20. insane
21. deviant
22. rapist
23. heinous
24. victim
25. devised
26. underfunded
27. understaffed
28. oath
29. mold
30. skull
31. witty

Crime on TV – To Catch a Killer at all Costs / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/94286

Gary Sinise. Filming CSI New York.
Fotograf: Jason DeCrow

The spin-offs are many because solving murders is exciting and entertaining - and addictive. We are passionately drawn into ruthless situations where the good guys have to find, lock up or most often kill the bad guys also called "*Unsubs*"(unknown subjects) or "*Perps*" (perpetrators). These series are not for the squeamish. Ever since *CSI* premiered October 2000 in the USA, the visual

effects, violence, graphic bloody images and sexual content have exploded.

The pounds of flesh, entrails and gallons of blood shown on screen have kept the special effects department in various studios around the world quite busy. The forensic lab teams are usually beautiful, lanky, mellow-voiced male and female models or actors with tight-fitting, revealing clothes. Even in uniform and bullet-proof vests they look fantastic due to training at the gym and Botox. Also one cannot avoid the futuristic forensic lab equipment with its science fiction aura, complete with mysterious lighting and props.

Program Structuring

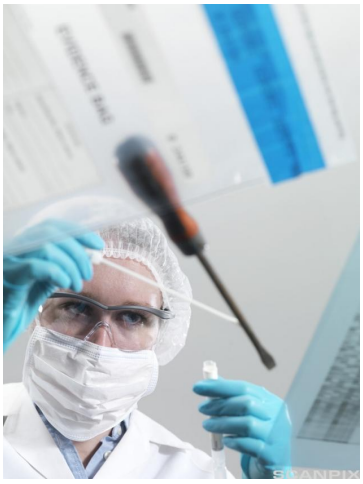
Each program is structured in a specific way and has its own gimmick. For example, the various nicknames Special Agent DiNozzo uses when addressing Special Agent McGee in *NCIS*, or the number of times Horatio removes his sun glasses in *CSI Miami*. All the good guys are obsessively dedicated to their work and have little time for private lives. Most of them are either divorced or have family problems due to their absence from home. Wives and loved ones are very often part of the plot and are often neglected, abducted or killed. The sexual tension between male and female partners in many episodes acts as a parallel storyline. The tempo in which the mystery is solved depends on the country of origin, but that too has to fit into a 45-60 minute time slot.

What Critics Say

What these programs have been criticized for is the level of sadistic violence, sexual sadism and grizzly imagery that have developed over the last 10 years. The crime and criminal behavior has escalated. The bad guys no longer commit petty crime or charm us with their anti-authority behavior. They are criminally insane pedophiles, sexual deviants, serial killers, sadists, collectors, rapists, kidnappers, etc. coming from horrible family backgrounds who engage in heinous crimes. And the more the victim suffers the more interesting the case.

In Real Life

Like reality series, the plots and conflicts are devised. In real life, forensic labs are usually underfunded by governments and understaffed. The programs have also been criticized by police, the FBI, CIA and attorneys. Not all labs and technicians in reality are accredited. There have been cases where coroners, crime labs technicians, police chemists, forensic anthropologists and forensic specialists have lied under oath at a trial or DNA testing has been faulty. Equipment is usually slow which makes it impossible to solve crimes as fast. Another point is that physical evidence is not as obvious as in *CSI*. The technical science used in *CSI* series is fantasy. For example, making a mold from a knife wound or even finding the killer because he/she has gunshot residue on his/her clothes.



Forensic science. Taking a DNA sample from a screwdriver.
Fotograf: Andrew Brookes

Violence is Entertaining

Some critics argue that violence seen at an early age increases the chances of violent acts later. Child aggression leads to aggression in adults later in life. Others claim that crime series accept violence, including torture, as right and acceptable. Guns blasting through skulls is the only way to solve problems. Violence is entertaining. And all of us empathize with the “good guys”, who invariably use these techniques, especially if they are beautiful, funny and witty.

The debate about how violence as a means of entertainment affects us, goes a long way back in history. In ancient Greece, the philosophers Plato and Aristotle strongly disagreed on this issue. Whereas Plato maintained that the violence exposed in the Greek dramas would inspire the spectators to copy the actions, Aristotle, on his part, claimed that just watching the drama in itself would give the audience an emotional outlet and aggression and strong emotions would be left behind in the theater. The debate is still relevant today.

Comprehension 1 - True or False?

Correct the false statements

1. *CSI* has changed little since it started in 2000.
2. Special effects are important in the production of the series.
3. One has to be squeamish to watch crime series like *CSI*.
4. Most of the “good guys” are dedicated to their work and to their families.
5. The “bad guys” have become more violent and sadistic.
6. In reality, not all lab technicians are to be trusted to tell the truth.
7. The forensic labs in the series are technically out-of-date.
8. Physical evidence is more difficult to find in real life crime.
9. The “good guys” are entertaining even though they use violence.

F, T, F, F, T, T, F, T, T

Comprehension 2

1. Parts of this article are clearly ironical, can you spot some examples?
2. Point at some examples of the use of “clichés” in these series. (If you don’t know the word, look it up.)
3. Mention some examples where these series clash with reality. How have these series developed over the last ten years?

Debate

Arrange a debate where you discuss Plato's and Aristotle's differing views on the employment of violence and aggression in drama.
Preparation: Work in pairs - one student is challenged to adopt Plato's views whereas the other adopts Aristotle's views. On a sheet of paper you should list up at least 5 arguments that support "your" view. Use the vocabulary in this article as a source of inspiration.
Now arrange a class debate *Plato vs. Aristotle* (try to remember your arguments without looking at the slip of paper).

From Soap Operas to Teen Drama

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
From Soap Operas to Teen Drama (77015)

English speaking countries are renowned for long running series that are indigenous to the country such as *General Hospital* (1963-) and *Days of Our lives* (1965-) in the USA, *Coronation Street* (1960-) and *EastEnders* (1985-) in Great Britain, *Neighbours* (1985-) and *Home and Away* (1988-) in Australia and the hospital series *Shortland Street* (1992-) in New Zealand.

From Soap Operas to Teen Drama / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/94284

Johnny McIntyre fills out the slate for the next scene in "One Tree Hill," which films in Wilmington, N.C.

These are mostly adult series, although many of the conflicts in the series may often include teenagers as well. Therefore, for example, *Home and Away* also fits into the category of “teen drama” because the later series dealt with teen issues. Teen drama also takes many elements from soap operas such as the serial forms, melodrama and dialogue. Some of the storylines focusing on teens deal with bullying, romance, rivalry, teen sexuality, teen pregnancy, abortion, racism, substance abuse, imprisonment, sexual and mental child abuse, homosexuality and homophobia, to name a few. What is interesting is that the genre “teen drama” did not come into existence until the 1990’s. And what was more relaxing after a boring day at school than viewing the complex lives of the characters depicted.

The genre evolved starting with *Beverly Hills 90210* (1990-2000) about upper middle class teens from Beverly Hills high school, *Dawson's Creek* (1998- 2003) about 4 teens living in the fictional town of Capeside, Massachusetts and later in Boston, Massachusetts, to *The OC* (2003- 2007) starring teens from New Port Beach and Orange County, California, *Gossip Girl* (2007-) about privileged teens and young adults from Manhattan's Upper East Side in New York City and *One Tree Hill* (2003-) about teens from a fictional town Tree Hill in North Carolina. What all of these teen dramas have in common are their slickness, affluence and no less than perfect American cast of actors and actresses.

What Critics Say

Although many of the same themes mentioned above are touched upon, the way in which they are handled vary in depth, intensity and shock value. Teen characters are lead into complex relationships and situations that although based on real life problems still seem far away. Critics claim that teenage characters, because they usually lack social power [1], are put into very adult situations and must act as adults. They seem much more mature and reflective than in reality. S imilar to reality series there is a lot of stereotyping according to gender, nationality, race and even class. Who wouldn't want to be as rich, thin, beautiful, cool, tough, sexy or aggressive as some of the main characters? Other critics base their disapproval on the amount of drug abuse and sexual violence shown in these series.

Risky lifestyle

A newer teen drama is *Skins*. Originating in the UK in 2007, the series is into its 6th season. It follows a group of British, working class teens from Bristol, England. The plot centers on social issues such as mental illness, eating disorders, dysfunctional families, sexual orientation, drug and alcohol abuse and death. However, critics have criticized it for its lewdness due to the scenes of voyeurism, exhibitionism, child pornography, masturbation and drug and alcohol abuse. The American version was first shown on MTV in January of 2011 but had to be toned down due to the outcries from parents. The contents had to fit FCC requirements.

Vocabulary

Try the vocabulary task:

From Soap Opera to Teen Drama - Vocabulary / amendor_ios_task
http://ndla.no/en/node/104611

Discussion

Sit in groups of three or four and duscuss the following:

- Which of the series mentioned in the text have you seen? Likes and dislikes
- What soap / teen drama have you followed? Particular likes and dislikes
- What do we mean by the word "escapism"? (Look it up if you don't know)
- Why is "escapism" a relevant term when talking about these series?
- Explain "stereotyping" with regards to these dramas?
- Discuss teen dramas with regards to realism.

Writing

Write and develop your own pilot manuscript for a teen drama. Be imaginative and include the following:

- Title
- Concept
- Number of episdoes

- Target Group
- Location
- Plot
- Structure
- Types of characters
- What the last episode will consist of

Footnotes

1. *Serialised Sexual Violence in Teen Television Drama Series*by Susan Berridge (2010)

Hollywood

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
Hollywood (6252)

What associations pop to mind when you hear the word "Hollywood"?

Hollywood / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/48605

Hollywood/Bollywood Film Quiz / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125159

"Hollywood" is the popular term for American cinema, which dates back to the early 1900s. The district of Hollywood, Los Angeles was found to be an attractive environment for moviemaking, with its warm, sunny and stable climate. Of course, the early films were silent, as sound technology was only developed by the late 1920s.

Grace Kelly

The movie industry grew enormously after this breakthrough. The following "Golden Age" of Hollywood, at its height in the 1930s and 40s, shaped the industry, laying the foundation for the Hollywood of today – the glamour, the excitement, and the ever-growing cult of celebrity. This was also the era of the big Hollywood studios – MGM, Paramount, and Walt Disney, to name a few. **Try to find the names of the film studios in the task to your right.**

Box Office Hits

Hollywood's "Golden Age" declined in the 1950s, in part because of the dawn of television. However, the last thirty years or so have seen the rise of blockbuster films, with big stars and even bigger budgets. These are films that appeal to wide audiences, and they often make huge profits for the studios. Some early blockbusters were the *Star Wars* films, *E.T.*, and *Jaws*. Among more recent blockbusters we have the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Titanic* and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films.

Taglines

A tagline is a slogan used to market a film. It should be short, memorable, and hint at what the film is all about. **Can you match the following blockbuster films with their taglines in the tasks in the link collection?** (If you do not know, make an educated guess.)

Further Reading

Celebrity Culture
James Dean - American Icon

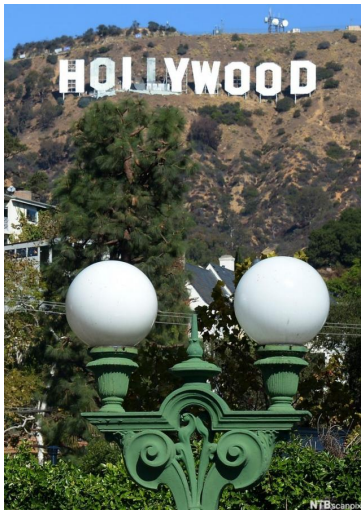
Hollywood Show-Down

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Hollywood Showdown (109693)

The name Hollywood is recognised as something more than a place. It is a concept, an idea signifying the American film industry. Paramount, Metro-Goldwin-Meyer, Warner Brothers, the Walt Disney Corporation – the big names in American film business are all centred in this little suburb north of Los Angeles, California. For a century Hollywood has equalled great films, famous directors, stars, celebrities, glitter and glamour. But now an era seems to be over – it is showdown time in Hollywood.

The Hollywood Concept

In the early 20th century, film makers flocked to this place in Southern California, mainly because of the long days that provided good lighting conditions, which was important in times when electricity was deficient and technical equipment was primitive. The rest is history – Hollywood has gained an iconic status in the film world. A Hollywood film's design is based on the American concept of film entertainment – dramatic action, love and emotions, spectacular effects and catchy music. As long as you know what to expect you probably will not be disappointed; and to many a Hollywood-made film is a guarantee of good film entertainment. But now time is up for Hollywood's hegemony as America's film capital.



Hollywood - Home of American Film Industry

Hollywood and "Hollywood"

Due to state financial support programs it is simply cheaper to move film production elsewhere. This is bad news for a state already financially on its knees. Between 1996 and 2007, film production in Hollywood was down by 41 percent, and over the same period California lost more than 90,000 jobs related to film production. New and more financially favourable locations are found in Detroit, Philadelphia, Louisiana, New Mexico and North Carolina, where the award-winning TV-series *Homeland* is made.
Hollywood as a concept will probably not disappear, even if a film is produced and set elsewhere, it may still be labelled "Hollywood". But in the future American films may be slightly different from the traditional Hollywood style, as the new locations may bring on new settings and new ideas that will reflect a more manifold picture of American reality and culture.

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension

1. What is the difference between Hollywood and "Hollywood"?
2. What is "hegemony"?
3. How is the title of the article a pun on a certain genre of Hollywood films?

Vocabulary

“The new locations may **bring on** new settings…" is an example of a phrasal verb. “Bring” belongs to a group of verbs that easily connect with a preposition, and thus change their meaning. (bring on, bring up, bring about, bring down) Follow link for more examples, a full explanation, and do the task on phrasal verbs.
Phrasal Verbs

Writing

1. It may not be fair to generalize, but some will claim that a Hollywood film is recognised by a predictable plot and a set of familiar ingredients. Do you agree? Why / why not? Write a brief article about a typical Hollywood production.
2. Write a review of a Hollywood film you have seen recently. (Your article must include a brief summary of the plot, the characters and actors, the effects, the music, a comment on the ending, and a conclusion.)

Research

1. Search the net for information about film stars from Hollywood’s golden age. Some of the most famous actors are: *Rudolph Valentino, Humphrey Bogart, Greta Garbo, Ingrid Bergman, Marlon Brando, James Dean, Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, Charlton Heston and Gregory Peck.* Choose one or two and make a presentation for the class.
2. The following American films and TV series are easily classified as “Hollywood" productions. Go on the net and find their actual production location.

- *Love and other Drugs*
- *The Italian Job*
- *Gran Torino*
- *Breaking Bad*
- *The Hunger Games*
- *Scream 4*

James Dean - American Icon

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
James Dean - American Icon (67593)

James Dean / video
http://ndla.no/en/node/66567

Comprehension

1. When was James Dean an actor in Hollywood?
2. How did James Dean die?
3. Why were the two retired police officers interviewed?
4. Explain the irony in the little studio interview with James Dean?
5. In the video you see a road sign indicating where the accident happened. Find it on the map.

Discussion

1. James Dean is described as an “icon”. What does that mean? (Why are the little symbols on your desktop called icons?)
2. Watch this clip from *The James Dean Story*:

   ### James Dean - American Icon / fagstoff

   http://ndla.no/en/node/67593

   - What does it imply about James Dean's personality?
   - Why did he decide to become an actor?
   - How is his acting career and life symbolised?
   - How would you describe the atmosphere created in this clip?
3. What does James Dean have in common with Marilyn Monroe, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Jim Morrison? (Find out about these artists if you don’t know who they are).
4. Look closely at the images of James Dean in the video, both the close-ups and the studio interview. How would you describe his posture and charisma? Discuss how this might have increased his popularity with young fans?
5. One of James Dean’s few movies was called *Rebel without a Cause*. What does the title mean? Why do you think young people were able to relate to James Dean in that particular movie?
6. Give examples of elements of American youth culture in the 1950s which you see in this video.

John Lennon - Working Class Hero

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
John Lennon - Working Class Hero (91360)

In September 2010 the music channel VH1 launched the conclusive list of the best and most influential rock artists ever. And no surprise, the ranking was topped by The Beatles. The Fab Four from Liverpool, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr had a hectic and creative career from 1962 to 1970, and their music is still classic rock and pop material.

John Lennon was killed in 1980, a fact which may have added to his legendary status, but there is more to it than that; his iconic personality and his diverse artistic career has ranked him as one of the most significant pop artists of the 20th century. He actually holds 31st position on the above-mentioned VH1 ranking as a solo artist.

Childhood and Music

John Winston Lennon was born in 1940. His mother left him with her sister, and John grew up with his aunt Mimi. His father left before John was born. He saw his father once after he had become famous, but John was bitter and and they never achieved any relationship. John and his mother regained contact in the mid-1950s, but some years later she was killed in a car accident. This was a turning point for John; he became very, very bitter, as he said it in an interview many years later. John at an early stage showed a talent for the arts; drawing, writing and music, and soon he got his own guitar. (Aunt Mimi said: "A guitar is all right, John - but you'll never earn a living by it.") His inspiration at the time was skiffle king, Lonnie Donegan and Elvis Presley. He was determined to start his own group, and together with his friend Paul, and Paul's friend George formed "The Quarrymen". Later they changed the name to "The Silver Beetles" and finally "The Beatles."

John Lennon
Fotograf: AP

Poetry and Film

In 1964, John published *In His Own Write,* a collection of poems, drawings and philosophical reflections. The book became a best seller and received good reviews, his texts were even compared to those of James Joyce and Lewis Carroll. His second book, *A Spaniard in the Works*, came the year after. John said that these books were personal and private expressions that came from another John than the “songwriter John” who produced music with the Beatles for what he called “the meat market.”

Many of John Lennon’s Beatles songs tell the story of a maturing artist with a strong poetic language. “Tomorrow Never Knows”, “Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite”, “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds”, “Strawberry Fields Forever”, “I am the Walrus” are all examples of John Lennon’s brilliant ability to play with words and put together images, creating surreal and original poetry. When the Beatles were at the top, John was once quoted as having said that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, a statement he had to retract after heavy criticism, particularly in the US. But it is just another example of John’s way of making a point in a provocative manner.

He was offered a minor part in the film *How I won the War* in 1966, a satirical presentation of British soldiers in a more or less surreal setting. This opened up for a new John Lennon. First of all he had a haircut and started to wear glasses. He had always had a bad eyesight, but thought that glasses would ruin his pop image. But more importantly, John Lennon got the chance to see that there might be a life outside the Beatles. This phase also became an important initiator for his political anti-war engagement.

John and Yoko

That same year John met the Japanese avant-garde artist Yoko Ono and this became a crucial point in both his career and personal life. Critics have claimed that she was the one who broke up the Beatles, but the fact is that the group was already in a process that sooner or later would end in a break-up, with or without Yoko Ono.

John and Yoko married in 1969, and after the break-up of the Beatles, they worked together on several projects including music, photography and film – none of which appealed to a broader audience. In 1971, he published his first solo album *Imagine* which became an international success, and the title cut has become a pop classic in its simple clarity – "Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try, no hell below us, and above us only sky". In the same year he and Yoko formed "The Plastic Ono Band" which was a rather noisy sort of musical happening with various members. The songs became more politically explicit, promoting anti-war and leftist issues; "Power to the People", "Give Peace a Chance" and "Happy X-mas (War is Over if You Want It"). But also, many of Lennon's songs are deeply personal and carry the evidence of his traumatic childhood, memories that never left him – "Julia" which was his mother's name, the desperate "Mother" from the *Imagine* album, and the bitter "Working Class Hero", a folk-style song in the Dylan tradition. The latter is a cynical text about his own disillusionment with money and fame, and the self-indulgence he experienced as a Beatle.

John and Yoko
Fotograf: AP

In 1971, John Lennon moved to New York, never to return to the UK again. John and Yoko tried to set up a family life in America, but after a time their marriage went through a turbulent period, and John moved to Los Angeles, hanging out with friends indulging in alcohol and partying, a period referred to as "the lost weekend". Lennon's political left wing stand along with his popularity was by the American authorities seen as a combustible combination, as they thought he might influence young people to riot against the establishment. This was pre-Watergate and President Richard Nixon feared that Lennon's anti-Vietnam stand would make the first-time 18-year old voters go against him at the next election. The CIA and the FBI followed him closely in order to have him expelled from the country on account of an old drug sentence from England. However, after a hearing in 1976, John Lennon was granted a permanent leave of residence and got his green card.

"Starting Over"

John and Yoko were reunited in 1975, and now John headed for a new phase in his career; John, the family man, living with his wife and their son, Sean, in their apartment in New York. He was working on a literary project with Yoko (which was finished and published after his death), and they were starting to produce music again. The album *Double Fantasy* came in 1980 and is, according to John, strictly autobiographical. The album contains the song "Beautiful Boy" (for his son Sean) where he in a personal way sums up his own life and career: "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans". The song also indicates his new attitude to life: "Every day, in every way it's getting better and better". The album was released in November, and three weeks later, on December 8 John Lennon was shot and killed in front of his home in New York.

John Lennon's influence goes far beyond his music. He was a poet, a writer, film maker and artist. He was a political activist with a social conscience and keen observation. He certainly deserves a legendary status within Anglo-American culture. After the terror attack on New York City in 2001 a huge banner was spanned across a building in Times Square reading "Imagine all the people living life in Peace."

John Lennon - Tasks and Activities

Reality Series - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
Reality Series - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (77013)

It goes without saying that nature and documentary series found on National Geographic, David Attenborough's nature programs, Animal Planet and Discovery Channel, and the History Channel are all excellent. They all depict "real reality".

Reality Series – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/94287

The Amazing Race that takes teams around the world under different forms of transportation, extreme conditions and stress, and quiz shows such as *Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?* give us both knowledge of the world and encourage us to explore. Some programs teach us practical things, like *The Colony* produced by The Discovery Channel where cast members must apply skills and technology to survive in an environment depicting the aftermath of a global catastrophe. And who can avoid being charmed by the Jamie Oliver cooking series? Even series such as *X-Factor*, *American Idol* and *So You Think You Can Dance* require training and certain performance skills. But no one with a TV guide or remote control can avoid such series as *The Bachelor/Bachelorette*, *Paradise Hotel*, *Jersey Shore*, *Top Model* or *Survivor*. Teens looking for role models and excitement are those who are going to watch these series. Both the negative and positive impact will depend on the essence of the show.

Jamie Oliver blends passionate activism for nutrition with reality TV.

Reality Show Formats

Formats vary from series to series, but the basic structure is the same. The main idea is based on some form of competition between the good guys and the bad guys where body beautiful and physically fit boys/men and girls/women, anywhere from 15 – 30 years of age, are put into high stress "real" situations for huge money prizes. To start with, producers choose non-celebrities or volunteers from auditions. This is commercially beneficial because non-celebrities are cheaper than well-known stars demanding star salaries. Some stars have even refused to appear in certain reality series because of fear for their reputations. Although the reality of the situation is supposedly unrehearsed and unscripted, the producers of these series are all-time tricksters. Segments are structured to extract the maximum emotional impact from a situation. Some even go so far as to cut, alter and edit dialogue or actions to make one character "play" the role they want him or her to play. Their reactions and how they face given situations are essential. And what bring most emotional feedback to a sequence are situations which include sensational feuds, aggression, promiscuous sexual behavior, excessive drinking and partying, power struggles, outlandish dares, survival of the fittest tactics, humiliation, intrigues, hate and revenge.

What Critics Say

Paris Hilton, hotel heiress and star of the reality television show "The Simple Life," holds her pet chihuahua Tinkerbell

Some critics claim that reality shows distort our views on reality. In many series, privacy is totally non-existent and audiences become voyeurs. Young audiences easily become involved in situations and dubious relationships, disagreements and brawls. They empathize with participants because they feel that “real and normal” people represent them. Reality and fantasy are blurred. The consequences of bad behavior and poor choices are never questioned. On the contrary, bad behavior is welcomed because sensationalism attracts more viewers. The danger lies in that they lose sight of their own sense of self-worth and critical thinking. In real life, actions do have consequences. Other critics have pointed out the danger of stereotyping by gender or race in these reality series. One sees the swaggering, aggressive, competitive male, the loud party girl, the manipulating bitch, the trashy white girl or the black girl with an attitude.

Most of the reality series mentioned have originated in English-speaking countries where democracy rests on the belief that all men are created equal and should be treated with respect. Schools try to teach ethics and tolerance. Many schools and communities have established organizations set up to fight bullying. In reality series where harassment and humiliation are essential ingredients, bullying is part of the basic concept. In the real world where media plays such an important role, perhaps it is time to question the value of these programs. Is it really worth giving up one’s integrity for the sake of entertainment?

Discussion

Sit with a partner and discuss which of the series mentioned above you would categorize as "The Good", "The Bad" or "The Ugly". Explain the concept and tell why.

Writing

1. Develop your own reality series. Include the following:
    - Title
    - Concept
    - Target group
    - Location
    - Structure
    - Segments/situations developed for emotional impact
    - Types of contestants/candidates
    - Outcome of series
2. Now write a pilot manuscript including all of the above.

The World of TV Series - How They Affect Us

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
The World of TV Series - How They Affect Us (77012)

TV History

The World of TV Series – How They Affect Us / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/94285

The Baird 'Televisor'. View of the Scottish electrical engineer John Logie Baird and his invention, the 'Televisor'. The televisor was the first commercially available television set. The 30 line, mechanical scanning image did not take up the entire screen, but was in fact only 6cm high and 2cm wide.
Fotograf: Science Photo Library

The history of television may be traced back to the 1920s and 30s (See Wikipedia). However, the first TV programs only became available to mass audiences in the USA and Great Britain during the late 1940's. Technological advancement since then has crossed international boundaries and brought TV into homes all over the world. TV viewing became a global activity, and the cultural impact television has had on western society has ever since been enormous. Societies have changed in step with TV series demonstrating how others think, live and behave. As radio and TV viewing became more and more popular, public concern grew over the harmful influences of inappropriate material being broadcasted. Under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Congress passed the Communications Act of 1934, creating the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to regulate radio, telegraph, and telephone communications. Today this also includes interstate telecommunications, satellite, and cable.

The Onset of Decency Standards

Decency standards were developed prohibiting indecency, obscenity, and profanity. In 1952 the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters [1] adopted a code to regulate broadcast content and set up guidelines. From the 1960's as social morals changed and "freedom of speech" as laid down by the 1st Amendment [2] became the catchword of the times, the boundaries of what could be shown on TV have moved. Viewer ratings became and still are the controlling factor. Over the years huge TV networks such as NBC, CBS, BBC, ITV, Sky, and Disney Channel have vied with each other for popularity. Marketing research analysts have been employed to map viewer trends according to demographics such as gender, age, education, income, location etc. The more viewers watching certain types of series the more money earned by the networks and products sold by sponsors.

TV Show Categories

A quick internet search of current international TV program listings demonstrates that TV series can be placed into the following categories: crime, drama, reality, including extreme reality programs, documentaries, soap operas, comedy sit-coms, game shows, dance competitions, talent shows, talk shows, news and sports. Most globally transmitted series have originated either in the USA or Great Britain. TV networks in other English speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa) have either bought the same series or copied them, thus adding local flavor.

Actress Anna Paquin signs autographs for fans after a panel for the television show "True Blood" at the Comic-Con International 2011 convention held in San Diego.

Fotograf: DENIS POROY

Although today's media preferences among teenagers include: the internet, gaming, mobile phones, as well as TV. Television producers around the world know for a fact that teenagers have more time to spend time in front of a computer or watching TV than an average adult; therefore teens are a great focal group for many programs and series. The first big question then to ask is what makes certain series so popular? The second question is what impact do the series have on our culture and on individuals? A look at three of these categories may give some answers.

Reality Series

Early TV series seemed to be interested in educating people as well as entertaining them. And many reality series still have education in mind.

Reality Series - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Crime Series

Another category of popular TV series often not shown prime time (6PM-10PM), depending on the country, are crime series.

Crime on TV - To Catch a Killer at all Costs

Teen Drama

Two categories which overlap are soap operas and drama series.

From Soap Operas to Teen Drama

Conclusion

Everyone enjoys being entertained, thrilled or scared. Reality, crime and teen drama are all forms of escape from the banalities of everyday life. We enjoy seeing life through another person's eyes. There is a strong sense of action taking place on the screen. Drama series lead to what the Greeks called catharsis, or a cleansing of emotions, when we watch. But not all TV is good TV. One should remember that TV producers love to spark controversy and all PR (Public Relations) is good PR, even bad PR. The number of websites and blogs connected to these series vouch for this. While teens from English speaking countries have a lot in common, they also influence teens around the world. They also have immense buying power, something the advertisers who sponsor the series are quite aware of. TV is undeniably a valuable tool for influencing value systems and behavior. The question is what kind of a society do we want to live in both now and in the future?

Music, Film, and Literature

"The Book was Better." Literature and Film

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
"The Book was Better" - When Literature becomes Film (90714)

We have all at some time left a cinema theatre with a feeling of disappointment after having seen a filmed version of a book we have appreciated. Making a film out of a successful novel has tempted many film makers. But the transition from novel to film is not easy, and more than often the film comes out as a reduced and meagre adaption of a great story.

These words appear in the article; make sure you know them before you read the text.

casting, narrative, to counsel, previously, to perceive, adaption, feature film, to emphasize, to justify, diversity, to justify, diversity, to transfer, transition, identifiable, to approve, to distort

From Literature to Film

Camera crew film the piece called 'The Age of Bullshit 2010' by George Shaw
Fotograf: Scott Heppell

First the author will have to give his or her permission to transfer the literary work into a motion picture. Once the financial things have been sorted out and there is an official producer, the actual film work starts. First a script writer must write a film script based on the narrative of the book; it is a challenge to turn a piece of literature into a visual presentation. Script writers are professionals who know how to structure a story for film and how a narrative will work best as a filmic expression, but they are not authors. So in most cases they will have to counsel the writer as they go along, but many authors may also want to stay out of this process and leave it in the hands of the script writer. Then there are all the other aspects of a film production, casting, shooting, and editing. They shoot the same scene over and over until the director is satisfied, and the cutting and editing also will take a lot of work to complete. It is a very time-demanding process with a lot of different elements that have to come together before the final result is ready for release. And then there is the publishing and distribution process which has to do with marketing and promoting the film for the box office.

My Mind's Eye

We are all familiar with the phrase “I think the book was better” after one has seen the film version of a novel one previously has read. Let’s reflect a bit on why this, in most cases, probably is a correct statement. First of all, the two media are perceived differently, but in some way they both end up as pictures, visually or mentally. The universe of a novel comes alive in the mind of the reader; he has to see the plot, the characters, and the setting in his mind’s eye. However, when you watch a film these pictures are ready made for you; the director and the camera-crew present their own visualization of the same features. And if these images clash with your own pre-created pictures, which they more than often do, the film version will in most cases come out as “wrong”, because our brain will react negatively to a new and different version. It is funny that the other way around it works a bit differently. If one picks up the book after having seen a filmed adaption, one will usually find that the images from the film are a supporting element for a visual understanding of the text.

Cut to the Chase

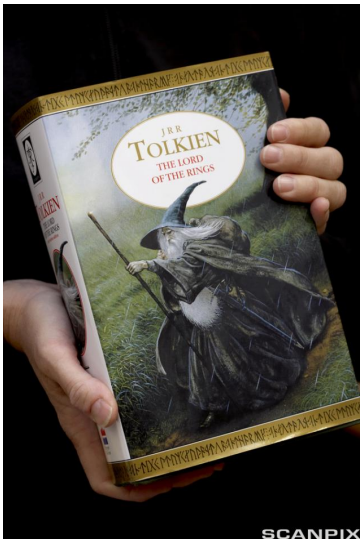
But there are other elements that make the film version come out as lacking compared to the literary text. One is the extent of the plot and the complexity of the universe the novel can offer. A book can take you to different settings and places just like that. The writer has only the limitation of his own imagination when he creates his literary universe, and many famous novels have a plot that develops over a long time span in many different settings. This will of course give the script writer and the director of a film a dilemma – what to leave out? To cover every detail in the novel is simply impossible for a regular two-hour feature film. Film makers tend to select the most dramatic scenes to capture the audiences, so they will often “cut to the chase” as they say in Hollywood. So your disappointment with the film may also be justified because so much has been left out. The film may be as good as any, but compared to the diversity of the book it simply does not add up. The structure and chronology may also be presented differently in a film version because the director and the editor will take liberties in giving the film their own personal artistic touch.

Less is More

On the other hand, there are a number of features of a film that the literary version cannot compete with. One of these is music and sound effects. They are there to complement the scenes and emphasize the tension or the development of the plot. Even the silent movies in the old days were accompanied by piano music performed live during the show. But the question is – how many effects and how much musical support does a film need to be appreciated? In some films, particularly in some Hollywood productions the music is a very important element of the total concept, and will set the mood of every scene like the icing on a cake. But if you watch e.g. a French or Italian film the music usually plays a much less dominant role, and the filmic effect is often better. Natural sounds and silence leave more attention to what goes on on the screen. Some Hollywood producers should perhaps remember that often “less is more”, particularly when it comes to “literary films”. Another feature which separates the way we perceive a film version and a literary text is how the film can manipulate by using lighting and camera angles. In that respect also we are in the hands of the director and the camera crew. Reading a book, on the other hand, is a silent and private process that takes place in the mind of the reader without supplementary effects of any kind.

Two Successful Lords

There are a number of examples of how literature has been put into film with disastrous results, but at the same time many novels have been so successfully transferred to the screen that they have become film classics. A successful transition from text to film has to preserve the epic elements of the book, and it must supplement the narrative positively. In some cases a film can even clarify certain obscure elements of a book and in that way add up to the way we understand the story. A brilliant example is Peter Jackson's extensive film version of J.R.R Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings". There were many sceptics among the fans before the release of the first of the three films, but most of them were brought to silence by the spectacular scenes and the way the narrative was displayed on the screen. William Golding's "Lord of the Flies" is another good example of a successful transition from literature to film. It has been filmed twice with rather different filmic approaches. The first, black and white version from 1963 is quite true to the original text in Golding's novel and has managed to keep the disturbing atmosphere of the novel. The newest version (1990) tells the same story, but puts it in a more modern context, which is a venture that has flopped before, but in this case it works quite well. This film makes Golding's agenda even more evident and unsettling, because it gives the theme a more universal value and makes it more identifiable with a modern world.



The Lord of the Rings Cover
Fotograf: Berit Roald

Will the Author Approve?

To sum up, film and literature are two completely different ways of telling a story. They both have their advantages compared to the other. But when a film sets out to tell the same story that you have read in a book, there are certain elements that will define the outcome of such a transition. The result may be good or bad, but it certainly will be different. For many authors it is flattering to be asked and probably tempting to approve of a film version, since it is an opportunity to reach a bigger audience. But it is a fact that many authors have become quite dissatisfied with the way their literary work has turned out on the screen as a commercial light-version they hardly recognise. Perhaps that is why J.D. Salinger who wrote "The Catcher in The Rye" (1945) never allowed his famous novel to be turned into a movie, even though it is a very visual story, and many directors have wanted to do it. He probably did not want to let a film maker distort the images his book had created in the minds of his readers.

Comprehension

1. Explain the meaning of and difference between visual and mental images.
2. Explain the phrases "less is more" and "cut to the chase".
3. Why do you think "The Lord of the Rings" was such a succesful transition from literature to film?
4. List some of the main advantages and disadvantages of the two different media - literature and film.

Compare Book and Film

Wuthering Heights and The Constant Gardener

Read the first chapter of the novels. Then watch the beginning of the film (about 15 mins).
Do they start in the same way? How does the information received compare with respect to setting, characters, etc.?

- The Constant Gardener by John Le Carre The Constant Gardener - From Chapter One,
- Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte Wuthering Heights - Chapter 1

These links are to the film trailers, but it would be more infomative to work with the actual feature films. The Constant Gardener - Trailer, Wuthering Heights 2009 - Trailer

Lord of the Flies

Do an in-depth study of *"Lord of the Flies"* where you compare the original novel by William Golding and the "updated" 1990 film version. Make a presentation where you point out differences and similarities between the two versions. Do you think Golding approved of the new film version? (He died in 1993.) You may even take this further: Watch the black and white version from 1963 as well and include that in your comparison. When you have read the book, and watched the film(s), search the net for information and inspiration for your presentation.

Turning Novels into Film Successes

Forfatter: Emil L. Mohr, NTB
Turning Novels into Film Successes (101263)

Turning Novels into Film Successes / aktualitet

http://ndla.no/en/node/101263

NICHOLAS SPARKS:

"Learning to write is like learning anything else, and can be broken down into three general parts: research, read and write."

Short biography:

Nicholas Charles Sparks was born in Omaha, Nebraska, December 31 1965.

He graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1988, majoring in business finance.

In 1994, at the age of 28, he wrote "The Notebook", which was published two years later.

Since then he has written several novels. All were domestic and international best sellers, with almost $80 million in worldwide sales, and were translated into more than 45 languages.

IN NORWEGIAN: His latest novel was published in Norwegian (entitled "Det beste av meg") in June 2012.

From Text to Screen

How do you turn a novel into a film successfully? What changes have to be made to adapt it to the screen.

Think about your favourite book. It took you days to read it, so how do you squeeze it into a two hour long film without destroying *the plot*, *the characters* and *the atmosphere*?

Discuss which of these you think would be most difficult to preserve when adapting a novel to film and then read about Nicholas Sparks below, who has been successful in doing exactly this.

Read **The Lucky (and Clever) One**

Creative Writing

1. Explain these terms in pairs and discuss which of them represents the hardest part of the writing process: *plot, characters, atmosphere, point of view*

2. Consider the following statements. Do you agree or not?

- I could never write several hundred pages about anything.
- Writing is easy once you get started, the story develops by itself.
- I can imagine a story and daydream for hours, but writing it is so much harder.
- Writing is so addictive, once I have created characters and a main plot I can hardly say goodbye to them. They come alive.
- When I write it's hard to come up with a good plot.
- I don't see myself writing

a novel.
- I was born to write great novels.

Now read Sparks writing tips below and discuss whether they change any of your conceptions about writing.

Sparks's Writing Tips

"Learning to write is like learning anything else, and can be broken down into three general parts," Sparks says on his website, **nicholassparks.com**.

Research: Sparks suggests the would-be novelist begins by having a look at titles such as "On Writing" by Stephen King, "The Elements of Style" by William Strunk and E.B. White, "Creating Fiction" edited by Julie Checkoway, and "A Dangerous Profession" by Frederick Busch. "[T]here are countless other books on the topic that will help as well, for everything from creating characters to coming up with plots."

Reading: "Second, you must read, and read a lot," Sparks recommends. His advice is to consult works in every genre, by a variety of authors, then specialise as you go along. "And read with questions in your mind. In a thriller, for instance, you might ask: how many characters were there? Too many or too few? How long was the novel? How many chapters were there? Was that too few, too many or just right?"

Writing: "The final step is to write. You can't be a writer if you don't write, it's just that simple." Sparks tells of how he wrote two complete novels before he made his first attempts at "The Notebook". "Those two novels are unpublished, but they taught me that I not only liked to write, but that I had it in me to finish a novel once I'd started it." According to himself, Sparks writes five or six days a week, "usually a minimum of 2000 words, sometimes more".

American Tune

Forfatter: Randi Hadland
American Tune (72618)

Paul Simon is an American songwriter who has gained wide recognition for his ability to compose songs that somehow both convey personal experiences at the same time as they may contain political and social themes. He is probably best known for being one part of the successful duo Simon & Garfunkel who are behind songs like “Bridge over Troubled Water”, “Mrs. Robinson” and “The Sound of Silence”.

Paul Simon

Watch a video of Paul Simon performing his song "American Tune" on a live TV-show in 1975 and work on the tasks below. Right-click to open. American Tune - Paul Simon - TV Show

- If you need the lyrics you can find them atAmerican Tune - Lyrics
- If you want to listen to the song, you can do so on Spotify,American Tune - Spotify

Understanding the Song

1. How do you interpret the title “American Tune”?
2. What kind of experience is described in the first four lines of this song?
3. What sort of dreams do you think the lyrical “I” refers to when he says “I don’t know a dream that’s not been shattered/or driven to its knees”?
4. In the third verse, the Statue of Liberty is mentioned. What type of symbol is the Statue of Liberty, what kind of values does it represent?
5. The famous ship, the Mayflower, is mentioned in the 4th verse. Do you know which group of immigrants it transported to the US and when?
6. What does the lyrical “I” dream about at the end of the song?
7. What kind of challenges can an immigrant face when settling in a new country?
8. What kind of emotions does this song express all in all?

Tasks

Quiz

American Tune - Lyrics Quiz / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/72637

Vocabulary

American Tune - Vocabulary - Fill In / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/72635

American Tune - Vocabulary - Drag and Drop / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125950

Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen - Rock Poets

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen - Rock Poets (90256)

The ultimate synthesis between rock music and lyrics can be a tricky one. The two expressions must complement each other in some kind of balance. Most rock productions tend to lean more on the music than the textual expression, while some singer / songwriters put more emphasis on the poetic choice of words in their songs. Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen belong in the last category; their literary contribution to rock and pop over half a century ranks them among the greatest modernist and contemporary poets.

Music and Poetry

Bob Dylan
Fotograf: Corbis

Critics have claimed that the voices of Dylan and Cohen are obstructive elements in their message. They say that none of the two has a talent for singing; Dylan's rough nasal pitch, his peculiar intonation and his endless whining harmonica simply stand in the way, they claim; and the same goes for Cohen's slow, often monotonous melodies and his total lack of song talent. Cohen's self-irony is striking: *"I was born like this, I had no choice, I was born with the gift of a golden voice."* ("The Tower of Song") The critics may well have a point, but with both Dylan and Cohen one must embrace the whole concept – the melodies, the lyrics, and their voices. But what is more important than their musical shortcomings is their abundant production of poetry. It is a fact that Cohen and Dylan brought poetry into the culture of an audience that otherwise never read or cared for poetry at all. Cohen said about Dylan that "he put the word back into the jukebox," signifying the intrusion of art into popular culture. Dylan's rich imagery and often surreal texts and Cohen's silent and sharp poetic observations certainly were, and still are read and listened to by an increasing audience all over the world. The songs are personal, often political but always original.

Fans and Followers

The American political scene of the sixties was one of turmoil and unrest with the assassinations of great leaders, race riots, civil rights rallies, the Vietnam War, the Cuba Crisis, student riots, anti-communism and cold war – to list some of the key factors that characterised American society at the time. Like many of the modernist artists, Cohen and Dylan were more into their art than what was going on around them. After songs like "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" and "Masters of War" Bob Dylan was embraced as a protest singer by the anti-war activists, who wanted to make him the voice of their generation. Admittedly, "Hard Rain" was spontaneously written during the Cuba Crisis, and he certainly is aware of political malpractice and injustice. But Dylan never wanted to be labelled and put into any specific category, and when he later left his acoustic concept and turned to a loud electric performance of his songs, there was uproar among his fans – accusing him of betraying their cause. But Dylan let them down and went his own unpredictable ways like he has always done.

Leonard Cohen never intended to become a singer at all. His ambition was to make a living out of his talent for writing. He published some novels in the early sixties that did not catch on very well, so he learned fingerpicking guitar and decided to put his poems into songs. This (probably much to his own surprise) went down with the bohemian beatniks of Greenwich Village, who cared more for a profound and mystic piece of poetry than a glittering stage act and loud music.

Leonard Cohen
Fotograf: Erik Thorberg

Imagery and integrity

Bob Dylan did not set out to be a poet; his ambition was to become a folk singer in the tradition of Woody Guthrie. Leonard Cohen had studied poetry and was more conscious about his poetic project. Hence their poetic approaches are quite different and must be dealt with distinctively. What unifies the two is their integrity and devotion to their work. It is hard to pick representative examples of their massive production that spans over half a century, but the following quotes could be a small sample that may tease the appetite for a more in-depth study of their songs and poetry.

Unlike most modernist poets Cohen's and Dylan's poetry has a distinct rhythm and rhyme, which of course is because the poetry was meant for singing.

Bob Dylan's Poems

One of Bob Dylan's most famous songs is "**Mr Tambourine Man**" from which these poetic lines are taken:

Yes, to dance beneath the diamond sky
With one hand waving free
Silhouetted by the sea, circled by the circus sands
With all memory and fate driven deep beneath the waves
Let me forget about today until tomorrow

"Desolation Row" is another long poem stacked with enigmatic imagery and references to Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bible; this is the first stanza:

Desolation Road (Bob Dylan)
They're selling postcards of the hanging
They're painting the passports brown
The beauty parlor is filled with sailors
The circus is in town
Here comes the blind commissioner
They've got him in a trance
One hand is tied to the tight-rope dancer
The other is in his pants
And the riot squad, they're restless
They need somewhere to go
As Lady and I look out tonight
From Desolation Row

Bono (of U2) said about the following lines: "I don't have a clue about what it means, but it is beautiful":

I Want You (Bob Dylan)
The guilty undertaker sighs
The lonesome organ grinder cries
The silver saxophones say I should refuse you
The cracked bells and washed out horns
Blow into my face with scorn
But it's not that way
I wasn't born to lose you

The lines are quite surreal; Dylan paints images and creates suggestive associations that stir the curiosity of his audience.

Leonard Cohen's Poetic Voice

Leonard Cohen's poetry is more subtle and low-voiced as he in this poem speaks of how love appears where you least expect it to. Note the poetic and evocative juxtapositions (birthmark / stain, snowman / rain etc.)

Love Calls You By Your Name (Leonard Cohen)
You thought that it could never happen
To all the people that you became,
Your body lost in legend, the beast so very tame.
But here, right here,
Between the birthmark and the stain
Between the ocean and your open vein,
Between the snowman and the rain
Once again, once again
Love calls you by your name.

The woman in your scrapbook
Whom you still praise and blame
You say they chained you to your fingernails
And you climb the halls of fame.
Oh, but here, right here
Between the peanuts and the cage
Between the darkness and the stage
Between the hour and the age
Once again, once again
Love calls you by your name

These are the two first stanzas of a beautiful song included on one of his early albums, *Songs of Love and Hate* (1971). The next example is an excerpt from a more recent poem, included on *The Future* (1992).

Anthem (Leonard Cohen)
The birds they sang
At the break of day
Start again
I heard them say
Don't dwell on what
Has passed away
Or what is yet to be

Ah, the wars they will
Be fought again
The holy dove
She will be caught again
Bought and sold
And bought again
The dove is never free

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

In his humble way Leonard Cohen has said about this poem that "it is probably the one I am most pleased with." And indeed, the last two lines sum up much of Cohen's poetry beautifully; his melancholy way of pointing out that despite, or even because of our defects we can see our blessings and the bright sides of life. Like the title of one of his novels also indicates – we are *Beautiful Losers*.

Bob Dylan was born in 1941 and Leonard Cohen in 1934. They are still active producing music and poetry, and they are both still touring.

Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen - Tasks and Activities

Poetry Meets Rock

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Poetry Meets Rock (99388)

The ultimate fusion between music and literature is when classic lyrics and poetry are adapted for music. The transition is not easy, as the poems have their own musical language, and transferred to a modern, musical form they simply turn out differently. There are, of course, many who will disapprove of such a concept and call it a sacrilege to steal serious poetry and turn it into rock lyrics. However, it is a way to introduce classic poetry to an audience that otherwise would not be interested in that kind of literature. And besides, it cannot be all that bad if young musicians find material in classic literature and, in that way, keep the old masters alive.

The Waterboys

This Irish/British rock group was formed in 1981 and is still active both on stage and in the studio. The group combines an Irish / Celtic folk tradition with contemporary plain rock. Flutes and fiddle lie as the instrumental basis of most of their music, and in many of their tunes it is easy to trace the traditional Irish reel or jig. Their line-up has changed over the years, but the two central musicians, Mike Scott, vocal and various instruments, and Steve Wickham, fiddle, have been there since the start. The group has had a line of much played hits, such as “Fisherman’s Blues” and “The Whole of the Moon”. Their music has varied from album to album, from an expression clearly rooted in Irish folk tradition (“Room to Roam”, 1990) to more direct rock and roll (“Book of Lightning”, 2006).

Mike Scott of The Waterboys

Fotograf: Erlend Aas

Yeats as Rock Lyrics

In 2011, The Waterboys recorded the album “An Appointment with Mr Yeats,” which is a tribute to the Irish poet William Butler Yeats. The album is a catalogue of some of Yeats’s finest poems adapted for rock and roll music. It is a bold project, and if there is a group that could do such a thing, it had to be The Waterboys. It is obvious that they want to pay homage to one of Ireland’s greatest poets, and they do so with respect. Furthermore, like on other albums, the group has an original sound which is clearly rooted Irish folk tradition. Among the songs are some of Yeats’s most cherished and famous poems, such as “Song of the Wandering Aengus”, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, “Mad as the Mist and Snow”, and “A Full Moon in March”. Such projects in general, and this one in particular, should have a bigger audience among young people, because it may introduce them to good literature in combination with their own musical language.

Activities

- The musicians cannot do this without seeking permission. Who do you think has the authority to give such a permission if the author is dead?
- Do you think it is all right to use classic poetry as rock lyrics? Who might disapprove of such a project - and why?
- Do you know other examples of poetry adapted for rock music?
- Follow the link and read more aboutWilliam Butler Yeats and his poetry.
- Check out YouTube for samples of The Waterboys and their "appointment with Mr Yeats". Discuss whether the music and lyrics

work together to form a good musical symbiosis.

Times They are a Changin': Music and Change

Forfatter: Drew Rodgers
Times They are a Changin': Music and Change (50120)

Times They Are a Changin / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/94306

Joan Baez and Bob Dylan

Music has been a part of the human experience for thousands of years progressing from simple instruments such as a bowed stick with a single string or primitive drums, to our modern symphony orchestras. It has been a source of celebration, inspiration and comfort in times of sorrow and oppression and encouragement to engage in political uprising, as well as a means of criticism of social injustice. In a sentence, it is a basic part of our lives and is frequently associated with life's changes, be it changes in mood or condition. Let us take a look at some of its uses.

Religious Ceremonies

Among primitive people, music was often used in religious ceremonies as part of an appeal to the gods in hopes of gaining their protection and provision of necessary conditions for a good harvest or hunt. When the gods were kind and the harvest and hunt were good, music helped celebrate the success and thanked the gods for their protection and kindness.

Source of Comfort

Music has also been a source of comfort. One example is American slaves' work songs which helped them endure the harsh conditions in the cotton fields. These songs later evolved into the blues which helped the same people through the tough times that followed slavery. The blues tells about the pain of poverty, loneliness, lost love and just feeling blue. Gospel music later evolved from the same type of music and was and is a means of expressing joy and devotion in the face of the blacks' struggle to endure their hardships and find meaning in religion. Anyone who has experienced religion in a black church knows how much joy and spirit can come from gospel music.

Political Movements

Music can also play an important part in political movements through expressing criticism of those in power, raising the hopes of the oppressed and encouraging their fight against oppression. The classic example is "We Shall Overcome," a theme song for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. During the same period, mainly white folk singers such as Joan Baez and Bob Dylan used music as a means of social criticism. Baez's and Dylan's goals were different, but both contributed to a growing awareness of social problems. Baez sang in hopes of bringing about social change and was active in political rallies. Bob Dylan's songs were more directed at making individuals aware of their situation and leaving it up to each individual to decide what to do. "The Times They are A-Changin'" is a good example where he points out that if you "don't heed the call" of the change, then you will be swept away by the tide of change.

Some folk singers who were critical of society were even willing to die rather than be silenced. The classic example is Victor Jar, the Chilean protest song writer. He refused to silence his protest against the fascist dictator, Augusto Pinochet, and finally paid for his criticism with his life. Music can also become a slogan for revolution as was the case with Scorpion's "Wind of Change," which became the theme song of the "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia, a revolution which finally brought down Communism.

Thus music is not only entertainment, much as it is today, but has given inspiration, comfort, and support to political movements which, as in the case of Civil Rights and anti-communist movements, have helped bring about change.

Tasks and Activities

Listening suggestions

- The Scorpions: "Wind of Change"The Scorpions: "Wind of Change"
- Bob Dylan's albums: "The Times They are A-Changin'" and "Bringing It All Back"
- Joan Baez's albums: "Baptism: A Journey Through Our Time" and "Blessed Are…"
- Victor Jara's albums: "Desde longuén hasta siempre" and "Vientos del Pueblo"

Writing

How important is music in your life? Write an essay in which you describe your tastes in music.

Discuss

1. Unlike politicians musicians and bands seem to gain popularity in the wake of scandals. Why is this so?
2. Do you feel that lyrics are important in a song? Do you reflect upon the lyrics yourself? Why, why not?

Project

Present your favourite band or songs in a PowerPoint/Impress presentation. Include audio and video clips if you have any available.

Your presentation should include

- background
- breakthrough
- profile/genre
- hits
- personal experiences
- recommendations

West Side Story

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
West Side Story (98494)

The musical is an extremely popular genre. For most tourists in London, a visit to a West-End theatre is a must, and the shows run for years on end. Catchy music, singing and dancing, combined with an entertaining plot is an all-time winner with most people. Although the music may be easy-listening and pompous, and the plot and acting may be both melodramatic and sentimental, most people love a good musical. Of all the familiar and famous musicals, there is one which stands out as one of the greatest – West Side Story.

Romeo and Juliet

The original score of West Side Story was written by American maestro Leonard Bernstein with lyrics (the libretto) by Stephen Sondheim. It was first staged on Broadway in 1957 and was filmed in 1961, a film that took home ten Academy Awards. Thematically, the plot is based on the timeless Romeo and Juliet story – the two lovers who cannot have each other because they belong to conflicting groups. In Shakespeare's play, the two families Capulet and Montague are enemies; in West Side Story, Tony and Maria come from different neighborhood gangs that fight each other – The Sharks and the Jets. Tony is the good guy who does not really want to be involved in The Jets' activity any longer; but in trying to stop a rumble, he accidentally kills Maria's brother, Bernardo, who is the leader of the Sharks. It is a dramatic and emotionally strong story. The score is a string of classic songs which have become standards of the musical genre: "Maria", "Tonight", "Somewhere", "America", "I Feel Pretty" to mention some of the most popular songs.

West Side Story opening night on Broadway, 2009
Fotograf: Peter Kramer

Race and identity

The Jets are white, straight American kids who want to defend their own neighborhood territory on upper Manhattan, and the Sharks are Puerto Rican immigrants. The story raises issues about group identity and inner discipline, and the rules of belonging to a group – you stick to your own and fight for your territory, and you stand up for the others. The play focuses on the gang reality of the 1950s in a choreographed way. The white Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks may from today's viewpoint seem a bit childish and innocent with their finger snapping and dancing. But beneath the somewhat glossy surface of theatrical effects and sentimental songs, there is a harsh reality. We know that the gang culture in the USA has brought fear to the streets. Many "hoodlums" see the gang as their only family and are ready to kill to hold the turf. In West Side Story the youngsters claim that growing up on the street has given them "social disease". They clash with the police who are after them, but other grown-up correctives, e.g. from parents are close to absent. In this way, the play is an example of the new youth culture, which in different ways was protest and revolt against adult values.
The race issue is another important element of the play; the Puerto Ricans are intruders who have to be fought. One of the song lyrics goes: "Life is a right in America, If you're a white in America", which seems to express an underlying thematic point. The USA of the 50s was a society that focused strongly on race and identity, both in the ghettos of the big cities in the north and in the segregated communities of the southern states.

The Musical Effects

In a musical or an operetta, one has to accept the basic rule that the actors suddenly break into a song instead of speaking their lines. In that way a musical's plot and dialogue will never be realistic, but that is not the point. The total package is what thrills the musical lovers – the drama, the poetic language, the music and songs. On top of that comes the choreography, which is an important element of the stage act in most musicals. It is hard not to be affected by this massive combination of effects. West Side Story offers a three-hour stage show packed with all these ingredients. For some it may be a bit over the top, but that is the nature of a musical; the fascination lies in the sum of all its effects, and for a captive audience a good musical is equal to top entertainment.
The list is long - Les Miserables, The Phantom of the Opera, Miss Saigon, Cats, Bobby Elliot, Mama Mia, Jesus Christ Superstar, Buddy, and We will Rock you are all examples of the classic and popular musicals that have bewitched the audience and have been played on and on in the London West End theatres.

Tasks and Activities

- Why do you think the musical as a genre appeals to so many?
- Sum up the complementing elements and effects of the musical.
- Do you know other modern versions of the Romeo and Juliet theme?
- Read more about the original Romeo and Juliet here:Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare
- What do you think is meant by the phrase "social disease"?
- There are many films about the gang culture in the USA. Have you seen any? How are the gangs and the gang identity portrayed? Check these links for more information about gang culture in the USA. Gangs - Safety in Numbers? Gang Crime in St. Paul
- Check YouTube for clips from West Side Story. Is there any particular song or scene that you particularly like? Discuss whether it is difficult for young people to relate to this musical today.

Youth Culture

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Youth Culture (89943)

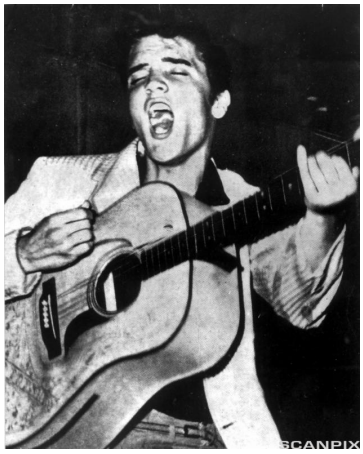
If you look up *"youth culture"* in a dictionary or a thesaurus you will probably find something like *"a cultural expression designated for young adults"* or *"a culture with certain distinctive patterns and beliefs typical of young people, such as social belonging, music and fashion."* However, some fifty years ago no dictionary would have listed any definition of youth culture - simply because it did not exist.

crooner, spirituals, segregate, ground-breaking, explicit, overtones, obscene, embrace, riot, channel (v), justice, disapproval, poverty, unemployment, censor (v), omit, unfavourable, legacy, address (v), trendsetter, promote, vibrant, manifestation, rebel, obsolete, breakthrough, ultimate, designed, disastrously, disillusioned, phoney, evolve, ban, nonetheless, neglect, upheaval, hemp, garment, androgynous, coined, dismay, unexcelled, predominant, branding

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Up until the 1940s and early 50s there was no specific culture that the young could identify with. Youth was just a transit phase between childhood and adulthood. The youngsters were seen as small adults and had no alternative to the culture enjoyed by their parents. Music was dominated by ballroom crooners such as Frank Sinatra and Matt Monroe along with smooth jazz bands like Glenn Miller's. Hollywood offered nothing on the big screen that could be associated with youth culture as such and with few exceptions literature was either for children or for grown-ups. However, times were about to change, and in the American Century it was only natural that the change took place in the USA.

From the Ballroom to Blues and Rock 'n' Roll



Elvis Presley

Fotograf: No Byline

Black music had been around for centuries, spirituals, gospel, and blues, but America at the beginning of the 20th century was a segregated society, also culturally. It all started when white performers began to pick up the rhythm and style of the black blues, and turn it into a ground-breaking new sound: Rock and Roll. And from the mid-fifties the musical scene opened for a new and young audience. Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent, Buddy Holly and Bill Haley were all white performers of this “black” music. Chuck Berry and Little Richard were two black performers who brought this new wave of music to the young. The lyrics became more explicit, and the stage performance was direct with sexual overtones; most grown-ups thought the way Elvis moved his hips when he sang was obscene. Musically it was an up-tempo, two-beat rhythm which was very catchy and easy to go along with on the dance floor. And young people embraced this new music as their own. At concerts the audience went wild, and there were riots in the streets. In general it was all a kind of protest against adult culture and values.

Protest

Then there was another wave of youth protest, channelled through the American folk music traditions by performers like Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan. This was a more political trend speaking up for justice and equality, and declaring disapproval of how the older generation was running things in the world. Some of Woody Guthrie's songs took up the darker sides of American society such as poverty, unemployment and racism. His song "This Land is Your Land" became a people's national anthem, but the official version was censored; certain lines were omitted since they mentioned aspects of America that the establishment thought were unfavourable for "the greatest nation in the world". Bob Dylan's "The Times They are a-Changing" is a message for the older generation: *"Come mothers and fathers throughout the land, and don't criticise what you can't understand"*. Dylan took up the legacy of Woody Guthrie, and though he didn't want to be labelled a protest singer, some of Bob Dylan's first songs were clearly addressing the political scene at the time. He actually wrote "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall" during the Cuba crisis in 1962, and many of his songs from the 60s, capture the spirit of the time by highlighting social issues such as racism and poverty. Bob Dylan is still active after a career of more than fifty years.

Musical Trends

America was the big trendsetter for youngsters all over the world, young people who had the same need for a cultural identity. In Britain gangs like "Mods" and "Rockers" were entering the scene, and London became the capital of rock and pop and youth fashion, thus the name "Swinging London". And the rest is history – the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and all the other British and American bands from the 60s, promoting young people's own life style and producing great music. And since then the ball has kept on rolling. From the sixties the trends have multiplied; from traditional pop and rock to punk and glam in the 70s, via various types of heavy and metal, to electronica and house in the 80s and 90s and rap and hip-hop today. The vibrant music scene over the last sixty years is where youth culture has had its most significant development and manifestation.

The Rolling Stones - original line-up
Fotograf: NTB scanpix

Hollywood

The rock 'n' roll culture of the late 1950s was soon picked up by Hollywood directors, who saw this as a new market and a gap to be filled for an audience in search of different role models than their parents. New stars such as James Dean, Marlon Brando and Marilyn Monroe represented this new rebel stand against dull and obsolete adult values. Typically, James Dean's breakthrough movie was called *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). The ultimate synthesis of youth culture was the rock and roll film *Rock around the Clock* with Bill Haley, which caused riots where it was shown and theatre managers had to call for police protection to control the teenage audiences. During the last half of the century, the market has been flooded with films designed for young people, some good, most of them mediocre and many disastrously substandard. When grown-up Hollywood film makers try to relate to young people's universe, the result is often a cliché–filled plot and sentimental over-acting as a poor cover for pure commercial interests.

Literature

During the first half of the 20th century there was an increasing market for books for children, but teenagers were not seen as a reading audience until halfway through the century. J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in The Rye* was published in 1945, with a disillusioned 17-year-old school drop-out as protagonist. He is in clear opposition to what he sees as the phoney adult world. The literature of the so-called Beat Generation a decade or so later became standard reading for the Hippie Generation of the 1960s. Leading names are Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs. The literature evolved around "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll" and many of the books were banned because they were explicit and seen as demoralizing for young people. But as usual, there is no better way to promote a book than to ban it, so the books found their audience nonetheless. J.R.R. Tolkien opened a market for fantasy literature that has exploded today; there is a continuous line from *The Lord of the Rings* to *Harry Potte*r and beyond. *The Lord of the Rings* was actually published in the 1930s and 40s, but neglected by the audience, until it was embraced by the Hippies 30 years later and got a new revival in the 1990s aided by the successful film version. This literary universe is primarily the domain of young people. Studies have concluded that eight out of ten readers of fantasy literature are between 12 and 18.

Dress and Fashion

The way we dress is a mirror of society. The sixties were a time of social and political upheaval and the conflicts are recognized in fashion styles. Designers saw a new market in the young generation, and clothes were now - for the first time - designed for young consumers. As with anything else, the young wanted to rebel against the parent generation. The Hippies, with their inspiration from the 1950s' Beat Generation, favored natural materials, such as cotton and hemp and loose garments. The popularity of an androgynous style, with blue jeans and tee shirts (often tie-dyed) reached an all-time high. Ethnical and hand-made accessories, such as Indian love beads became part of the "obligatory" outfit.

Icons like James Dean had a tremendous impact on young fashion. In his Lee 101 Riders' jeans and short leather jacket, Dean coined the American teenager, whereas the Beatles were trendsetters for hair fashion among young males. Much to the dismay of their parents, boys all over the world started to grow beards and refused to cut their hair. In the sixties Twiggy was a skinny, boyish-looking top model who earned an iconic status. Critics maintained that her thin image and unexcelled fame contributed to an uhealthy body ideal among girls.

The fashion styles of the sixties and seventies has never lost its grip on the young and is mirrored in nostalgic and retro clothing. Over the last two decades second-hand clothes have become "chic", some fashion shops even offer used vintage clothing. Many of the shops are charity-run, with the British Oxfam as a predominant example. It has become part of many young people's cultural identity to recycle and demonstrate environmental consciousness while others want to signal their preferences (mostly inspired by their taste in music) by wearing Emo, Punk, Hip-Hop (Gangster) and Gothic clothes and accessories.

Branding the Self?

To sum up, the rise of youth culture, has paved new ways for adolescents to signal who they are. They do not only send out a warning addressed to the grown-ups and the Establishment, but also to their peers, about their subcultural identity. Beliefs, values and desires are flashed through taste in music and entertainment, style in clothing, body decorations, food and the car you drive. A thriving industry has developed to help young people achieve their sense of self through branding. Now, take a look at yourself; what kind of sneakers do you wear, what kind of apps do you have on your i-Phone and what is your playlist on Spotify like?

Tasks

Youth Culture Tasks

News and Trends

Yo!

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Yo! The Culture of the Web Generation (100801)

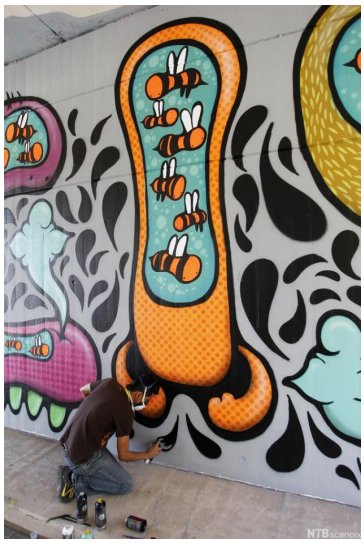
If we define youth culture as the combination of interests and activities that are distinctive for young people, it is amazing how youth all over the world can be identified by many of the same cultural features. There will of course be regional variations defined by religion and national values, but in general these youngsters will have much more in common than what separates them.

Globalization

Youth culture as such is not a new phenomenon; since the 1950s young people have had their own cultural expression in music, film and literature. However, over the last couple of decades new ways and means of communication have given the concept of a global youth culture a new and different meaning. It comes as a result of international marketing and branding, media coverage, but most of all – the web. The Internet has provided a limitless meeting place for communication, commerce, and culture. The old saying that the world has become smaller is truer than ever. Travelling today is also something else than what it was fifty years ago. Now young people go as backpackers to places and countries their parents only could dream about. Globalization and the commercial interest in young people as a group with spending potential have resulted in a global fashion industry aimed at this particular group. Young people in Hong Kong, Stockholm and Toronto probably wear the same kind of jeans, hoodies, and trainers, and they may even have a similar hairstyle.

Street Art and Music

Wherever you go through the suburbs of nearly any city in the world you will see the same street art and graffiti. This juvenile code of identification used to be gang-related, defining an area, or “the hood”, as belonging to a certain group. Today graffiti has become a more or less accepted expression of young urban culture. The bold and colourful illustrations and images brighten up otherwise grey brick walls in dull and run-down suburban areas. There you will also find the same skaters wearing the same caps and saggy trousers, and kids performing street dance or hip-hop, and listening to the latest rap hit on their iPod. To a large extent young people around the world also enjoy the same music. Web-based sources like iTunes, Spotify and YouTube provide music and entertainment for millions of youngsters worldwide, and they also share their favourite music track or video clip with each other. In addition, international TV channels like MTV and VH1 have since the early 1980s had an immense influence and have perhaps more than anything else composed the soundtrack of the younger generation in most countries around the globe.



Graffiti artist at work
Fotograf: HEINO KALIS

Communication and Identity

Social media have made it easy to make friends and connect with young people in countries all over the world. The brave new world of communication opens up by the click of a button, and the code is www, @, or #. The smartphone is always at hand - texting and phoning are cheap, and being online is vital. To most young people information shared on Facebook is more important than anything else. Online gaming is another international arena where the kids join and enter a world of their own and play and communicate with each other without parents or adults interfering. This bonding is a key element of young people's need to identify and belong to a group of some kind. To most youngsters group identity is so important that they feel more kinship with peers than with their family. Though it may not be verbalised, they are joined by a common rebel stand against grown-ups in general and parents in particular, and they share the same distrust in adult norms and values. It does not mean that they are bad or mischievous in any way; it is just a natural process of seeking identity and belonging.
The "children-of-the-web generation" has become a label identifying today's young people and their culture all over the world, for better or for worse. One might claim that the result is a standardized cliché ruining any individual or national identity. However, the perspective could also be that this young and unifying international culture could mean something for future communication and better understanding between people of different nationalities – and that can't be a bad thing.

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension and Discussion

- How would you define "Globalization"?
- What is a "backpacker"?
- Would you agree that young people are targeted by commercial interests and aggressive marketing? Can you give any axamples?
- Where would you draw the line between tagging and graffiti?
- What mechanism lies behind the fact that you will find the same kind of fashion brands on so many young people?
- Why are social media and music streaming sites full of advertising? Is this OK or can it be problematic in some way?
- Do you agree with the conclusion in the article?

Research

- Do some research on fashion gear in your class or at your school. What are the popular brands of, e.g. shoes, jeans, mobile phones, accessories etc?
- Check out some commercials aimed at young people. (Where do you find them?) Do they have a common use of effects?
- Find out why more and more experts warn young people against Facebook addiction. This article may give you some hints: Face the Addiction.

Language

British and American English differ slightly both in pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary. The following words are British English, what would they be like in American English?

Dialogue
Travelling
Favourite
Trousers
Centre
Holiday
Catalogue
Verbalised
Shop
Sweets

Dialog, traveling, favorite, pants (jeans), center, vacation, catalog, verbalized, store, candy

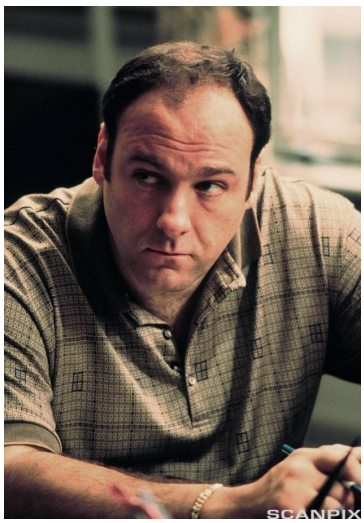
Good Bad Guys

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Good Bad Guys: The Sympathetic Gangster - a New Trend in TV Drama (105809)

It is an ever-recurring issue how we are affected by what we watch on TV. A rational and well-adjusted adult will normally be able to buffer strong images and fictional violence. But it is a fact that as the violence in some films and TV series becomes more explicit and grotesque, we become increasingly callous and unaffected by what we see. Our mental defence system seems to be at work. But in the wake of popular TV series like *The Sopranos*, *The Wire* and *Boardwalk Empire* another issue is raised – will these series affect our moral judgement?

The Moral Dilemma

These series are brilliantly produced and cast a line of fairly unknown, but good actors. Their popularity may also be accounted for by the true-to-life characters, whose complex nature and human aspects are displayed in a most credible way. Traditionally, a protagonist in such a series would be directed to give the impression that, in spite of his shortcomings and vices, he is out there fighting for a good cause. The new heroes of TV fiction also come alive because they are neither all good nor all bad, but a bit of both, just like most people. But the difference is that they are not fighting for a good cause – they are, in fact, criminals.

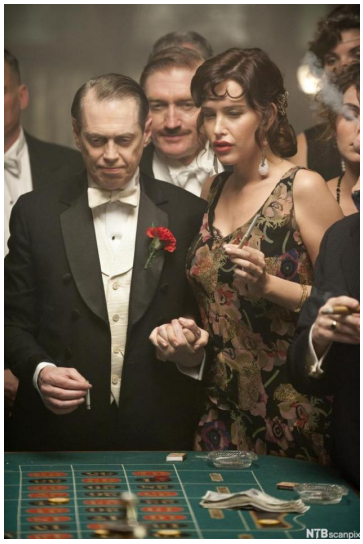


James Gandolfini as Tony Soprano
Fotograf: Anthony Nesta

Most people respond to a film narrative intellectually as well as emotionally. We try to make sense of a plot that can often be complex and intricately composed. At the same time, an emotional sensor will tell us where to place our sympathy as the plot develops. Based on information the film director chooses to give about the different characters, we gradually form a combined conception of what goes on and where to place our sympathy. But what happens when our intellectual and emotional understanding clashes with our moral judgement – because the supposedly good guy is actually a bad guy? Can we, for example, sympathise with mafia boss Nucky Thomson in *Boardwalk Empire* just because he has human traits? We can see his troubled mind and follow his personal considerations, but a protagonist who easily pulls the trigger to protect his own interests is hard to sympathise with from a moral viewpoint. And Omar Little in *The Wire* may have his positive sides and moral reflections, but he is far from what we would call a good guy. We also appreciate Tony Soprano's domestic situation and care for his family, but there is a dilemma: we cannot accept the way he runs his business, but at the same time we catch ourselves hoping that he gets away with it all, because he is such a human and charming character.

If we take a step back and consider the moral implications, it would probably kill the thrill. So, instead, we side with these protagonists, even though their conduct is despicable. But the question is whether this alternative affects our own ethical judgement; is it possible that we develop a moral flexibility and bluntness in the same way as we can buffer fictional violence?

To Take the Bad with the Good



Steve Buscemi as Nucky Thomson in Boardwalk Empire
Fotograf: AP

These heroes show efficiency, and they pursue their goals with a ruthless drive. They know how to pull the strings so they don't have to do the dirty work themselves. This exercise of power is a liberating escapism in our un-dramatic everyday lives. The reason why these bad protagonists have our sympathy may be down to the simple fact that their antagonists are even worse. And faced with this ambivalence, our sympathy will go in favour of the most human and least brutal character. But when we take the bad with the good like this, we have made a choice of moral dimensions by just turning a blind eye to the dodgy proceedings of our hero. We see how Nucky Thomson runs his Empire and may even accept his questionable logic: *"It's a tough world out there, and one must bend some rules to get by. And after all, crime is, well – a question of definition, ain't it?"*

However, there is definitely a line somewhere as to how far a bad protagonist can go and still deserve our sympathy. Within the commercial frames of these productions, there are certain crimes that would simply be untouchable. Smuggling, black-mailing, cheating, - even killing seem to be acceptable offences, whereas e.g child molesting or rape would most certainly be more than what a supposedly heroic character would get away with. This ranking of crimes is a peculiar phenomenon; our ethical standards are manipulated because we tend to accept more from a sympathetic gangster than from an all-bad character. In the Tarantino film *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) the protagonists are involved in really bad stuff like torture and mutilation; but the difference is that they don't get away with it, and none of them has our sympathy.

Criticism and Responsibility

The ethical issue in film is not new. The acclaimed and award-winning *Godfather* trilogy (Francis Ford Coppola , 1973,-74,-90) presented a family-loving protagonist who, at least in the beginning, seemed to have a moral standard of some sort, and was more or less unwillingly dragged into his criminal activity due to his responsibility as the new head of the family. Consequently, we feel sympathy with Don Corleone even though we know that he is a ruthless criminal who should be brought to justice. The issue was vaguely raised in the wake of the two first films, but most of the criticism was silenced by the enormous success of the films, both on the screen and at the box office.

The block-buster *Natural Born Killers* (Oliver Stone, 1994) was heavily criticised for the way the protagonists are portrayed as sexy and cool. They are cold-blooded mass murderers, but they are also vulnerable and emotional characters that call on our sympathy. When the film was released, it caused a debate about the ethical responsibility of a film director or a TV company. The same issue is now being raised by the new trend in TV drama; how should we relate to the sympathetic gangster without corrupting our own moral standards?

Tasks and Activities

1 Comprehension

1. How, and why, do the commercial frames of TV production limit its use of effects and criminal elements?
2. What does it mean that we respond to a film intellectually as well as emotionally? Explain the difference?
3. What does it mean that "their exercise of power is a liberating escapism"?

4. Explain “moral flexibility”.

2 Discussion

1. Can you mention some examples of the fact that violence on film has become more explicit and grotesque?
2. How do you explain such a development? Is there a limit to how far it can go?
3. Do you agree that we respond to fictional violence by gradually becoming more callous?
4. Do you think we are ethically affected by watching series like *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire*?
5. What do you think of Nucky Thomson’s logic that is quoted in the article?
6. Do you think a film producer or TV-company has a moral responsibility for what they publish?

3 Vocabulary

In the text, you will find words and expressions that cover the following definitions. Scan the text and find them.

1. To look in another direction and pretend that you don’t see
2. To become thick-skinned and insensitive
3. To sever and cut pieces off a body
4. It has to do with house and home
5. It is another word for evil or immorality
6. To hold off or keep at a distance
7. A film that has a huge success
8. To be in doubt about two diverging alternatives
9. The need to get away from a boring existence
10. To be sensitive and exposed to harm
11. To be realistic and authentic
12. To be mean and detestable

1. To turn a blind eye

2. To be callous

3. To mutilate

4. Domestic

5. Vice

6. To buffer

7. A block-buster

8. Ambivalence

9. Escapism

10. To be vulnerable

11. To be true-to-life

12. To be despicable

4 Research

- Make a survey in your class or at your school of the popularity of the series mentioned in the article. Ask also whether they have thought about the ethical issue raised in the text.
- Search YouTube for clips that demonstrate some of the dark sides of our new TV-heroes.

5 Writing

- Write a blog entry where you oppose the points made in the article.
- Write an article (200-300 words) where you present one of the series mentioned, and state what you like / dislike about it.

Talking Heads

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Talking Heads: Funny-Guys and TV Hosts (108015)

In spite of what the title may indicate, this is not about the American 1980s rock group. It is about two trends that have been dominating TV entertainment over the last couple of decades: the stand-up act and the talk-show. Like so many TV shows, these concepts originate from the USA, where the talking heads have been staple TV entertainment for nearly half a century.

Stand and Deliver

The funny man or woman who can just stand up and make people laugh simply by talking has become an immensely popular stage act. It is straight-forward and simple, and it can be done without any technical fuss or theatrical arrangements; the only prop needed is a microphone. There seems to be an endless line of more or less talented stand-up wannabes out there, who eagerly want to climb the stage to entertain. And people flock to the theatres to listen and laugh. The list of celebrated and acclaimed talking funny-guys is long, from the classic American stand-up icon Jerry Seinfeld to the popular present-day British stand-up Lee Evans, and the funny-girls Dawn French and Jo Brand.

Jerry Seinfeld on Stage

Fotograf: Jason Sheldon

We Laugh at Ourselves

So what is the trick? The comedian addresses the audience in a chatty, relaxed and seemingly improvised style, relating his observations of, and reflections on, everyday incidents that anyone can identify with. A common introduction is when the stand-up guy says to the audience: “Have you noticed how…” and goes on with a familiar scene about e.g. sex roles in a relationship, charter holiday making, a talkative taxi driver, a check-out at the supermarket or any familiar everyday situation. And the people in the audience gladly follow, impressed by how these guys find comic potential in the simplest and most ordinary things, for example like carrying out the bin bags or switching TV channels. The simple trick is to pin-point some everyday practice that people can recognise, and make them see the folly of it. And while the audience are laughing at the guy on the stage - they are, in fact, laughing at themselves; and how liberating it is to laugh at oneself once in a while. Another point is that this is not supposed to be manipulative in any way; no hidden messages or underlying agenda to win people for a certain cause. The point is simply to make us see the trivial details of our everyday lives in a comic perspective; and most people would probably think of that as a praiseworthy project.

Have a Seat on my Sofa…

The classic American talk-show dates back to the 1950s, when Joe Franklin hosted what is claimed to be the first and original talk-show series in TV history. The concept is the same sixty years on – a host invites interesting people in the studio for a chat which is broadcasted live or recorded in front of an audience. The guest will usually be a celebrity of some sort who talks about himself and his career, and reflects on whatever issue is brought up by the host. People seem to love the celebrities, and many of the half-famous are actually dying to be invited on the most popular talk-shows, because in show business being seen is what counts. Many of the hosts become celebrities themselves, and the line-up of famous American talk-show hosts is extensive, from Oprah Winfrey, to John Stewart and David Letterman. One of the most celebrated British talk-show hosts is Michael Parkinson who retired in 2007 after a career of more than thirty years, during which he had seen nearly all the world top celebrities on his sofa. Currently running (2012) in Britain are the Graham Norton Show and Alan Carr – "The Chatty Man" - both attracting millions of viewers. The sofa-concept seems to be an all-time winner for the TV companies.

British Talk Show Host Michael Parkinson

Fotograf: Rune Hellestad

… and Talk to Me

Is there more to this than making room for a celebrity to put himself on display? For this to become good TV entertainment, it all comes down to the way the host is able to create an intimate atmosphere, ask the right questions and create an interesting dialogue with the guests. British Michael Parkinson had a way with this, and his shows were extremely popular, also with people who were not typical talk-show fans; he had a humble approach, and was well aware who was the star of the show.

In tradition with American TV entertainment in general, American talk-shows are a bit louder and more tabloid than what is usual in Europe. The "Oprah" show used to bring on regular people with conflicts and problems that were to be confronted live in the studio; yelling, tears and harsh accusations were common ingredients, and the audience seemed to love this rather intimate and emotional hurly-burly. David Letterman and John Stewart have a more serious approach, as they often raise political issues and invite guests that have an influence on the lives of ordinary people. Commentators have claimed that John Stewart, in fact, contributes to setting the political agenda of the country.

Tasks and Activities

1 Comprehension / Vocabulary

1. According to the article, why is the stand-up act so popular?
2. What is needed to make a talk-show good TV entertainment?
3. What does it mean that a show is "tabloid"?
4. What do you do when you "carry out the bin bags"?
5. What is a "stand-up wannabe"?
6. What is meant by "staple entertainment"?
7. Explain the expression "manipulative".
8. "A prop" is an abbreviation used in the theatre and entertainment business. What do you think it stands for?

2 Research

- On YouTube you will find a lot of stand-up clips. Watch some of the performances, and check what everyday situations you can recognise.
- Find some scenes from different talk-shows and compare style and approach. Present your findings for the class.
- See if you can find a site from a local venue that invites you to come and stand up.

3 Grammar

Explain the ing- form in “he contributes to setting the political agenda”.

"To" is a preposition, and not the "to" you find in front of an infintive, hence we need a gerund (-ing) to follow because the rule is always a gerund after preposition (without knowing). Besides, by Norwegian standards we would in fact need a double to (to to contribute) since the Norwegian "til" and "å" are both translated with "to", in English the last "to" (the infinitive) becomes a gerund. Similar examples are "We look forward to seeing you there" and "I'm not used to living alone".

4 Pronunciation

Match the rhyming words in the two columns:

Raise	Tomb
Laughed	Same
Chat	Horse
Shoe	Pays
Claim	Right
Aware	Craft
Grow	Flat
Fume	Grew
Course	Bear
Site	Foe

Raise - Pays
Laughed - Craft
Chat - Flat
Shoe - Grew
Claim - Same
Aware - Bear
Grow - Foe
Fume - Tomb
Course - Horse
Site - Right

This is Your FuturE-Book

Forfatter: George Barker
This is Your FuturE-Book (106894)

In August 2012, bookseller Amazon announced that its electronic book sales in the UK had overtaken printed book sales. A similar tipping point had been reached in the US market eighteen months earlier. E-books are now so popular that Amazon has boldly suggested that we are witnessing 'a renaissance of reading'.

Underpinning that claim is the market research finding that British users of the Kindle (Amazon's reading tablet) are buying four times as many books as they did before going electronic. The Kindle has only been available in the UK for two years, however, so those users are necessarily newcomers to the platform. And it's well known that newcomers generally want to build themselves a little electronic library, with which to get started. Whether they will still be buying four times as many books a few years down the line is debatable.

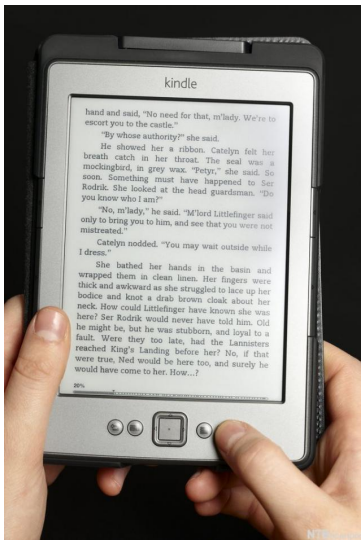
Besides, there is a difference between buying more books and reading more books. Many e-book readers report buying electronic copies of old favourites and downloading very cheap titles on a whim, just to see what they're like. In all probability, lots of those books are merely dipped into, left unread, or discarded after a just few pages.

Changing habits

Nevertheless, it's clear that the new platform's arrival is having an effect. Consumers aren't merely rejecting dog-eared paperbacks in favour of shiny tablets, and otherwise carrying on as before. They are changing their habits.

For one thing, e-book readers say that they're more willing to experiment. "Low cost and instant availability have certainly induced me to look at books I would never dream of buying in a bookstore," confirms Professor Albert Jordan, an expert in French literature. "I'll sometimes read pleasurable trash, for instance, which I can afterwards delete from my device with no pangs of conscience at having thrown out a print book."

Seductive reading



Kindle Amazon Electronic Reader

Attractive pricing is also inducing many downloaders to read more literature from previous eras. "Access to books long out of print and out of copyright is just wonderful for an inveterate reader like me," enthuses Jordan. Musician and booklover Tim Phillips takes a similar view: "I think I've read a lot more classics since I got the Kindle. I've always read a lot of Victorian novels, but now I'm reading even more, simply because they're cheap." Both Jordan and Phillips say that they sometimes download weighty tomes, which they already own in print, but enjoy being able to carry around and dip into whenever they please.

Although unlikely companions for Dickens and Balzac, it seems that erotic novelists such as EL James and Kitty von Klass are also gaining from the e-publishing boom. People who would feel uncomfortable buying an explicit paperback in a shop or reading it on the tube have no qualms about downloading erotica and hitting the 'Off' button when the in-laws drop by. A recent survey found that a third of tablet owners secretly read soft porn, and that nearly as many privately indulge other 'embarrassing' interests, such as children's literature or futuristic fantasy writing.

Non-readers abound

Habitual readers may be reading more, then, and are certainly becoming less inhibited, more exploratory and more whimsical in their habits. However, it's hard to find evidence that more people are reading. In 2012, five years into the Kindle era, the average American spent 107 hours reading books – almost exactly the same as a decade earlier.

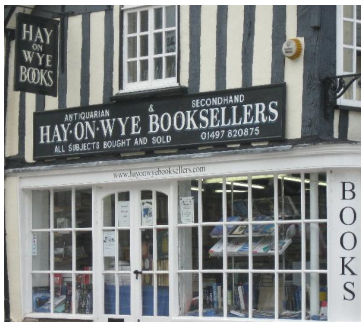
Part of the explanation for the static levels of book reading is likely to be that quite a lot of people can't read, or have difficulty reading – one in six in the UK, according to the National Literacy Trust. Many more are temperamentally disinclined to read. "I didn't read any books last year," concedes Richard Bustos, a 34-year-old project manager. "I'd rather spend my leisure time in the pool."

Bustos isn't alone. Back in 2003, a survey by The Jenkins Group found that a third of American high school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives. Numerous commentators have disputed that figure, but what isn't arguable is that reading books just doesn't appeal to a significant slice of the population.

People who don't read because they can't read, or because they don't like reading, aren't likely to modify their ways when the words move from a printed page to an electronic viewer.

Persistent patterns

Book-reading is something that educated people do more than early school-leavers, that wealthy people do more than the poor and that children and mature adults do more than young adults. So far, there's no sign of any of that changing. In fact, a case can be made for saying that migration to electronic platforms is liable to entrench those patterns and harden the divide between readers and non-readers.



Traditional Book Seller
Fotograf: George Barker

"My friend Charlie has only read one book in all the years I've known her," observes care home worker Martha Slingerland. "And I don't suppose she'll read another, if that means buying a fancy gadget, or if paper books soar in price as print runs decline."

Along with all the people who are book-averse, there are plenty who are technology-averse. Helen Goodman – a woman with enough drive and ability to have been elected to the British Parliament – recently said in a public debate, “The minute you talk about downloading … my brain goes bzzzz.”

Raised threshold

Once a person has crossed the threshold of the e-book world, he or she has access to a vast array of marvellous literature. Much of that literature – particularly the copyright-expired material – is extraordinarily cheap, or even free. As time goes by, modern bestsellers are also likely to fall in price.

However, there is a threshold. Unless you have a reading tablet or another suitable device, and unless you 'get on' with such things, you can't enjoy the riches of this new world. Electronic gadgetry is constantly getting cheaper and easier to use, but it will never be free and its acquisition and mastery will always be too much trouble for some. Book reading may become easier and cheaper for many, yet increasingly alien to others.

Tasks and Activities

1 Comprehension

1. In your own words, summarise the reasons for the popularity of e-books that are mentioned in the article.
2. Do you have an e-book reader yourself? If not, would you like to have one? Explain your answer. What types of literature have become more popular since e-books were introduced?
3. Do you see it as a good thing or a bad thing that those types of literature are becoming more popular? Explain your answer.
4. There are many people who rarely or never read books. In your own words, summarise the reasons that are mentioned in the article.
5. Immediately beneath the subheading 'Persistent patterns', the article mentions three 'pairs' of social groups who tend to differ in their reading habits. Identify the three pairs and suggest why their habits differ.
6. Why might book reading become "increasingly alien" to some people?

2 Vocabulary

The words / expressions in the left hand column all appear in the article. Match them with the correct synonym / explanation:

1. To concede	Experienced
2. Seductive	To rise
3. Acquisition	To encourage
4. Liable	Plentiful
5. To induce	Reserved
6. On a whim	To admit
7. To entrench	Buying or taking possession
8. Inveterate	To lay off
9. To discard	Do something on an impulse
10. Abound	To widen the gap
11. To soar	Tempting
12. Inhibited	Likely to

To concede - to admit

Seductive - tempting

Acquisition - buying or taking possession

Liable - likely to

To induce - to encourage

On a whim - do something on an impulse

To entrench - to widen the gap

Inveterate - experienced

2 Find out More

1. Find out what Kindle Direct Publishing is. Summarise how the scheme works in no more than a hundred words.
2. In the UK, one person in six apparently has difficulty reading. Try to find literacy figures for other countries. Briefly compare the UK with other European countries, and/or Europe with other regions.
3. The article mentions Charles Dickens. Who was he? What kind of books did he write?
4. When it isn't used as a product name, what does the word 'kindle' mean? Try to find 'real-world' examples of the word being used in different ways.
5. Find out where the town of Hay-on-Wye is and what it is famous for. How might it be affected by the growing popularity of e-books?

To discard - to lay off

Abound - plentiful

To soar - to rise

Inhibited - reserved

THE BEST ROCK ARTISTS EVER

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The best rock artist ever (60612)

It seems like mission impossible to compare and rate music and artists in an all-time big sum-up of rock music over the last 50 years. There are numbers of different ratings around – best albums, best vocalist, best album cover and so on. The result of such ratings will of course depend on the criteria and the audience who will respond to these ratings.

The trend-setting music channel VH1 has now, by the help of its expert panel of experienced musicians, put up the ultimate list of the best rock artists ever. Anyone with a more than average music interest will of course be curious to see whether this is just another rating or if this really is the conclusive list of rock music.

Guitar

The list was published on September 6, 2011 and of the 100 entries there certainly are some influential artists and bands. This list is an indicator of what really counts in rock music.

Let's take a look at some of the artists in the top ten:

1. **The Beatles** are at number one, which really should be no surprise. Their influence is indisputable even today, 40 years after their break-up. (John Lennon and Paul McCartney are also on the list as solo artists at 31 and 36.)
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrkwgTBrW78
2. At number two we find **Bob Dylan** – like it or not. A career span of nearly 50 years and still on the road and producing albums speaks for itself. His contribution to modern rock is unquestionable.
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RPkJeziNyI
3. Number three is **Michael Jackson**. Eccentric and vain – but a huge musical talent, no question about that. A trend-setting artist in stage performance, dancing, and music video.
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG6oy46qKE4
4. **Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones** and **Jimi Hendrix** follow at the next three places. Zeppelin and Hendrix had fairly short careers, whereas The Stones have been active for nearly as long as Bob Dylan. Metal rock, rhythm and blues and heavy guitar would never have been the same without these three.
5. Further down the top ten we find **Prince, Elvis Presley, James Brown and Stevie Wonder.**

So whether we agree or not, the experts have spoken: These are the best and most influential rock artists ever.

For the full list, check this link: http://www.stereogum.com/495331/vh1-100-greatest-artists-of-all-time/list/

Note: Compare with the 1998 list (see link in the introduction) – which similarities and differences can you spot?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is it difficult to create a list of the 100 best rock artists ever?
2. Do you agree that there are some criteria of art (music in this case) that are over and above personal taste? If so, discuss which criteria they are.
3. Choose one or two of the top-ten artists and give a description of his / their music style, and what you think is their primary contribution to rock music.
4. The top two (The Beatles and Bob Dylan) have not published many videos. Why do you think that is so?
5. Would such a list be the same if VH1 had asked its viewers and not the experts? Is quality equal to popularity?
6. You will have to go some way down the list to find "new" artists, most of the top entries origin from the sixties. How can this be

explained?

What would your personal top-ten list be like? Make a list, compare and discuss with a friend.

LANGUAGE

1. Explain the difference in the use of apostrophe: *"a viewers' poll or someone's favourite taste…"*
2. Discuss the use of *speaks* (and not *speak*) in the sentence: *"A career of nearly 50 years and still on the road and producing albums speaks for itself."*
3. Scan the text and find examples of the use of the prepositions *at* and *on* – and explain the examples you find.
4. Find the sentences: "*…to see whether this is just another rating*" and "*…whether we agree or not…"* and discuss the use of *whether* instead of *if.*

1. The S in viewers indicates plural, so it cannot indicate genitive at the same time. Someone is singular, so the s indicates genitive with the apostrophe in front of the S. Therefore the apostrophe has to come behind the s in viewers.
2. Usually speak connects to a subject in plural. This may look like a plural subject with many elements. But they are combined into one fact which "speaks" for itself.
3. Examples: At number one / on the list. The use of prepositions is complicated in English, since we often compare to Norwegian use (in this case "på") On usually refers to something which is physically on top of something else (on the wall, on the table, on the list) whereas AT will indicate something that is in some location (at the hospital, at number one, at school)
4. We use whether and not if (Norwegian "om") when we get some alternative (indicated by or) – "whether we agree or not" – but: "I don't know if they will agree"

3 Art and Architecture

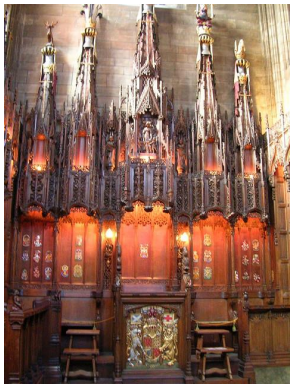
Church and Cathedral

Visit a Cathedral - St. Giles' in Edinburgh

Forfatter: Morten Serkland
Visit a Cathedral - St. Giles' in Edinburgh (92475)

Jean Robertson works as a volunteer guide in St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh. In the interview below, she gives an account of the cathedral's history and artefacts. The interview is recorded in the Thistle Chapel in the cathedral. The thistle is the national emblem of Scotland, and the Thistle Order is the highest Scottish order of chivalry.The sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, is the one that grants membership of the order.
It turns out that the cathedral has also a surprising link to Norway.

In the interview (c. 10min.) there is special focus on the history of the Thistle Chapel in St. Giles' Cathedral. After listening to the recording, you should be able to answer the questions below. The tasks are based on the ideas of students of International English at Skien videregående skole.



The Thistle Chapel
F o t o g r a f : Kindabigdeal's Photostream

The Thistle Order - Interview / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/92478

Comprehension

You will find an interactive task in the link collection.

Vocabulary

Here are some central words in the interview. Try to unscramble them.

yorla
nnotecicno
gehatrite
tdcaahelr
ylahicrv
anlotani
mbeelm
eltihst
gorna
tkignh
lacphe
rdore

royal
connection
heritage
cathedral
chivalry
national
emblem
thistle
organ
knight
chapel
order

Photo Story Presentation

Scotland and Norway have had a close relationship for centuries. One of the Norwegians who emigrated to Scotland was Christian Salvesen. On the link provided you will find an outline of the main events of his life. Based on this information, make a photo story of his life (e.g. Photo Story 3, MovieMaker). Choose pictures that match the period (fashion, architecture and people). You may also include audio clippings and/or musical effects that you think match your pictures.

Salvesen Shipping

Make a Guiding Manuscript

You are a volunteer guide in St. Giles' Cathedral and have been asked to write a brief manuscript for a group of volunteers which they can use in their guiding. As a basis you can use one of the many videoes from St. Giles' on the web. Build your manuscript on the video/-s, the interview and additional reading. St. Giles' Cathedral homepage

Oral

Use your manuscript to present St. Giles' to your classmates.

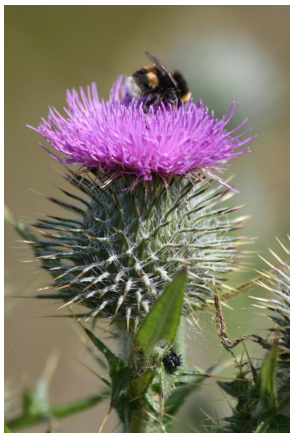
Writing

Use the picture as a source of inspiration.

1. The bee in the picture has a story to tell. The story is about the importance of the thistle for Scottish identity. Tell its story.
2. What kind of connotations come to mind when you look at the thistle and the bee? Use your associations to make a poem with the title "The Thistle and the Bee".

Research

St. Giles' is a Presbyterian cathedral which has been a symbol of Scottish identity for centuries. Make a Power Point presentation where you explain the reasons for this.



Thistle and Bee

Fotograf: Donald Macleod

Images and Paintings

I. William Hogarth (1697 – 1764), Marriage à-l..

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
I. William Hogarth (1697 – 1764), Marriage à-la-mode (12611)

Now we will take a closer look at some examples of British and American art from the eighteenth century and up to today.

William Hogarth / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/66099

A Model of Proper Living

In the eighteenth century, the English upper classes were supposed to be a model of proper living. Hogarth used satire to show how this was not necessarily the case. Some examples of modern-day satire are "*MADtv*, *The Simpsons*, John Stewart's *The Daily Show* and the BBC classic *Monty Python*. These television programs all hold up a mirror to society. They are very different from the work of Hogarth 250 years ago, but the idea is the same: to criticize society in a humorous way.

Hogarth wanted to draw attention to the morals – or lack of morals – in English society in his time. Between 1743 and 1745 he created a series of six paintings called *Marriage à-la-mode* (the French "mariage à la mode" means "fashionable marriage"). In the series we follow the story of an arranged marriage between a bankrupt viscount and the daughter of a rich merchant.

The series pokes fun at those members of the upper class who marry for money or for an aristocratic title. The aim is not only to amuse, but to show the damaging consequences of a marriage of convenience.

The Breakfast Scene

Hogarth Marriage
Kunstner: William Hogarth

Here in the second painting, *The Tête à Tête* (also called the *Breakfast Scene*, ca.1745), the viscount (husband) and countess (wife) are at home after midday, recovering from separate immoral activities the night before. The wife is slouching low in her chair, looking satisfied. She seems to have been playing cards the night before, and several clues hint that her lover has been there (for example the chair that could have been overturned by him when he rushed out). The bored and tired husband has been out with some other woman, perhaps a prostitute; her cap is hanging out of his pocket, and the spot on his neck is probably from a venereal disease. His pockets are empty of money from gambling. The steward (servant), who works for the couple, is in despair; he disapproves of what has been going on, and in his hand are the couple's unpaid bills.

Suggested Further Activity

William Hogarth , Mariage à-la-mode - tasks

II. John Constable (1776 – 1837), The Haywain,..

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
II. John Constable (1776 – 1837), The Haywain, 1821 (18675)

Art can say a lot about the time and place it was made in. It reflects how events in history have shaped people's ideas and tastes. John Constable's *The Haywain*, from 1821, is no exception.

John Constable / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/66098

From Horse to Machine

The Hay Wain
Opphavsmann: Ukjent

Before the Industrial Revolution, England had been a rural farming society. As the country became more and more industrialized, English society was transformed. To put it very simply, one could say that it was a transition from horse to machine, from country to city.

Nostalgia for Country Life

With all the changes the Industrial Revolution brought about came new ways of looking at the world. This could be seen in art and literature. The restful sight of the idyllic English countryside was idealized in paintings and poetry. The very famous 1821 oil painting *The Haywain** (by the English landscape artist John Constable) is an example of this widely felt nostalgia for England's rural past. The life of a famer living in harmony with the land and with nature was the perfect example of this calm, peaceful existence.

The Haywain is interesting also for what has been left out. Many farmers lost their livelihood during this period, and traditional family and social structures were upset. People were distressed by this. There was a lot of violence and unrest in the countryside as a result, yet there is no trace of this in *The Haywain*. The only ominous sign may be the storm clouds that seem to be gathering in the upper left-hand corner.

*a haywain is a cart or wagon

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension

1. Why were people nostalgic for English country life?
2. Why was there also unrest in the countryside at this time?
3. Give a brief description of the painting - what do you see?

Studying a Work of Art

Studying a Work of Art - The Haywain

III. Georgia O’Keeffe, Ram's Head and White Ho..

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
III. Georgia O’Keeffe, Ram's Head and White Hollyhock (19641)

Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986) was an American painter who is probably most famous for her beautiful and unmistakable close-ups of flowers and shells, as well as the landscapes and bleached desert bones of New Mexico.

Georgia O'Keeffe / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/66101

O’Keeffe wanted to find the essence of natural objects through her painting. She was a master at using colour, light and shadow to simplify the complexity of nature on the canvas, giving the viewer a unique vision of the natural world.

Ram_s Head
Opphavsmann: The Brooklyn Museum

Some people in O’Keeffe’s day found her close-ups of flowers almost erotic, looking like the female reproductive organs. O’Keeffe herself dismissed this.

Find the following paintings (listed below) online, and see if you agree. (Of course, you may also find others.)

- Red Canna (1923)
- Black Iris (1926)
- Jack-in-the-Pulpit IV (1930)

Tasks and Activities

Discussion

"Nobody sees a flower, really, it is so small. We haven't time - and to see takes time like to have a friend takes time.” *Georgia O’Keeffe*

1. Explain in your own words what O’Keeffe meant by this quote. Do you agree with her? Why or why not?
2. A lot of young people are stressed out because their days are overfilled with school, hobbies, friends, work, Internet, and other activities. Do you feel that you have enough time for everything you are supposed to do? Do you get enough time just to “stop and smell the roses”, as they say? What things would you like to have more time for?
3. Make a list of five small, but good things in life and share it with a partner.

Describing a Painting

Ram's Head and White Hollyhock, New Mexico, 1935, is one of Georgia O’Keeffe’s most recognizable paintings.

The following “chunks” or words that often go together, can be used to describe *Ram's Head and White Hollyhock*. Match them up.

Now use the words above and describe the painting. You can also comment on the use of color, contrast, composition (how it is put together – foreground, background), lines or movement, and repetition. These questions will help you:

- Color: Are the colors subdued or bright?
- Contrast: Where is there contrast between: light and dark; dead and alive; round and pointed?
- Composition: Discuss the size and placement of the skull and hollyhock compared to the sky and hills.
- Lines and movement: Where can you find lines that are:
  - Horizontal?
  - Diagonal?
  - Vertical?
- Repetition: Which colors are repeated?
- Where can you find v-shapes (there are at least two)?
- What do the hollyhock and clouds have in common?

- Are the colors subdued or bright?
  subdued, muted
- Where is there contrast between:
  light and dark – in the horns, clouds, and hills
  dead and alive - the skull versus the hollyhock; the hills versus the trees and shrubs
  round and pointy - the hollyhock and clouds are round and organic; the skull and hills are pointy and angular
- Discuss the size and placement of the skull and hollyhock compared to the sky and hills.
  The skull and hollyhock hang, as if suspended in air, in the middle of the painting; they are much bigger than the clouds and hills in the background and therefore appear to be much closer.
- Where can you find lines that are:
  Horizontal? on the underside of the clouds
  Diagonal? in the hills (and curving diagonal lines in the clouds and horns)
  Vertical? in the nose of the skull
- Which colors are repeated?
  The color of the horns is repeated in the hills; the hollyhock, skull, and clouds all contain a lot of white
- Where can you find v-shapes (there are at least two)?
  In the horns and the hills (these are inverted (upside-down)
- What do the hollyhock and clouds have in common?
  They have the same shape and color; the outline of the hollyhock is repeated in the shape of the clouds, especially at the top, between the horns.

Understanding Symbols

1. Find O'Keeffe's famous *Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue* (1931) online. O'Keeffe painted it to represent America. It has become a classic symbol of the American West. Which elements in the painting make it "American"?

   The red, white and blue are the colors of the American flag; the skull represents the American West.

2. There are many opinions about what the white cow's skull symbolizes. Certainly, it represents the American West. But it can also stand for other concepts. Some feel it represents death, while others see it as representing Christ on the Cross; yet others feel it depicts purity, while some read into it the harshness of nature or the spirit of America. Explain at least one of these interpretations, that is: in what way can someone say that the skull symbolizes death, or purity, etc.?
   - death – because:
   - purity – because:
   - the harshness of nature – because:
   - the spirit of America – because:

- death – because the skull is from a dead animal. Human skulls are a widely recognized symbol of death.
- purity – because the desert has weathered and bleached away the flesh, leaving only a clean and pure, white skull.
- the harshness of nature – because the skull used to belong to a living animal, which is now dead. Furthermore, the elements have stripped away everything except the hard, dry, white bone.
- the spirit of America – because the fact that it has survived the elements shows the

idea of America's enduring spirit, a strength of character, never giving up

IV. Jasper Johns, American Flag, 1954

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
IV. Jasper Johns, American Flag, 1954 (19643)

Jasper Johns is one of the forerunners of the Pop Art movement, finding inspiration in familiar, everyday objects.

Jasper Johns / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/66097

Jasper Johns is an American artist, born in 1930. When Johns started painting, most art was abstract (non-realistic pictures of lines and shapes that did not represent anything you could see in the surrounding world). Johns broke with the abstract tradition.

His work was representational; he painted flags and maps, as well as stencilled numbers and letters. He was especially fascinated by everyday objects, things he called “seen but not looked at”. Johns wanted people to see these objects in a fresh way and not just take them for granted.

American Flag ,1954
Opphavsmann: artchive.com, Jasper Johns

Looking at Art

Study Johns’s *American Flag* from 1954 and his *Map* from 1961.

1. How is Johns’s Flag similar to, and different from, an actual American flag?
2. And in what ways is Johns’s Map similar to, and different from, an actual map of America? Key: Jasper Johns map
3. Take a quick look at the schoolbooks and maps in your classroom and try to see them as Johns would. Then, use a whole day and try to discover some things that are “seen but not looked at”, things around us which we see but do not notice or think twice about. Make a list of at least five things. Next class, sit with your partner and explain why your objects are “seen but not looked at”.
4. Compare and contrast Georgia O’Keeffe’s *Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue* to Jasper Johns’s *American Flag* from 1954.What is similar? What is different?

Map, 1961

V. Roy Lichtenstein, Whaam!

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
V. Roy Lichtenstein, Whaam! (19644)

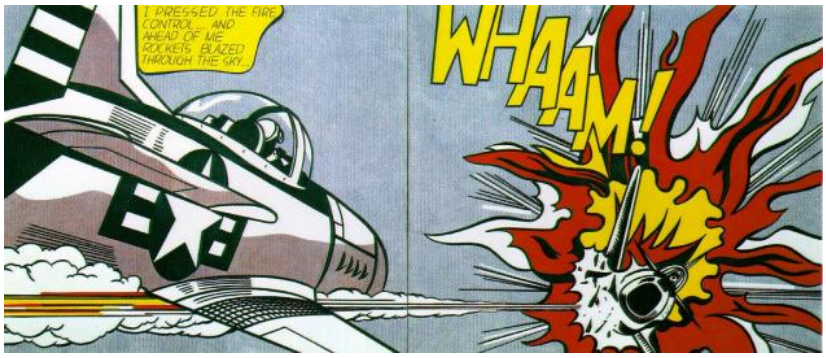
American pop artist Roy Lichtenstein is most famous for his paintings of dramatic comic book frames.

Roy Lichenstein / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/66096

In his work he kept the comic strip's thick, black lines and strong colors. An important feature of Lichtenstein's paintings is the shading technique, which makes use of small colored dots (called benday dots).

Short for *popular art*, Pop Art is a largely British and American art movement that started in the 1950s. It represented a new kind of art, which could appeal to everyone, and not just to a snobbish elite. Many claim that Jasper Johns laid the groundwork for the American Pop Art movement, which was carried on by such artists as Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. These artists took mass-produced products and immortalized them in their work, giving the viewer a fresh perspective on the disposable objects we surround ourselves with.

Whaam!



Whaam! Roy Lichtenstein
Opphavsmann: Roy Lichtenstein

Lichtenstein's *Whaam!* from 1963 speaks for itself. The image is taken from a 1962 frame from D.C. Comics' *All American Men of War*, a popular series which ran through the 1940s to the 1960s. The text of the pilot: "I pressed the fire control.. and ahead of me rockets blazed through the sky…" brings us straight into the action.

Discussion/Speaking

1. Take a good look at *Whaam!* and describe what has happened here.
2. Imagine and act out the conversation between the pilot and ground control. Make sure to convey a sense of urgency in your voice.
3. Discuss the title, *Whaam!* An "a" has been added to the word "wham" for emphasis, and the exclamation mark adds even more punch. What else could this painting be called? Use your imagination and come up with a few alternate titles. Are any of them as effective as *Whaam!*?

Hopeless

The word "melodrama" is used to describe a situation which is highly emotional. Examples of melodrama can be found in romantic, sensational story lines like the ones found in television soap operas, courtroom dramas, and made-for-TV movies. Some examples of modern TV melodrama are *The O.C.*, *Gossip Girl*, *Grey's Anatomy* and the Norwegian soap *Hotel Cæsar*. The melodramatic scene presented in Lichtenstein's *Hopeless* (1963) was common in romance comic books.

Hopeless, 1963 Roy Lichtenstein
Opphavsmann: Roy Lichtenstein

The Psychology of Pictures

Discuss

What tells us that the young woman's misery has been caused by troubles in her love life, and not something else? How can we tell that there is a man, probably a boyfriend, involved here?

Write a Story or Make a Comic Strip

Without the rest of the comic strip, it is hard to know what has been going on, but the viewer still can relate to the young woman's despair. Use your imagination and make up a story explaining the situation. You can write a story, or present it in comic-strip form, making drawings (either stick figures or more elaborate sketches, depending on your drawing skills!) and adding speech and/ or though bubbles.

VI. British Pop Art - Richard Hamilton

Forfatter: Celia Suzanna Sandor
VI. British Pop Art - Richard Hamilton (19645)

British artist Richard Hamilton (born in 1922) was interested in the influence of advertising on people's way of thinking, and liked to blend popular images and fine art.

VI British Pop Art / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/48571

In this collage (right) Hamilton mixed elements from the mass media (television, theatre, newspapers), advertising (for Tootsie Pops, Armour hams, and Ford cars, among other things) and pop culture (like a famous bodybuilder, a former pin-up, and a "Young Romance" comic book).

(*Adapted from Gardner's Art Through the Ages, Eleventh Edition, Harcourt College Publishers, p.1091)

Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes so Different, So Appealing?
Opphavsmann: artinspired.pbworks.com, Richard Hamilton

Tasks and Activities

Studying a Work of Art

Take a close look at the collage and make a list of things you see which might make a 1956 home "so appealing", but which are uninteresting or outdated today. What are their modern counterparts, if they have any? Make a list using bullet points.

Make a Collage for Today

1. Either electronically (using the Internet) or using some glossy magazines you can cut out of, create a collage for the 2000s with Richard Hamilton's *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes so Different, So Appealing?*as your inspiration. Make sure to include central elements like references to mass media (television, Internet, etc.), advertising and pop culture, or other objects representing common values in today's society.
2. Show your collage to someone - your classmates or teacher, etc., and explain it to them. You might also want to get their feedback or start a discussion about values in today's society.

Discussion

1. If Hamilton made his collage today, do you think he would use paper cut-outs, or do you think he would use computer graphics? Why?
2. With a partner, write a dialogue between two people looking at this collage in a museum and act it out.
3. *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes so Different, So Appealing?*is an unusual title for a work of art. It was supposedly taken from an article in a 1950's women's magazine. What is different or unusual about the title, and why does it work so well, in your opinion?
4. Can you come up with an alternative title?

Writing

Choose one of the following:

1. Write a script for a TV advertisement with "Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?" as its opening line. Remember to think of a suitable product that you are trying to sell. Keep in mind that you want to send the message that it is your product which makes a home of today appealing and different.
2. Imagining that you are 50 years in the future, write a text (article, essay, poem, short story or some other genre of your choice) titled "What it is that makes today's homes so appealing".

Art on Display

Dedication to Art - Peggy Guggenheim in Venice

Forfatter: Morten Serkland
Dedication to Art - Peggy Guggenheim in Venice (112181)

What makes a person dedicate her life to art? Listen to an interview recorded in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, a city famous for its architecture and unique, historical atmosphere. Visit the museum's website and their collections and exhibitions online. How does the art exhibited there reflect the 20th century?

Peggy Guggenheim (1898 - 1979) belonged to the influential Guggenheim family in the USA. Her uncle, Solomon, founded the famous Guggenheim Art Gallery in N.Y. City. Peggy herself developed a keen interest in contemporary art. She settled in Venice in 1949, where she had her growing collection on display. As an art collector she played an important role for upcoming artists.

Guggenheim Water Front

Below you will find an outline of the information provided in the recording. Listen closely and insert the missing words/expressions:

Peggy Guggenheim's goal was to protect the.....of her time, and she wanted to help new..... One of these artists was……. She took a special interest in .....art and.....art. In New York she founded an art……called Art of the…… Peggy moved to……. and displayed her ……there. Venice is a fascinating city, and the best way to get around is to……. The city is unique in the way it is built on……., and the ……. is very characteristic.

If you think it is difficult to come up with the correct words, look

architecture, art, Century, abstract, gallery, Jackson Pollock, surrealistic, water, walk, Venice, collection, artists

Study these definitions before listening to the interview:

Guggenheim Entrance

Guggenheim Entrance Gate

Carneval

Canal Grande

Gondola

Surrealism, according to the Free Dictionary (Free dictionary - surrealism), is a controversial movement in art and literature between the two World Wars, in which the artist attempted to portray, express, or interpret the workings of the subconscious mind.

Subconscious/unconscious, according to the Free Dictionary (Free dictionary - subconscious), means not wholly conscious; partially or imperfectly conscious: subconscious perceptions. The part of the mind below the level of conscious perception. Often used with the definite article.

Abstract art, according to http://dictionary.reference.com , is a trend in painting and sculpture in the twentieth century. Abstract art seeks to break away from traditional representation of physical objects. It explores the relationships of forms and colors, whereas more traditional art, represents the world in recognizable images.

Expressionism, according to http://www.macmillandictionary.com is a style in art, literature and music in which the artist emphsizes emotions and reactions to things rather than objects as they really appear.

The Guggenheim Museum / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/113230

Writing

> «I dedicated myself to my collection. I made it my life's work. I am not an art collector. I am a museum." (Peggy Guggenheim)

1. Discuss what makes a person dedicate herself to art and how this formed Peggy Guggenheim's identity? Base your discussion on the quote above and your research about her life and career.
2. Pretend that you are one of the gondoliers in the picture and you are going to tell your passengers about the architecture along the Grand Canal. Choose your intended route and show through pictures and texts what you are going to tell them.
3. Traditionally Venice is known for its abundant Renaissance art and architecture. Peggy Guggenheim represents a totally different expression of art. Discuss the main difference between these two art movements. Use pictures and text to demonstrate your views.
4. Jackson Pollack was one of the American artists Peggy Guggenheim supported. Find out what influence he had on contemporary art, and compare and contrast three of his works. Use pictures and text.

Discuss

Watch this video presentation from Guggenheim Museum, Venice:

Dedication to Art - Peggy Guggenheim in Venice / fagstoff

http://ndla.no/en/node/112181

What do you think of the way in which the museum presents itself? To what extent do you think the museum and its art collection capture essential ideas of the 20th century.

Make a Presentation

1. Choose one piece of art either from the museum's websiteThe Guggenheim Museum in Venice or one of the art objects displayed here. What do you think it expresses?

What might be the artist's idea? Does it speak to you, or not? Explain your views and state your attitude to modern art in general.

2. Find an art object or piece of art that you think might be a good illustration of a 20th century fictional text or poem that you have read. Why do they complement each other?

4 The Big Screen

Literature and Film

Frankenstein Revisited

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Frankenstein Revisited (89686)

Working with the Film

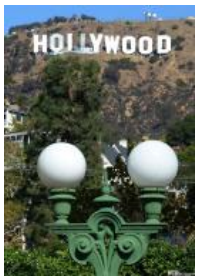
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein has been filmed many times. (Check out YouTube for trailers and clips of different versions, and compare.) Because the story is so dramatic and visual, it holds potential for a spectacular film version. However, some of the Frankenstein films focus more on the horror effects than the universal elements that the story contains. A movie that has taken care of these elements in a successful way is the Kenneth Branagh version from 1994. This version is, by critics and literary scholars, seen as being the version which is most true to Mary Shelley's original story. It casts a line of celebrated stars: Kenneth Branagh (who also directed the film), Robert De Niro, John Cleese, Helena Bonham Carter, Tom Hulce to mention some of the most famous of them.
Note: To give an adequate analysis of a film is difficult after the first viewing; there is simply too much to take in. So, to answer the tasks below, it is recommended to watch the film at least twice. You will probably also need to select particular scenes to watch again to get a full understanding of how the film is put together. (E.g. lighting, editing, camera angles, symbols etc.)

1. How does the film carry elements of the ideals of the Romantic age?
2. Mention examples of how the film is true to the Gothic tradition in Romantic literature.
3. When Frankenstein creates his monster from organs and body parts taken from corpses ("just material") – whose brain does he take? Is there a symbolic significance here?
4. In which scene(s) do we feel sympathy with the monster, and why?
5. Discuss the setting and the use of symbols in the scene when Victor and Elizabeth make up after the break and decide to get married the next day.
6. What is the symbolic meaning of the way the monster kills Elizabeth?
7. Discuss the use of lighting in the film and its symbolic effects. (Why are there so many dark scenes?)
8. Follow the camera angles in the film. Do they add anything to the way we see the story? Check, for example, the scene when they carry home the body of the child that was killed by the monster.
9. Do you note the use of contrasts in the film? (Not only visual contrasts, but also contrasts in the way the film is edited.) What is the purpose and intended effect of juxtaposing these scenes in that particular order?
10. Explain how the narrative of the film is kind of a "story within a story". What is the purpose and effect of such a technique?
11. Discuss and give examples of how and why there is a focus on the basic elements of nature in the film (e.g. fire, ice, water, temperature, weather). For example, where did Frankenstein and the monster meet to talk and Frankenstein make a promise?
12. It is a colourful film production, but the colour red seems to reappear over and over. Give examples of where, and discuss its symbolic meaning.
13. Go to the sea captain's speech at the end (when Frankenstein has died) and explain and discuss what he really says. (These lines are taken directly from the original text in the book from 1818.)
14. How did Frankenstein die? (What is the symbolic meaning of the fact that he was not killed by the monster?) In what way is this related to the theme of the story?
15. Discuss the last scene of the film. How did Frankenstein and his monster reach some kind of reconciliation? How is this related to the theme?
16. How does it show that the film is a Hollywood production? (Is it possible to point out some features in general that will separate a Hollywood production from an independent or a European production?)

Working with Film

One to Watch

Forfatter: Åse Elin Langeland, Eli M. Huseby
Recommended Films (93230)



This list of films may be used to teach essential topics in Social Studies English. For each film there is a brief description of contents and theme as well as links to relevant websites.

From an educational point of view the use of films in class may be a good way of combining entertainment with learning. Films may broaden students' perspectives and inspire to further reflection, learning and research. The list of films you see below may be used in teaching *English Social Studies*. The suggestions are based on recommendations of teachers and students over many years. However, the list is in no way complete; we will update and revise it with new films and documentaries as they are released. To make this site a useful tool, we would appreciate your tips and recommendations.

Old camera

Opphavsmann: Wikimedia Commons

The list of films below may be used to teach essential topics in Social Studies English. For each film there is a brief description of contents and theme as well as links to relevant websites. We would also like to remind you that Film Education offers an alphabetical list of films and suggests suitable ways of working with them. There are other websites that offer resources suggesting suitable ways of working with films, but you often need to subscribe and/or pay for their service. However, your school or library may agree to take out a subscription for the Norwegian online site Filmrommet. This site offers a variety of films and documentaries related to many of the topics in our course. (Most of the subtitles are in Norwegian.) NDLA now has permission from Filmrommet regarding the use of some films. We have indicated in the review of each individual film if you are able to view the entire film on this licence. It might also be a good idea to watch some of the film trailers. You may search for trailers, films and actors on such sites as MovieClips and Video Detective.

Films Released in 2009 - 2013

A Thousand Times Good Night (2013) Rebecca is one of the world's top war photographers. While documenting a group of female suicide bombers in Afghanistan she is severely injured. While recuperating at her home in Ireland, we understand that her job as a top war photographer comes at a cost. Her husband admits that he is unable to live with the uncertainty of ever seeing her again each time she leaves on a mission and thus forcing her to choose between covering war zones, or prioritizing her family. Watch the film trailer.

Jobs (2013) is a biographical film based on the life of Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple Inc. It covers the period from when he was a student in 1974 until 2001. The film received mixed reviews. Joe Neumaier in the New York daily News said that it takes "...a sharp look at the late Steve Jobs and the technological and cultural changes he brought about..." Watch the film, Jobs. You will find more information about Steve Jobs here: The Legacy of Steve Jobs, Stay Hungry – Stay Foolish.

12 Years a Slave (2013) is a historical drama about Solomon Northup a free- born African American who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Louisiana. He worked on the plantations there for twelve years before his friends secured his release. The film is an adaption of the memoir written by Northup in 1853. Work with the film at 12 Years a Slave .

Lincoln (2012) Steven Spielberg's film about the 16th American President, Abraham Lincoln, was released in January 2013. It deals with Lincoln's fight to end slavery. What is it about Lincoln that makes people line up to see the film? Watch the film trailer here. Here you can find out more about Lincoln and work with tasks: Abraham Lincoln - An Icon? .

The Iron Lady (2011) portrays Margaret Thatcher (Meryl Streep), Britain's first female Prime Minister. She was controversial, both as Leader of the Conservative Party and as Prime Minister, an office that she held for 11 years. Follow this link to watch the *The Iron Lady* trailer. Work with tasks here

The Help (2011) is the filmatization of Katryn Stockett's novel by the same name. She has explained that the idea behind the novel was born in the aftermath of 9/11. Living in New York, she was unable to reach her family in the South, because of the impaired phone and mail services. She was really homesick and started thinking about the maid she had had when she was growing up. In the novel, she gives voice to the African American domestic maids in her hometown of Jackson, Mississippi, in the early 1960s, where the policy of segregation was merciless. Watch the trailer. You will find educational resources at *The Help* - Educational Resources.

Inside Job (2010) is an award-winning documentary that examines what caused the current financial crisis. Charles Ferguson, the director of the film, blames "the systemic corruption of the United States by the financial services industry and the corruption of that systemic corruption." *Inside Job* is divided into five parts, and it starts out with Iceland and how the country's banks were privatized. The film is narrated by Matt Damon. This website offers trailers, glossary and valuable educational resources regarding the economic recession. *Inside Job* resources.

Fire In Babylon (2010) is a documentary about the West Indian cricket team that was unbeaten in a series of test matches in the 1970s and 80s. The legendary team even knocked out their former masters - the British. The supremacy this team attained was symbolic in many respects, and had an impact on black politics and culture. Watch a trailer and read a review at *Fire In Babylon*.

The Social Network (2010) is the story behind the foundation of Facebook. It all started at Harvard University back in 2003 when the two students and friends Martin Zuckerberg (Jessie Eisenberg) and Eduardo Severin (Andrew Garfield) came up with the idea that sparked Facebook. Film Education on *The Social Network*

The King's Speech (2010) When King George V of England died in 1936, his son Albert, Duke of York, was quite unprepared mentally and physically to take over the throne after his father. He was second in line, and no one had expected his elder brother to abdicate. As a king, you have to talk to your people in public, something Albert dreaded more than anything due to an ufortunate stammer. Albert (as a King George VI) is played by Colin Firth. If you want to work with the film, follow this link, *The King's Speech* or work with assignments here. If you would like to watch the entire film you may watch it here.

Sarah's Key (2010) is a dramatic story revolving around the Vel' d' Hiv Roundup of Jews in German occupied Paris in 1942. It is based on the novel by Tatiana de Rosnay**.** The film alternates between two stories, one about Sarah Starzynski, a 10 year-old French Jew, and her experiences in 1942 and the second about a journalist researching the Vel' d' Hiv Roundup in 2009. You can search for a trailer on the web, or watch the whole film, Sarah's Key. A summary and discussion questions are available here.

Oranges and Sunshine (2010) Based on a shocking true story, *Oranges and Sunshine* stars Emily Watson as Margaret Humphreys, a social worker from Nottingham who uncovers a dark National secret. For decades, children in care were being forcibly deported from the UK to
Australia and Canada. Margaret Humphreys brought worldwide attention to
the case and reunited estranged families. Watch the trailer. A study guide is available at Film Education.

Howl (2010) In the film you may listen to the poem recited, learn what inspired Allen Ginsberg to compose it and through the legal process about censorship see why the poem agitated and provoked the Establishment of the 1950's. Even today the poem raises questions; are the issues discussed still controversial, what is blasphemy, and what is not, and should there be any limitations to the freedom of speech? Watch a clip from the film here and work with the poem here.

My Name Is Khan (2010) Rizwan Khan, a Muslim immigrant from India moves to San Francisco. Khan suffers from Asperger's disease. Much to the dismay of his parents, he marries Mandira. Then September 11 arrives, and attitudes towards Muslims undergo a dramatic change - for the worse. This creates a strain on his marriage as well, and in order to win his wife back, he wants to convince the president of the USA in person that the surname Khan is not synonymous with the word *terrorist.* Watch a trailer here. You may find resources here.

Armadillo (2010) was awarded a prestigious critics' prize at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.The jury described the Danish film as: "a journey into the soldiers' minds and a unique film on the mythological story of man and war staged in its contemporary version in Afghanistan". We follow a troop of Danish soldiers from a few days before departure to their base (Armadillo) in Helmand Province in Afghanistan. In the film we meet the soldiers in their leisure time and on patrol, we see them handing out candies to the children and dealing with the civilians, and in fierce encounters with the Taliban. A lot of issues are raised in the film, but the statement by one of the soldiers who said that they:...." liquidated wounded people and piled up the dead to take pictures of ourselves as heroes" raised public anger. Many saw a parallel to soldier attitudes demonstrated in Abu Graib prison and demanded that the Danish troops should be withdrawn from Afghanistan altogether. Watch a trailer here.

Avatar (2009) James Cameron's science fiction epic about the Na'vi people on the planet Pandora was filmatized with the latest 3D technology available in 2009. The aboriginals on Pandora are exposed to human greed, as they have got something that people on Planet Earth really crave - a precious metal. The themes in this film are linked to curricular issues in our International English course; intercultural communication, the conditions of indigenous peoples, environmentalism and sustainability to mention a few. Follow the link to find educational resources Avatar - Unique Box Office Success.

Desert Flower (2009) is a film based on the Somali top model and human rights activist Waris Dierie's autobiography. The film debates culture clashes and female circumcision. Watch the trailer. Diere has dedicated the last twelve years to fighting against female genital mutilation as a UN Ambassador and as a founder of the The Desert Flower Organization.

Invictus (2009) Read *The Guardian*'s interview with Morgan Freeman who portrays Nelson Mandela in the film about the legendary South African leader. On the same link you can watch a trailer from the film. Morgan Freeman about *Invictus*

Films Released 2000 - 2008

The Hurt Locker (2008) builds on the accounts of the war reporter, photographer and director Mark Boal. In 2004, he joined up with an American bomb sqad that served in the Iraq War. His experiences are mirrored in the screenplay he wrote. On the release of the film, that he co-directed with Katryn Bigelow, he explained that they wanted it to be the first film from the Iraq War from the point of view of the soldiers. They wanted to expose things about a soldier's life "that you can't see on CNN." The film focuses on what makes certain personality types more ready to volunteer for certain conflicts than others, and how the bomb squad soldiers are motivated to attack, when everyone else wants to flee. It was awarded 6 Oscars. Watch the trailer**.** A study guide is available here.

Slumdog Millionaire (2008) is the filmatization of the Indian diplomat and author Wikam Swarup's novel, Q and A. In the film version we meet the young waiter Jamal Malik from the Mumbai slum. No question about it; Jamal, poorly educated and a former street child, is the definite underdog as a contestant in the fictionial quiz game Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Against all odds, he answers all the questions correctly. When one question remains, though, he is interrogated by the police and accused of cheating. How can a "slumdog" know all the right answers? The film revolves around the explanation Jamal gives his lawyer. By revealing facts about his life in the slum, WE get to know all the answers, and above all, the message comes through: You should fight prejudice! Watch a trailer *Slumdog Millionaire* - Trailer or watch the entire film here. You will find resources here.

Into the Wild (2007) is a film drama based on John Krakauer's biographical book about the adventurer Christopher McCandless who abandoned everything and everyone and set off on a solitary trip to the Alaskan wilderness. By making this journey he highlighted essential existential questions: How does living in a civilized world restrict us? Is it possible to live without these restrictions? Why is the wilderness considered attractive? Do we need other people to give our lives meaning? And do we really need modern technology? Watch trailer. You will find educational material on this blog: *Into the Wild* educational resources.

Atonement (2007) is the fimatisation of Ian McEwan's novel. It is a gripping tale from its beginning in pre-war England to the nightmare of one of the protagonists, Robbie Turner, on the beaches of Dunkirk in 1940. Cecilia Tallis is the love of his life. For Robbie, as the son of a cleaning woman, Cecilia, the daughter of a wealthy estate owner, is considered far out of reach. In pre-war England class restrictions regulated most personal relationships. Their kindling romance is also forcefully interrupted by Cecilia's sister, Briony. She wrongly accuses him of raping a young girl. Briony has been an aspiring writer from an early age, and through her biased narration we perceive her efforts to come to terms with her feelings of guilt. Watch trailer. If you want to work further with the novel/film, take a look at *Atonement* Study Guide.

Outsourced (2006). Todd Anderson (Josh Hamilton) suddenly finds out that his job is outsourced to a call center in India. The film gives a humorous account of what happens when Todd goes to India to train his replacements. *Outsourced* - Working with the Film

This is England (2006) takes us back to 1983 and is based on the director Shane Meadow's own childhood experiences. He lost his father in the Falklands War and is looking for male role models. He finds them in a skinhead gang that harasses the ethnic minorities in the local community. *This is England* - Trailer. Look up educational material at Film Education on *This Is England*.

Babel (2006) Babel is a multi-plot film by the Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu set in Morocco, Japan, the USA and Mexico. Above all, this is a narration of how difficult it is to communicate across borders, no matter if they are physical, geographical, cultural or psychological. A main plot revolves around Mexican Amelia (played by Adriana Barazza), who works illegally as a maid and nanny for the Jones family (starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett) in the USA. Amelia is in charge of their two children, when the couple sets off on a vacation trip to Morocco to save their faltering marriage. The Morocco vacation turns into a nightmare, and the couple are unable to return to the USA. This puts Amelia in a critical situation; she has to bring the children with her to her son's wedding in Mexico. The encounter with the US border police when crossing La Linea becomes devastating. Babel - Film Analysis, Babel - Trailer, Babel - Assignment.

House of Sand and Fog (2003). The screenplay builds upon Andre Dubus III's novel from 1999. Ben Kingsley stars in the role of the Iranian ex-colonel, Bahrani. The film portrays a tragic clash of cultures which revolves around the possession of a house located on a desolate beach in California. It gives a heart-rendering and disturbing picture of the vulnerability of a young "white-trash" American girl and a proud, hard-working Iranian immigrant and how much they have in common without realizing it. Watch the trailer.

Cold Mountain (2003), a mountain located in North Carolina that rises 6,030 feet above sea level, has given its name to Charles Frazier's novel and the film adaption. Through the eyes of the Confederate soldier, J.P. Inman (Jude Law), we see how the horrors of the American Civil War affect three different characters. In the film's opening scenes we are thrown right into a battle in Petersburg, Virginia, in 1864, when Inman is seriously injured. Abhorrence of the cruelty of the war and a longing for his sweetheart, Ada (Nicole Kidman), makes him decide to desert and start a long and perilous journey back to Cold Mountain. Watch the trailer. If you watch the entire movie, it is a good idea to compare how this novel excerpt is incorporated: *Cold Mountain* excerpt.

The Queen (2006) Helen Mirren stars in the role as Elizabeth II. The film takes us back to 1997. Tony Blair has just taken office as Britain's new Prime Minister, when Lady Diana tragically dies. England goes crazy with mourning. How do the new Prime Minister and the Queen deal with this situation? Watch the trailer. Further study at Film Education on *The Queen.*

Sicko is a Michael Moore documentary (2007) where he scrutinizes the US health care and insurance system along with the pharmaceutical industry. He compares the domestic health policy to that of other countries, e.g. Norway. In comparison, Norway's health care system appears "too good to be true". Watch the trailer.

There Will Be Blood (2007) is the adaption of Sinclair Upton's novel Oil! (1927). Like the novel, the film also focuses on the new era when oil was first found and extracted from the American soil. The former silver miner, Daniel Plainview, is turned into an oil man when he in 1898 accidentally stumbles across oil in the desert. The film debates greed and business as opposed to religion and family values, and gives a rare portrailt of the driving forces in the early shaping of American identity. Watch the trailer.

Revolutionary Road (2008) is based on Richard Yates' debut novel from 1961. The author has expalined the message in his novel as follows: "I think I meant it more as an indictment of American life in the 1950s. Because during the Fifties there was a general lust for conformity all over this country, by no means only in the suburbs - a kind of blind, desperate clinging to safety and security at any price". The novel depicts what is left of the American Dream, and has been characterized as *The Great Gatsby* of the Fifties. In the film adaption, we meet Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio as the Wheelers, a married couple in a Connecticut suburb, and through these characters the challenges of the post war generation come to life. Watch the trailer. If you watch the entire film, we recommend that you compare it to this excerpt from the novel. Discuss how this is adapted in the film. *Revolutionary Road* excerpt

Memoirs of a Geisha (2005) This is Steven Speilberg's adaptation of Arthur Golden's novel about a nine year old Japanese girl that, after her mother's death, is sold as a geisha in the early 1930s. The novel, as well as the film, follows Chiyo Sakamoto, who even if she is a fictional character, gives voice to an old tradition in Japanese culture and by this raises many issues about female destinies. Read an excerpt from the novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha* - Excerpt and find out how this is adapted in the movie.

Million Dollar Baby (2004) Is the American Dream attainable for everyone? What if you are a girl? Throughout history women have been regarded as second class citizens. To make it even more complicated; what if you are a white trash girl from Missouri who wants to excel in an all male sport? In *Million Dollar Baby* the waitress Margaret Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank), has to fight every imaginable prejudice in order to fulfil her dream. One of the toughest obstacles turns out to be her very own boxing trainer Frankie (Clint Eastwood). The film is based upon a short story by a former boxing trainer. A good way of working with *Million Dollar Baby,* is to study the way the short story is adapted to film. Watch the entire film here.

Hotel Rwanda (2004) is based on Hotel Manager Paul Rusesabagina's account of what happened during the bloody conflict between the Hutu and the Tutsi people, in Rwanda in the early 1990s. Estimates confirm that 77% of the Tutsi people were massacred (Human Rights Watch). The film also describes how the world decided to turn a blind eye to the genocide. You will find resources on Film Education on Hotel Rwanda.

Rabbit-Proof Fence (2002) is a film based on a true story. It depicts how three Aboriginal girls walked a distance of 1,500 miles and spent 9 weeks in the Australian outback to get back to their native village and their families. In 1931, they were, as a part of the official Australian policy aimed at forcing the Aborigines to adapt to the majority culture, kidnapped from their homes. The three small representatives of what is later known by the name "The Stolen Generation" were relocated and trained as domestic servants. Their story along with numerous other victims of this policy, made the Australian government make an official apology to the Aborigines in 2007. Watch *Rabbit-Proof Fence* - Trailer. Check *Rabbit-Proof Fence* – Study Guide.

Thirteen Days *(2000)* is a docudrama based on the thirteen days in 1962 when the world stood still, confronted with the potential outbreak of a new World War. The Cuban Missile Crisis was one of the most critical moments in the Cold War between the USA and the past superpower, the Soviet Union, and also the most challenging moment in John F. Kennedy's presidential career. The drama that took place inside the White House and behind the political scenes was a fight where also personal values were at stake. The placing of nuclear weapons in what the Americans considered as their "backyard", Cuba, was perceived as an act of war. Watch the *Thirteen Days* trailer. Study guide: *Thirteen Days* on Film Education.

Erin Brockovich (2000) is a biographical filmatization of a single mother's struggle in 1993 to defeat a powerful enemy, a US Gas and Electric company, in court. Erin Brokovich, played by Julia Roberts, accidentally finds out that the company is to blame for the contamination of the ground water in Hinkley, California, causing many residents to fall sick with cancer. Check out Erin Brockovich's website, Erin Brockovich Official Website.

Films Released before 2000

Snow Falling on Cedars (1999) is a film based on David Guterson's novel. The story brings us to a small fishing village in the state of Washington on the Pacific coast in 1951. A Japanese American fisherman is accused of murdering a white man. The case is brought to court and the suspect risks being innocently convicted. Since the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, there was a strong anti-Japanese sentiment in the USA. The storyline includes the "impossible" love between a white American and his Japanese American girlfriend, the Internment of Japanese Americans and how difficult it is to fight prejudice. Watch the trailer . Read this excerpt from the novel and find out how it is incorporated into the film: *Snow Falling on Cedars* excerpt.

Dead Man Walking (1995) portrays Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn), a prisoner on death row, convicted of killing two teenage lovers, in Louisiana in the 1980s. The film depicts the Roman Catholic nun, Sister Helen Prejean's fight to make an appeal to obtain life imprisonment for Poncelet, but it also demonstrates how the nun is torn between her sympathy for the victims and their families and her urge to forgive. The film is based on Helen Prejean's non-fiction book where she speaks out against capital punishment. Sister Prejean has become one of the most fierce advocates for abolition of the death penalty in the USA. Watch the trailer, *Dead Man Walking*. Read more about Prejean's work here: Sister Helen Prejean. It is also a good idea to relate the film to Thomas Hardy's poem, *The Dead Man Walking,* and Bruce Springsteen's lyrics.

Forrest Gump (1994) Watch the film over again to highlight US history and events ranging from the 1950's to the 1980'sForrest Gump - Revisited

American History X (1998) is a merciless portrait of two brothers. Due to his strong personality and intellect, Derek Vineyard (Edward Norton), the elder brother, becomes the hero, not only for his younger brother, Danny, but for his family and the neo-Nazi-gang he comes to lead. The two boys are raised in a white family in Venice Beach, L.A., a multicultural community that has faced severe social and racial challenges. When the boys' father, a fireman, is killed by a black drug dealer, while he is trying to extinguish a fire, the latent hatred is ignited. Derek does not back down for anything, and eventually he kills two black gang members. While serving his term in prison, he is humiliated and victimized, something which gives rise to an increasing understanding of how prejudice blurs the mind. Now he starts his fight to save his little brother, who in the mean-time, has taken up the family tradition of revenge and the ideology of white supremacy. Watch the trailer. You should keep in mind that this film has traditionally been given as essay assignments and reports. Consequently, a search for this movie will come up with several "hits", but they may not be reliable. Due to its thematic link to racism, you should also check the ethical platform of your sources.

Amistad (1997) is a Steven Spielberg drama based upon an uprising in 1839 among the West African slaves that were captured on board the Spanish ship *La Amistad.* The storyline also includes the legal aftermath in the Supreme Court in Washington where former President John Quincy Adams (Anthony Hopkins) is a spokesman for the slaves and the abolition of slavery. Watch the trailer. You will find more resources at *Amistad* on Film Education .

The Green Mile (1999) is the film version of Stephen King's thriller of a novel. In retrospect, the former warden Paul Edgecomb (Tom Hanks), gives us his gripping account of an incident that happened among the inmates on Death Row in a Louisiana prison during the Great Depression. Even if his tale includes a demonstration of supernatural powers, it raises fundamental questions regarding innocently convicted prisoners and capital punishment, and it dissects the deep-rooted prejudice against the African Americans in the 1930s. Watch trailer.

The Great Gatsby (1974) is based on Scott Fitzgerald's legendary novel from 1925. The 1920s kindled a new social class in the USA, the ones that made quick fortunes on the stock market or on importing alcohol; liqor was strictly prohibited at the time. Jay Gatsby is an upstart. He is incredibly rich and buys a big estate on Long Island, but being newly rich, does not go down well among those with "old money". As a young boy he fell in love with the unattainable Daisy, a girl belonging to the elite. Now, with money in his pocket, he desperately wants an entry ticket to her fashionable circle and to her cold heart. With the 1929 Wall Street Crash looming "backstage", the novel and film give a portrayal of the Roaring Twenties. A new film edition with Leonardo DiCaprio starring in the role as Gatsby, will be released in December 2012. This site may be used to analyze the novel as well as the film: *The Great Gatsby* Analysis.

Of Mice and Men is the adaption of John Steinbeck's novel *Of Mice and Men* (1937), set in California during the Great Depression. It brings to life the two hobos and friends, George (the narrator) and the mentally retarded Lennie, who, as it turns out, has a fatal crush on furry pets. The story gives a moving and warm portrait of the two buddies as well as a harsh image of the social misery and working-class struggle in the 30s. Watch the trailer. Read about how the novel was adapted to the screen at *Of Mice and Men*.

To Kill a Mocking Bird is based on one of the most read novels in the USA, Harper Lee's Gothic story with the same title from 1960. It is based on her childhood experiences in the Deep South and a particular criminal act that occurred in a neighbouring city in 1936. This incident ignited the latent racism and hatred in the local community. As the narrator's father, the lawyer Atticus Finch, Gregory Peck performs one of his most memorable roles. Watch the trailer. To work with the film/novel you may use this link *To Kill a Mocking Bird* - Resources.

How to Analyze a Film

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski, Catharine Ruud, Celia Suzanna Sandor
How to Analyze a Film (10649)

Characteristics

Film Shoot

Films are similar to novels or short stories in that they tell a story. They include the same genres: romantic, historical, detective, thriller, adventure, horror, and science fiction. However, films may also include sub-groups such as: action, comedy, tragedy, westerns and war. The methods you use to analyze a film are closely related to those used to analyze literature; nevertheless, films are multimedial. They are visual media made for viewers. Films take command of more of our senses to create special atmospheres, feelings or to bring out emotions.

Along with the literary elements such as plot, setting, characterization, structure, and theme, which make up the text or screenplay, there are many different film techniques used to tell the story or narrative. Attention is paid to sound, music, lighting, camera angles, and editing. What is important is to focus on how all the elements are used together in making a good film.

Below is a list of elements and questions to help you when analyzing films.

Film Contents

Special Effects

Film Facts:

- Title of film
- Year film was produced
- Nationality
- Names of the actors
- Name of director

Genre:

- What main genre does the film fall under? - romantic, historical, detective, thriller, adventure, horror, and science fiction.
- What sub-grouping does the film fall under? - action, comedy, tragedy, war and westerns.

Setting:

- Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place. Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- What aspects of setting are we made aware of? - Geography, weather conditions, physical environment, time of day.
- Where are we in the opening scene?

Plot and structure:

- What are the most important sequences?
- How is the plot structured?

- Is it linear, chronological or is it presented through flashbacks??
- Are there several plots running parallel?
- How is suspense built up?
- Do any events foreshadow what is to come?

Conflict:

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the film and is related to the main characters.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
  - Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?
  - is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Characterization deals with how the characters are described.

Characterization:

- through dialogue?

- by the way they speak?
- physical appearance? thoughts and feelings?
- interaction - the way they act towards other characters?
- Are they static characters who do not change?
- Do they develop by the end of the story?
- What type of characters are they?
- What qualities stand out?
- Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

Narrator and point of view:

- The narrator is the person telling the story. Is there a narrator in the film? Who?
- Point of view means through whose eyes the story is being told.
- Through whose eyes does the story unfold?
- Is the story told in the first person “I” point of view?
- Is the story told through an off-screen narrator?

Imagery:

- In films imagery are the elements used to create pictures in our minds.
- They may include:
- Symbols – when something stands not only for itself (a literal meaning), but also stands for something else (a figurative meaning) e.g. The feather in the film *Forrest Gump* symbolizes his destiny.
- What images are used in the film? e.g. color, objects etc.
- Can you find any symbols?

Theme:

- What are the universal ideas that shine through in the film (in other words, what is it about, in general)?

Cinematic Effects

Soundtrack:

- includes both dialogue and music, as well as all the other sounds in a film.
- enhances the atmosphere of the film (what effect does the choice of music have? Does it suit the theme?)
- Are any particular sounds accentuated **(fremhevet)**

Use of the camera:

- A camera shot is based on the camera’s distance from the object.
- The four basic shots used in films are:
  - a close-up – a very close shot where the camera lens focuses on some detail or the actor’s face.
  - medium shot – a shot where the camera lens picks up some background or upper half of the actor.
  - full shot – a shot where the camera lens has full view of the actor.
  - long shot – shot taken at a distance from an object.
- What camera shots can you identify in the film? How are they used?
- A camera angle is how the camera is tilted while filming.
  - straight-on angle – The camera is at the same height as the object.
  - high angle – The camera is filming from above the object.
  - low angle – The camera is looking up at the object.

    - oblique angle – The camera is tilted sideways.
- Does the way in which the camera is held say anything about the character?

Lighting:

- Lighting focuses the audience's attention on the main character or object in a film.
- It also sets the mood or atmosphere.
- While high-key lighting is bright and illuminating, low-key lighting is darker with a lot of shadows.
- What special lighting effects are used during the most important scenes?
- Filters are often used to soften and reduce harsh contrasts. They can also be used to eliminate haze, ultraviolet light or glare from water when shooting outside.
- Using color like red or orange can be used to enhance the feeling of a sunset.
- Can you find any examples where a filter has been used in the film?
- What effect did using a filter have on the scene?
- What colors are most dominant?

Editing:

- Editing is the way in which a film editor together with the director cuts and assembles the scenes. The way the scenes are joined together creates the rhythm of the motion picture. Scenes can be long and drawn out or short and choppy.
- Can you see a pattern to how the scenes are cut?
- How would you describe the pace/tempo of the film?

Poster

Conclusion

When analyzing films for school work or projects, you may be asked to use some or all of the characteristics above. Link those elements together that seem most logical. Try to think of the film as a whole and how the elements mentioned above work together to bring out the main message of the film.

Go to: **Literature, Film and Music** in our top menu to find our suggested films for further study.

Braveheart

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Braveheart (64069)

Many countries in the world have or have had in earlier times, freedom fighters. In Scotland, one of the most famous is Sir William Wallace, who became known all over the world from the film *Braveheart*.

How many other famous freedom fighters can you think of?

Braveheart, from 1995, was directed by Mel Gibson, who also played the leading role. The film won 5 Academy Awards, including one for best picture and one for best director. The film tells the story of Sir William Wallace and his fight against Edward I of England, for the freedom of Scotland.

Braveheart statue

William Wallace lived from c.1270 to 1305. There are many stories connected with him, but little is known for sure about his early life. He was probably the son of a minor landowner. The Scottish king, Alexander III, died in an accident in 1286, and his granddaughter in 1290, leaving no direct heir. Edward I of England invaded Scotland in 1296 and demanded that the Scottish nobles recognize him as king.

Wallace, according to the tales about him, seems to have started out as a guerrilla fighter or, from the English point of view, a terrorist. He attacked and killed the sheriff of Lanark, who had murdered Wallace's wife. In 1297, Wallace and Andrew Murray, the leader of a rebellion in the north-east, joined their forces together and met and routed the English army at Stirling Bridge.

After driving the English out of Scotland, Wallace was knighted and appointed the Guardian of Scotland for the absent king, John Baliol, who was a prisoner in England. However, many of the Scottish nobility did not support him. The English returned the following year and eventually defeated the Scots at Falkirk. Wallace escaped and though he had lost the battle, he had strengthened the Scots' resistance to the English. This resistance continued, now led by many of the nobles who previously had not supported Wallace.

Edward I invaded Scotland again in 1303 and conquered the Scots. The only thing remaining was to capture Wallace who symbolised Scotland's resistance. The English king put a price on Wallace's head and he was betrayed and captured in 1305. He was taken to London, tried and executed for treason in the barbaric way of being hung, drawn and quartered. His head was displayed on London Bridge as a warning to those who tried to oppose the English king. However, Edward I had created a martyr who became the symbol of Scotland's opposition to the English and has continued to be so.

In 1997, the referendum to vote for the new Scottish Parliament was held on 11 September, the 700th anniversary of Wallace's victory over the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297.

Watch the trailer and then answer the questions below.

Braveheart Trailer (If link does not open, right click to open in new window)

1. At the beginning of the trailer Wallace expresses his wishes for his future. What are they?
2. What prevents his hopes from being realised?
3. What are the differences between the Scottish army and the English army? Why do you think they are different?

Working with the Film

1. When and where is the film set?
2. Who are the main characters?
3. Describe William Wallace, his appearance and personality.
4. What leadership qualities did he have?
5. Who is the antagonist in the film?
6. Apart from battles, what strategies does Longshanks (the King of England) use to defeat the Scots?
7. How do the Irish fool the English at the Battle of Falkirk?
8. William Wallace finds himself betrayed by Robert the Bruce and the other Scottish noblemen at the Battle at Falkirk. However, Robert the Bruce also received a "taste of his own medicine" later in the movie. Explain.
9. How is the Prince of England portrayed in the movie?
10. In what way does the Princess of England have "the last laugh" while the king is on his death bed?

Discuss

1. What makes a person lead the fight for his country's freedom?
2. What kind of personal qualities does he/she need?
3. Do you think that he/she might have other reasons than just wanting to get rid of the invaders and be free?

Oral Activities

Work in pairs/groups. One of you is a news reporter, the other is Wallace or Edward I. Carry out one of the interviews and then reverse roles.

- Interview Wallace at the beginning of his campaign.
- Interview him after his arrest.
- Interview King Edward I of England after the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

Writing

Write a newspaper report of your interview.

Research

Is the film historically correct? You will find some comments on this at the following links: Braveheart Errors Medieval Scotland, Braveheart Errors Wikipedia (go to Historical Inaccuracies) and William Wallace.

Find out:

- which of the main characters were real historical characters
- which of the battles were real events
- were the dates correct

1. At the end of the 13th century. Mainly in Scotland.
2. William Wallace, Edward I King of England, Prince Edward, Princess Isabella, Robert the Bruce, Campbell
3. For example: wild, impressive, tough, strong, sensitive, charismatic, intelligent, etc.

4. Charismatic, strong bond to his followers, clear goals, etc.
5. Edward I King of England
6. He offers land and gold to Scottish noblemen in return for their allegiance to England and he re-enforces the law of First Night with the idea of "breeding out" the Scots.
7. They lead the English to believe that they will fight on their side. However, they turn and join the Scots' army.
8. Braveheart is invited to come and talk with Robert the Bruce and the noblemen. However, Robert the Elder and the noblemen have negotiated "the price" for Robert the Bruce's crown. That price being Wallace.
9. weak, homosexual, naive, afraid of his father....
10. The King has lost his ability to speak. Learning this, she tells him that she is pregnant with an illegitimate child (Wallace's). Furthermore, she tells him that she will ensure that the Prince does not have a long reign.

Once Were Warriors

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby, Jan-Louis Nagel
Once Were Warriors (53491)

Why is the encounter with modern society and big cities so brutal for the aboriginal people in many countries around the world? Watch the movie *Once Were Warriors* about the Maoris, New Zealand's indigenous people, to find out.

Once Were Warriors is a 1994 film based on Alan Duff's debut novel about the highly dysfunctional family, the Hekes. Beth Heke, the mother of five children, is proud of her Maori background, whereas Jake, her husband, thinks it is difficult to come to terms with his Maori slave descent and subsequently turns to violence and alcohol as a refuge. When the pair started to see each other 18 years ago, Beth's family who could boast ancestry with royal Maoris, did everything in their power to stop the alliance. However, Beth made a choice, some would say that it was fatal; she chose love over family concerns, broke all ties with her Maori family and the village, and moved to the capital Wellington with Jake. When Beth confronts Jake with the following words: "***If my spirit can survive living with you for eighteen years, then I can survive anything,"*** it reveals a lot about their marriage. In this heartbreaking movie you'll see how merciless life in the city suburb is, not only for Beth and Jake, but also for their children, Grace, Boogie and Nig.

Maori Warrior Source

Watch the trailer (01:56 minutes) and the footage video with interviews with the director, the author of the screenplay and the actors (12:26 minutes) on this link: Once Were Warriors - Trailer

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Tasks and Activities

Translation

En gang var vi krigere

Filmen er fra New Zealand og handler om dagens sosiale forhold for Maoriene - landets urbefolkning. Hverdagslivet er preget av arbeidsløshet, alkohol og vold. Beth og Jake har vært gift i atten år og har fem barn. Hun stammer fra en Maoristamme, mens hans forfedre var slaver.

Dette har gitt Jake et mindreverdighets-kompleks som han prøver å kompensere for ved å bruke vold, både mot sin kone og andre som kommer i veien for ham.

Barna deres blir vitne til både vold og fyll, men prøver å holde sammen trass i de ekstremt dårlige forholdene. Sønnen Boogie blir sendt på et guttehjem, en annen sønn forlater familien og slår seg sammen med en gjeng Maori-aktivister med tatoveringer i ansiktet.

Da datteren Grace blir voldtatt av sin onkel og begår selvmord, bestemmer moren seg for å forlate Jake i sin elendighet. Hun reiser til sin familie for å leve sammen med sine egne, og finne igjen Maorienes stolte tradisjoner fra den gang de var krigere.

Filmen er et sterkt uttrykk for Maorienes situasjon i dag, og kan være en påminnelse om hva de hvite inntrengerne har påført den innfødte befolkningen både i USA, Australia og New Zealand.

Ein gong var vi krigarar

Filmen er frå New Zealand og handlar om dagens sosiale tilhøve for Maoriane - urfolka i landet. Kvardagslivet er prega av arbeidsløyse, alkohol og vald. Beth og Jake har vore gifte i atten år og har fem barn. Ho nedstammar frå ei Maori-stamme, medan forfedrane hans vore slavar.

Dette har gitt Jake ei mindreverdskjensle som han freistar å kompensere for ved å bruke vald, både mot kona si og andre som kjem i vegen for han.

Barna deira blir vitne til både vald og fyll, men prøver å halde saman trass dei ekstremt dårlege tilhøva. Sonen Boogie blir sendt til ein guteheim, ein annan son forlet familien og slår seg saman med ein gjeng Maori-aktivistar med tatoveringar i andletet.

Då dattera Grace blir valdteken av onkelen sin, bestemmer mora seg for å forlate Jake i elendet sitt. Ho reiser til familien sin for å leve saman med sine eigne og finne igjen dei stolte tradisjonane til Maoriane frå den gongen dei var krigarar.

Filmen er eit sterkt uttrykk for situasjon til Maoriane i dag, og kan vere ei påminning om kva dei kvite inntrengjarane har påført urfolka både i USA, Australia og New Zealand.

The film is from New Zealand and deals with today's social conditions for the Maori – the country's native population. Everyday life is characterized by unemployment, alcohol, and violence. Beth and Jake have been married for eighteen years and have five children. She is descended from a Maori tribe, while his ancestors were slaves who were brought to the island by the English. This has given Jake an inferiority complex which he tries to compensate for by using violence, both against his wife and anyone who comes in his way.

Their children witness both violence and drunkenness, but try to stick together in spite of the extremely bad conditions. Their son Boogie is sent off to a boys' home, another son leaves the family and joins a mob of Maori activists with tattooed faces.

When their daughter Grace is raped by her uncle and commits suicide, her mother decides to leave Jake in his misery. She goes to her family to live with her own and recapture the proud Maori traditions from the time when they were warriors.

The film is a strong expression of the Maori situation today, and can be a reminder of what the white intruders have brought upon the native population of both the USA, Australia, and New Zealand.

Analyze the Film

1. Describe Jake's situation in the beginning of the movie, and what symbolic effect it has?
2. Nig leaves the family to join a group of seemingly violent mobsters. How is he taken into the group? Are there examples of how similar rituals occur in other cultures?
3. What kind of a group is the one that Nig joins? What is their identification, and what is the cultural significance of this community?
4. Towards the end of the movie Nig asks Boogie if he wants to join his group and have a tattoo – Boogie says: "I've got mine on the inside" What does he mean by that?
5. Where do we meet white people in the film – and what roles do they play? (Is this deliberate from the director?)
6. Can you spot examples of the use of contrasts in the film?
7. What is Jake's background? In what way is that important? Is he a complex character?
8. What is Beth's background, and what does it mean in her relationship to Jake?
9. Grace's friend Toot (the kid living in the car wreck) dreamed about getting old enough to get social benefit. What does that indicate?
10. What is Jake's general attitude towards other people, and how does he show it? (What is his real problem?)
11. Are these people happy sometimes? ("Beth: I'm not drunk, I'm happy") Where do you see traces of love in the film?
12. How does the boys' home turn out to be so important to Boogie?
13. There is some quite explicit violence in the film. (Why all the violence and alcohol?) However, if we step back and see the film in a thematic perspective, we will also see the structural violence that is there. What does that mean?
14. Where do we meet Maori culture and tradition in the film?
15. Mention some tragic elements of the film.

16. Comment on the title of the film, and discuss thematic approaches.
17. In what way does the setting (both social and material) relate to the theme(s) of the film?

Arrange a Debate in Class

You need a leader of the debate and a secretary.

These are some of the words that you will need in the debate. Look them up in the dictionary.

* (commit) suicide * domestic violence * culture crash * majority * minority * arranged marriage * countryside * urban * social welfare * on the dole * unemployment * assimilation * dysfunctional family * tribal culture * bridging cultures * ethnic groups * Maori * community * alienation * juvenile detention * abusive relationship * rebel groups * predestination/predestined/destiny/fate * inferiority complex

Divide the class into several groups. Each group is assigned a viewpoint (no matter what the members actually think). The members go together to prepare their "views" and how to defend them.

Each group adopts one of these viewpoints about whom/what to blame:
JAKE
SOCIETY
BETH
FATE
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Avatar - Unique Box Office Success

Forfatter: Catharine Ruud
Avatar - Unique Box Office Success (49019)

It seems that the most-asked question these days is, "Have you seen ***Avatar*** yet?"

Box Office

If you haven´t seen *Avatar* yet, you should! Once again, Canadian-born producer James Cameron has redefined film-making technology and offers an abundance of eye-candy and food-for-thought, to moviegoers.

Another Box-Office Success

Avatar was released in London, UK on December 10, 2009 and was released on December 18, 2009 in the U.S. and Canada. The film received critical acclaim and commercial success, immediately. Within three weeks of its release it grossed over $1 billion, second only to Cameron´s, *Titanic*.

Re-Defining Film Technology

Development of *Avatar* began in 1994 and filming was to take place after the completion of *Titanic*. However, Cameron was not satisfied with the technology available at the time and decided to postpone filming until it became advanced enough to portray the world he had created. The result was a budget to the rumoured amount of $280-310 million not to mention another $150 million for marketing!

The latest technology in 3D-filming that Cameron uses will have you jumping off your seat. However, should you be on a tight budget, the less expensive 2D version is also more than enough to wet your visual appetite!

Setting and Themes

Avatar takes place in the year 2154 on the planet, Pandora. Humans are interested in mining Pandora´s reserves of a precious metal called unobtanium. The indigenous Na´vi resist the colonists´ expansion by not relocating to another area and thus going to war.

The themes present in *Avatar* are abundant and have been compared to those found in *Dances with Wolves* and *The Emerald Forest.* Culture clash, environmental issues such as sustainability, integration, and loyalty are some.

So if you haven´t yet seen this phenomenal film, put on your 3D glasses and get ready for a journey into space that you will never forget!

Research

Here is some research you can do before watching the movie. Use the internet to learn more about the following:

1. According to Greek mythology, who was Pandora?
2. What was Pandora´s Box?
3. The main Na´vi character has been compared to the American Native Indian, Pocahontas. Who is she and how is her personality described?

Discussion

These are discussion questions that can be considered both before and after the movie:

1. The motive behind the journey to Pandora is the desire for a mineral called "unobtanium". What word do you think this name stems from, why is it appropriate and what does it signify?

Further Work

"Unobtanium" resembles the word "unobtainable"

2 . *Loyalty* is a theme that appears in *Avatar*. Being loyal to one´s group is considered a strong moral value. However, what happens when loyalty comes into conflict with what is right and wrong, personal interests or interests of those "outside" the group?

Avatar - Trailer

Avatar on Film Education

(Right-click to open in separate window.)
How to Analyze a Film

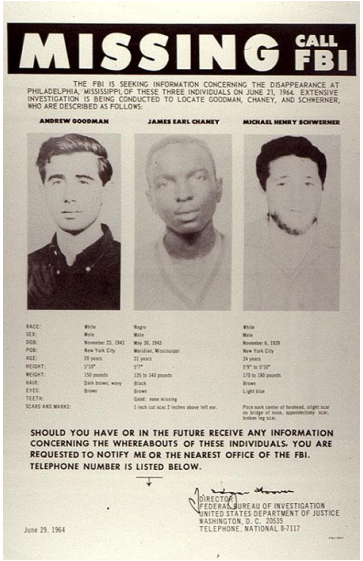
Mississippi Burning - Working with the Film

Forfatter: Christine Varadian Johnsen
Mississippi Burning (63036)

If you just want to work with the film trailer, you can find resources here.

Historical Background

The mysterious circumstances surrounding a case in 1964 of the disappearance and eventual murders of three civil rights workers is the backdrop for this powerful film produced in 1988. James Chaney, age 21 (black), Andrew Goodman, age 20 (white) and Michael Schwerner, age 24 (white) headed south to Mississippi, as volunteers for a program called Freedom Summer. The program focused on voter registration for blacks in the "closed" state of Mississippi. Immediately after their arrival they were arrested by the local police and later found shot to death.


MISSING CALL FBI

THE FBI IS SEEKING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISAPPEARANCE AT PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI, OF THESE THREE INDIVIDUALS ON JUNE 21, 1964. EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED TO LOCATE GOODMAN, CHANEY, AND SCHWERNER, WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

	ANDREW GOODMAN	JAMES EARL CHANEY	MICHAEL HENRY SCHWERNER
RACE:	White	Negro	White
SEX:	Male	Male	Male
DOB:	November 23, 1943	May 30, 1943	November 6, 1939
POB:	New York City	Meridian, Mississippi	New York City
AGE:	20 years	22 years	24 years
HEIGHT:	5'10"	5'11"	5'9" to 5'10"
WEIGHT:	150 pounds	135 to 140 pounds	170 to 180 pounds
HAIR:	Dark brown; wavy	Black	Brown
EYES:	Brown	Brown	Light blue
TEETH:		Good; none missing	
SCARS AND MARKS:		1 inch cut scar 2 inches above left ear.	Pock-mark center of forehead, slight scar on bridge of nose, appendectomy scar, broken leg scar.

SHOULD YOU HAVE OR IN THE FUTURE RECEIVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, YOU ARE REQUESTED TO NOTIFY ME OR THE NEAREST OFFICE OF THE FBI. TELEPHONE NUMBER IS LISTED BELOW.

DIRECTOR
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535
TELEPHONE, NATIONAL 8-7117

June 29, 1964

FBI Missing Poster

As this was a time of great tension and unrest, due to the advancement of the Civil Rights Movement, there was massive media coverage and the FBI was called in to investigate. For the next six weeks the story unfolds revealing racism, hatred and corruption on all levels. The director, Alan Parker released the film as a dramatization of these events.

A Northerner and a Southerner

The two FBI agents (Gene Hackman and Willem DaFoe) couldn't be more different from one another and their approaches to solving the murders set them apart. Agent Alan Ward (DaFoe) is portrayed as a younger, "by the book" agent from the north, who is naive of race relations in the south, while Agent Rupert Anderson (Hackman), having been a former Mississippi sheriff, has first-hand experience, including the unspoken rules of the south. They often disagree on their methods, yet manage to learn from one another and solve the case together.

Tasks and Activities

Discuss

1. What were your first thoughts after having seen the film in its entirety? This film triggers many emotions. Write down some key words and share with another student.
2. Would you recommend this film to others and why?
3. Towards the end of the film Agent Anderson re-visits the Deputy Sheriff's wife. The Deputy Sheriff is a racist while his wife remains neutral. Her role is the dutiful wife. In this quote she seems to be facing her reality.

Mrs. Pell: *"It's ugly. This whole thing is so ugly. Have you any idea what it's like to live with all this? People look at us and only see bigots and racists. Hatred isn't something you're born with. It gets taught. At school, they said segregation is what's said in the Bible... Genesis 9, Verse 27. At 7 years of age, you get told it enough times, you believe it. You believe the hatred. You live it... you breathe it. You marry it."*

Discuss this quote in small groups. Do you agree with Mrs. Pell? Do you sympathize with her? Who is responsible for bigotry and racism? Do we copy other people's actions? Can racist people change?

Comprehension

1. From the moment we are introduced to the local sheriff's office we get a feel for which side they are on. What impressions did you have? Could you give any examples to support your thoughts?
2. In a conversation between the two agents they discuss their admiration for the missing boys, yet Agent Anderson says that he feels that they were "being used". Why and what does this imply?
3. Agent Anderson visited the men's barbershop twice in the course of the film. The first was at the start of the investigation and the second toward the end. How were these two scenes different?
4. Agent Anderson: "You can talk to them but they won't talk to you." Why were black people afraid to speak with the FBI agents? Can you give examples of events in the film to support your answer?
5. What did Agent Anderson notice in Mrs Pell's wedding photograph?
6. Why was a shot fired into the hotel room of the two agents and what was the significance of the burning cross outside?
7. Why were the three men who were tried in court for arson not sentenced to prison? And why was there a rampage of fires afterwards?
8. After viewing the burned home and barn of Aaron's family, Agent Anderson says: "At least we know who did this." Why does Agent Ward respond: "We did."?
9. At what point in the film does Agent Ward change his tactics and let Agent Anderson take over and why?
10. Who called the KKK meeting and why?
11. Why was the sheriff acquitted at the end of the film?

Writing Tasks

1. Setting: the setting of this film is central to the story. Write a short text explaining how and why the setting is of importance in this particular film. Use any previous knowledge you have of the Civil Rights Movement and from this film to support your text. You may want to do a bit of research on the state of Mississippi. (Please note that Jessup County used in the film is a fictional county modeled after Neshoba County where the real murders took place.)
2. FBI missing poster: study the faces of the three men and imagine you are one of them. All three had their youth and their desire to work for a cause, in common. They chose to devote a summer to working for the civil liberties of blacks. Tragically, their humanitarian desires cost them their lives. Choose one of the young men and write a letter to his friend/family telling about his summer plans to visit Mississippi to register black voters. Mention his strong interest in working for this civil rights cause.

Research

1. Many of the southern states had segregation laws referred to as "Jim Crow" laws. Learn more about these laws and write a summary of what you find. Include some examples by stating the law, the state in which the law was written and the year. Can you recall any examples of Jim Crow in the film?
2. The national attention brought on by this case helped advance the Civil Rights Movement. Two historic acts were passed in the US government, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Learn about these two acts and how they brought blacks one step closer to equality.
3. Does the KKK still exist today? Find information on the internet about the KKK organization and write a brief summary about their existence.

Forrest Gump

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
Forrest Gump (62701)

Give a brief description of the man you see in the picture (his age, appearance, the way he is dressed and behaves).

Forrest Gump

Forrest Gump is a film based on a novel by the same name. It was directed by Robert Zemeckis in 1994, and Forrest portrayed by Tom Hanks, immediately became one of the most popular film characters ever. In the film we get to meet the physically and mentally disabled boy Forrest who was born in Alabama in 1944. According to his mother, who is portrayed by Sally Field in the film, his father is “on vacation”. When Forrest asks her what “vacation” means, she explains that it is when you go away and never come back. In spite of his considerable handicaps, Forrest succeeds in many walks of life, he even excels! We are admitted to his life story from his birth until his beloved Jenny dies in 1982. As a backdrop to his extraordinary life, we are witnesses to many historical events and “hot” social issues from the 50s right up to the early 80s.

Before you start watching the trailer or the movie, answer the following questions.

1. Look up the word "gump". What does it mean? Dictionary reference - gump
2. Where is Alabama? In which part of the USA is Alabama located? Do you think this is significant? Why? Why not?
3. Animated Atlas Timeline Use the bar and scroll until you arrive at the late 1950s up to the start of the 1980s. Focus on the orange bar – society. What are the main events?

Watch the Trailer

Forrest Gump

1. Describe the first scene in the trailer. How do you think that scene suggests what the film is about?
2. What do you think is Forrest’s handicap?
3. In which ways is Forrest’s life extraordinary?
4. Why do you think Forrest found college “confusing”?
5. How did Forrest get famous?
6. Forrest was a great success in the American Army. Why was that do you think?
7. Forrest gets to meet a lot of famous persons. How many do you recognize from the trailer?
8. Which historical events do we get to see in the trailer?

Discuss

1. In which way may Forrest’s mother be credited for his success?
2. How important is Jenny in his life? Why can’t they be equal partners?
3. To which degree do you think this story is a story about a boy who succeeds against all odds?
4. Is it a realistic story? Why or why not?
5. What makes this story funny? Would it be funny if the story was told by another character, e.g. Mrs. Gump?
6. Forrest refers to his mother saying: “Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get.” How do you think that sums up what the film is about?

Writing

1. Use the trailer as a source of inspiration and make up your own story. Call it either **“Against All Odds”** or **”Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re gonna get”.**
2. Use the trailer to make a report about Forrest’s life. Try to make it chronological (in the time order that the events take place).

Working with the Film

Watch the entire film and then work with the tasks below.

Find Out

Group work: Each group use the web to look up key words to one of the incidents or concepts listed below. Remember to relate “your” concept to the USA. *Elvis and Rock n’Roll; Segregation and desegregation; the Civil Rights movement; the Supreme Court and Brown v. Board of Education; KKK; the Cold War; the moon landing; the Black Panther Movement; the assassination of John F. Kennedy; the Vietnam War; the Hippie Movement; the Watergate Scandal; the outbreak of HIV/AIDS.*

Make a table in your text editor, like this:

Concept/Incident	When did it happen?	What happened? Why did it happen?	Consequences/present status

Forrest Gump - table

Comprehension

In which occupations/fields does Forrest succeed?

- Astronaut
- War hero
- Car mechanic
- Athlete
- Family man
- Film actor
- Shopkeeper
- Businessman
- Fisherman
- Chef
- Chess player
- Wrestler
- Football player

Film Analysis

1. Describe Forrest's relationship to the following characters and explain how they come to play important parts in his life: Mrs. Gump, Jenny, Bubba and Lieutenant Dan.
2. Why is Jenny a character that finds it very difficult to settle down? In which way is Lieutenant Dan a dynamic character?
3. Forrest is the narrator of the story. How does that affect the film?
4. Use this link, choose a few examples and demonstrate how the musical effects contribute to the theme Wikipedia - Forrest Gump Soundtrack

Project Work

Many historical events and moments from the 50s up through the 70s are highlighted in the movie.

1. You are journalists for a youth magazine and as a team you are asked by the editor to make an issue to commemorate one of the decades represented in the movie. The editor instructs you to focus on the historical events and persons that are depicted in Forrest Gump. Based on your research you are going to make and assemble articles that revolve around important persons and events from ONE of the decades.
2. Study the sound track list provided on this link Wikipedia - Forrest Gump Soundtrack and make an oral presentation of how the music clips you have chosen from the film highlight issues and events in ONE of the decades depicted in Forrest Gump. Choose music that particularly highlights what you think is important and show how it defines "your" decade (the 50s, 60s or the 70s).

The Constant Gardener

Forfatter: Åse Elin Langeland
The Constant Gardener (76056)

The Constant Gardener by John le Carré

Pre-reading: Read the following lines from the film. How would you answer Tessa? The people she refers to are in a desperate situation and they are poor.

Justin Quayle: We can't involve ourselves in their lives, Tessa.
Tessa Quayle: Why?
Justin Quayle: Be reasonable. There are millions of people, they all need help. It's what the agencies are here for.
Tessa Quayle: Yeah, but these are three people that we can help.

Justin Quayle (Ralph Fiennes), a British diplomat, finds his wife Tessa (Rachel Weisz) murdered and seeks to uncover the reasons behind her death. In doing so he discloses high level corruption between goverment officials and multinational companies. On his quest to unveil the truth, Justin realizes that he really didn't know the woman he married and that the people he trusted shouldn't be.

The film, *The Constant Gardener* (2005) is an adaption of a novel by the British writer John le Carré. It was directed by the Brazilian Fernando Meirelles. Meirelles told *The Independent* that the chance to take on the pharmaceutical industry was one of three elements that made him want to direct *The Constant Gardener*, as was the chance to shoot in Kenya. The film is a conspiracy thriller, criticizing the involvement of a large pharmaceutical company in testing drugs in Africa. However, it is also a passionate love story.

The Constant Gardener

Working with the First Chapter of the Novel

The Constant Gardener - From Chapter One

Read from the first chapter of the novel. As you read, write down the names of the characters and the jobs/positions they have. Afterwards you could write a summary or take on the slightly more challenging task of answering the questions below.

1. The story is told from Sandy Woodrow's point of view. What do we get to know about him?
2. What has happened to Tessa Quayle and Arnold Bluhm?
3. What were Tessa and Arnold doing by Lake Turkana?
4. When talking to Sandy, Wolfgang, the owner of Oasis, says: "Listen, I'm Galileo. Put me in prison, I'll swear she never came to the Oasis." What is implied here?
5. What impression is given of Tessa?
6. How does Sandy react when he hears that Tessa has been murdered?
7. How does Justin react when he is informed about Tessa's death?
8. How is the theme of gardening introduced literally? How can gardening be understood figuratively?
9. What are we told in flashbacks?
10. How does the writer create suspense in this chapter?
11. How is this chapter dealt with in the film? Which adaptations have been made? Make a comparison.

Working with the Trailer

Watch the trailer and answer the questions below.

1. How does the opening scene comply with the rest of the trailer?
2. What impression do you get of Justin?
3. What do we get to know about Tessa?
4. Why do you think Tessa has been murdered?
5. Compare the way village people are portrayed to the way Britsih diplomats are depicted in these clips. Pay attention to filmatic devices in your comparison.
6. Justin says that the pharmaceutical industry is "right up there with the arms dealers." What does he mean?
7. "Some very nasty things live under rocks, especially in foreign gardens." How do you understand this quotation?
8. Why do you think the film is called *The Constant Gardener*?

Kothbiro

Kothbiro is the name of the song we hear at the beginning of *The Constant Gardener* and a recurring theme in the film. Listen to "Kothbiro" by Ayub Ogada and discuss how his music influences our emotions and thus the way we perceive the pictures. Do you know what it means? Why do you think the director chose this theme?

Working with the Film

Film Education has developed a study guide offering background tasks and research opportunities for *The Constant Gardener*. See *The Constant Gardener* - Study Guide .

Making a Difference

The Constant Gardener raises issues regarding how large multinational companies, "Big Pharma", test and sell drugs in the Third World. Is this an issue that concerns and engages you, or do you have a different cause worth fighting for? Discuss with a friend and share your ideas in class. Explore how you can use social networking to promote your views and gain support of your cause. What kind of social media do you think would be most suitable? Explain why. If you have time, try it out.

A funny example of this kind of marketing is Alexis Ohanian: How to Make a Splash in Social Media . Watch Mister Splashy Pants rise to Web stardom.

Freedom Writers

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel, Eli M. Huseby
Freedom Writers - Film Analysis (56834)

The first encounter between students and teachers is always exciting. Erin Gruwell, the new teacher at Wilson High, is met with hostility from her Hispanic, Asian and African American students. One of the students even states that she hates her because she is white.

> Erin Gruwell: You hate me? You don't even know me.
>
> Student: I know what you can do. I saw white cops shoot my friend in the back for reaching into his pock his pocket! I saw white cops come into my house and take my father away for no REASON except th feel like it! Except because they can! And they can, because they're white.
> So I HATE white people on sight!

Freedom Writers is an American film produced in 2007 with Hilary Swank in the part of the young and idealistic high school teacher, Erin Gruwell. The film is based on a true story as it is recounted in the diaries of Miss Gruwell and 150 “unteachable” and “at-risk” students in Long Beach, California.

In the film dancing bridges the gaps between the gangs in the classroom *Freedom Writers*

Not What She Expected

In the 1980s, Woodrow Wilson High School was recognized as a high-achieving school. However, in the early 90s the school launched an integration program where teaching discipline and obedience was a primary concern. On her first day, Miss Gruwell enthusiastically expects to be met by motivated and keen students. Instead, she is confronted by hostile teenagers segregated in racial groups in the classroom.

Rising to the Challenge

The new high school teacher miraculously manages to grab the attention of the tough teenagers by making them see what segregation and racism led to during the Second World War. On a visit to the Holocaust section in the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles they are introduced to the story of the young Dutch Jewish girl, Anne Frank, and her destiny as a Holocaust victim. They detect many parallels to their own suburban lives as members of dysfunctional families and rough gangs.

The Diaries

This revelation inspires them to keep diaries that offer a more healthy way of giving an outlet for their frustration and anger than gangbanging and violence. The diaries were compiled in the book, *The Freedom Writers Diary*, on which the film is based. The title of the project is a word play on the term “Freedom Riders” referring to the 1961 civil rights activists that rode the state buses into the Southern States to demonstrate against their segregation policy.

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension

Watch a trailer from the film. Trailer - Freedom Writers

1. From the information in the trailer, what do you think is the theme and the plot?
2. Which teaching methods are demonstrated? Do they work, do you think?
3. There are many scenes where violence is evident. What effect do you think these scenes have?

Research

Find out how the story of Anne Frank is important in the film? (Search words: Anne Frank video blog)

Anne Frank blog

Make a brief character analysis on ONE of these characters: Erin (Miss G); Erin's father; Erin's husband; Erin's colleague; Eva; Andre; the principal; Miep Gies.

- List the values and culture clashes you find in the film.
- “The Line Game” is a turning point in the movie. Describe the game and explain its purpose. How is it a turning point for the class?
- Comment on the camera shots, music, props and other effects.
- Does this film have a so called false ending?

Discussion

1. What is Miss G's motivation? How would you explain her dedication? Compare with the Freedom Riders. Use the link to find information: http://library.thinkquest.org
2. Why does Miss G's husband choose to leave her?
3. One of the goals of the English curriculum is to assess and evaluate your progress in learning English. Think of all of the learning methods that have been used in English class throughout the year and find out which ones work best (for you), and why.

Find Out

What are the ideas behind the Diary Project (Freedom Writing) and what does Erin Gruwell say about her experiences?

Listen to the pod cast recording and/or read the transcript from a conversation with the "real" Erin Gruwell on this link: Erin Gruwell and Freedom Writers Podcast

Writing

This is Crystal's film "review" posted in a blog:

"This movie I think shud make ppl apperciate wat u have now cuz the kids dat diz happened to probably lost a lot to gang violence or jus becuz someone felt like shootin u cuz u were a different race from dem. And if that teacher had't believed in them they wud have probably been dead or doin nothin with there lives" (Crystal, 2010)

Write a "review" after watching the film. Make it appropriate for posting in a blog.

The Iron Lady

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
The Iron Lady (95029)

The Iron Lady is a film that portrays Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female prime minister. She was controversial, both as Leader of the Conservative Party and as Prime Minister, an office that she held for 11 years. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the film, where Thatcher (Meryl Streep) as an old woman suffering from dementia looks back on her eventful life, has been met with both acclamation and fury.

Margaret Thatcher (1925 - 2013) was 86 years old when the film was released. To a large extent the film renders a pitiful picture of a lonely, hallucinating old woman. Critics thought that its release could have waited. What do *you* think; was it disrespectful to present Britain's most powerful person for an entire decade in this way, while she still was alive? How do you think her family felt about it? Lady Thatcher died from a stroke two years later.

Film Trailer

To get an impression of the career of one of the most influential women in the 20th century, you should take a look at the film trailer, The Iron Lady .

After watching it, reflect on:

- What prejudice did Margaret Thatcher have to fight?
- In which sense was Margaret Thatcher an outsider?
- What did she have to sacrifice? How did her family respond to this, do you think?
- Judging from the trailer, how did she earn the nick-name "The Iron Lady"?
- What made her controversial?
- Do you recognise any political events that she had to handle as a Prime Minister?

Interview with Meryl Streep

Watch a clip from the interview with Meryl Streep about how she prepared for the role.
BBC interview with Meryl Streep

- What was Meryl Streep's perception of Margaret Thatcher before she started playing the role?
- How did she prepare for the role?

Vocabulary

Before you watch the film, it is a good idea to revise these terms and expressions:

MP
constituency
The Conservative Party
The Tories
The Labour Party
parliamentary system
The House of Commons
The House of Lords
Cabinet
general election

trade unions
Chancellor

Find Out

1. To complement the picture of Margaret Thatcher as one of the most admired, and at the same time, one of the most hated leaders of all time, read a few of these entries from people who experienced what is commonly known as the Thatcher era. BBC on the Thatcher era What are some of the reasons given for:
   - praising her?
   - critcising her?
2. Study this timeline, Margaret Thatcher timeline.
   - What was there in Margaret Roberts' (later Thatcher) family background that made it very unlikely that she should become the leader of the Conservative Party?
   - When did the Falklands War occur? What did she accomplish by this war?
   - How was her relationship to the US president, Ronald Reagan?
   - What was her characterisation of the Soviet Union leader, Mikail Gorbachev, when they met in Moscow in 1987?

Discuss

1. Why was it sensational that the UK should get a female prime minister in 1979?
2. There is a joke which goes like this: "Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good." Did this apply to Margaret Thatcher do you think? Do you think she adopted the tough appearance, which earned her the "Iron Lady" label, because of this?
3. If you watch the film, discuss how Margaret Roberts (Thatcher) is met by men before she takes office as Prime Minister.
4. Check out recent news regarding the Falklands. How does the current official British policy regarding these islands compare with Mrs. Thatcher's policy?

Writing

Norwegian female politicians have recently come forward with experiences of sexually offensive and patrionising words from male party colleagues."My little girl" and "young miss" being some of the less offensive examples. Does this correspond to what Margaret Roberts (Thatcher) experienced? Why are women treated like this?

Make a "tweet" (140 characters).

The King's Speech

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
The King's Speech (70204)

When Albert, Duke of York, asked Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon for her hand in marriage in 1922, she readily accepted. She was confident that her husband would never assume the throne. He was second in line to the British throne and as he was suffering from a severe speech impediment, she thought he was considered unfit to become king. She was wrong....

Edward and Mrs. Simpson

In 1936, when the ritual phrase, "The King is Dead. Long Live the King!" was declared at George V's deathbed, Albert's elder brother, Edward, was expected to ascend the throne. However, he was deeply in love with an American divorcèe, Mrs. Wallis Simpson. As the King of England, he would also become the head of the Church of England, and a marriage between the two lovebirds would be out of the question. In the 1930s, their love affair was considered a great scandal and the British government was deeply concerned that it might threaten the monarchy. For others, it became the love story of the century when Edward decided to abdicate after spending a few months as the King of Great Britain, Ireland, the British Dominions beyond the Seas and Emperor of India.

Albert - Next in Line to the Throne

Elizabeth had never imagined her husband as king. Yet, after Edward's abdication, Albert, had to stand up and accept his responsibility. Since he had had a stammer from the age of four or five, he had cleverly avoided all public speaking in his adult life. In the movie, Colin Firth excels in his role as the reluctant king. First, Albert had to accept his transformation from a family man that could have a private life with his wife and two girls (one of them Elizabeth, the future queen), into King George VI and a life in the public eye. Furthermore, he had to face what he dreaded more than anything; to speak in public.

Colin Firth

Royal Duties

In 1936, when Albert reluctantly had to ascend the British throne, Hitler was successfully capturing German hearts and minds as a great orator and propagandist. With the help of a highly unorthodox speech terapist, the Australian Lionel Logue , the newly appointed George VI barely passed the test as an orator in his inauguration speech. In 1939, there was a great deal at stake; Britain had declared war against Hitler and Germany and the occasion called for a speech to be broadcast in the media of the day, the radio. With the mental and practical help of his devoted therapist, the king delivered a flawless speech when it really mattered.

Watch the Trailer

The King's Speech - trailer

Questions

1. What do you think about the speech therapist's methods?
2. How do you think the King copes with his problem?

Discuss

How are stammering and self confidence intertwined?

Working with the Film

The King's Speech (film)

Work with tasks provided on this website: The King's Speech Lesson Plan

5 Literature 1550 to 1780

The Renaissance

The Renaissance - Science, Religion and Philos..

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Renaissance - Science, Religion and Philosophy (88475)

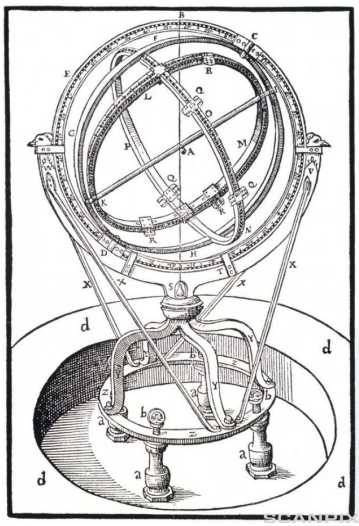
Writers, poets, and painters are all parts of and, in a way, products of their own contemporary society. The artists of a specific period were influenced by what was going on around them, so to fully understand the culture of that era one has to broaden the perspective and look at what lies beyond books, plays and paintings.

Progress and Conflict

The second half of the 16th century was in many ways when people took up the challenge of understanding man's existence in the universe. This interest had mainly two directions: Philosophers wanted to understand man's complexity and his moral and intellectual dimensions. And physicians sought knowledge about the universe, the planets and the laws of physics. What these projects had in common was that they both challenged the religious dogmas and authority of the church.

Science Comes Alive

Already many centuries earlier the Chinese and the Egyptians had taken an interest in observing and figuring out the system of the stars and planets. Their theories were now taken up and studied by European mathematicians and scholars. Copernicus had at the beginning of the century established doubt about the geocentric theory, which had been the prevalent view until then. Johannes Kepler took this hypothesis further and introduced a heliocentric theory, claiming that the planets are orbiting the sun and not the other way around. Kepler cooperated with the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe who invented and developed the telescope for planet observation. Isac Newton is another famous scholar whose theories about dynamics and gravity were ground-breaking research for modern physics. The world had already been circumnavigated and gradually it was accepted that the world was round. Another great scientific pioneer was Galileo Galilei, who elaborated on Newtons theories of dynamics and laws of nature. All these creative and innovative scientists were active between 1550 and 1650.



The zodiacal armillary instrument

Religion

The new theories were of course seen as radical and revolutionary in a religious perspective. Religion had an important role in people's lives and the church had until then been the authoritative source of information about heaven and earth. Now its dogmatic position was challenged by new, and what the church would call heretic theories. And indeed, this was a dilemma for many of the physicians and scholars. They were religious people who believed in the Holy Trinity and feared the wrath of God. But their findings and theories were published, and being devoted to their scientific vocation many of them suffered hard persecution from the church and were excommunicated after Inquisition trials. The conflict between science and religion has since then been a significant element in the quest for understanding human nature and life in general. This strife reached a climax two centuries later when Charles Darwin published his "Origin of Species". The clash between creationism and evolution is even today a hot issue in many communities both in the USA and Europe.

Philosophy

The Renaissance has also been labelled the age of humanism. Man was seen as the most important factor in his own universe. He had to come to terms with his challenges and shortcomings on his own. The basic thesis was that man had the capacity to sort out whatever came in his way in terms of intellectual and moral obstacles. This attitude was also in conflict with the fatalist views of the church which would claim that whatever happens is God's will, and cannot be challenged by man. But now the whole concept of being was confronted, and the philosophers claimed that man's mere existence was determined by his capability to reason. The French philosopher Rene Descartes fronted this view and wanted to demonstrate the dualism and interaction between man's spiritual and physical aspects. His famous statement, "I think, therefore I am" (Cogito ergo sum) formed the basis of his philosophical system of doubt and reason. Descartes was also a religious man and believed that man's reason and intellectual capacity were gifts from God, and in that way he also claimed to have proved God's existence.

Portrait of French mathematician Rene Descartes

All these intellectuals, scholars and scientists were prominent during the period we call The Renaissance, and they paved the way for the new cultural trend – The Enlightenment.

Introduction to the Renaissance

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Introduction to the Renaissance (88233)

Definition and Background

In French the word “naissance” means birth. And we know that most words beginning with “re-“ mean to do something over again (rewrite, replace, refurbishment, reopening) – hence the name of the period means re-birth. What is born again is art and culture. After the so-called “Dark Ages” (which in a cultural aspect weren’t so dark after all), art was again seen as an important way for man to express himself. Mainly it was the classical ideals of Greece and Rome that were brought back to life; therefore the period is also referred to as Classicism. Most of the French and English plays of the era are clearly inspired by the works of great Greek playwrights like Sofokles and Euripedes.
The artists depicted man’s complexity, his shortcomings, contradictions, doubts and beliefs. God is there as the great creator, but man had to search within himself for solutions of the mysteries of life. The label Humanism refers to this focus on man’s own ability to come to terms with the world.
This period is also called Elizabethan, as it was at its peak during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. She ruled England during the last half of the 16th century, and was a strong monarch and a well-educated woman who encouraged art and culture.

Elizabethan Theatre

The most important cultural venue at that time was the theatre. Most common people were illiterate; books were expensive and accessible only for the aristocracy. But the theatre was a unifying arena where everybody could be captivated by what they saw and listened to. People were good listeners and story-telling was a cherished tradition, so these dramatized stories attracted huge audiences. Theatres were mainly located in London, but theatrical groups also travelled around the country, for example, when London in the 1590s was hit by the plague and the authorities banned public gatherings and closed down the theatres.

The Globe Theatre, London
Forfatter: Corbis

Actors and playwrights were the celebrities of the time. Theatres were owned by aristocrats who offered their patronage, which comes close to our conception of sponsorship. There was a competition between the theatres and between the playwrights to attract the biggest audience (and make more money). The most famous theatres were The Globe, The White Hart, The Rose to mention a few. The Globe is closely connected with William Shakespeare who had it built in 1598.
Elizabethan theatre was in principle similar to a modern theatre, but in many ways different from the stages we see today. Most importantly it was quite primitive when it came to lighting and other effects. There was a trap door in the stage floor, and there would be several rooms on the stage to indicate different scenes and settings. Since there was no lighting, plays would be performed only during daytime. All the actors were men; female parts were played by male adolescents, which was usual in ancient Greece as well. New performances were announced by a flag at the top of the theatre building or by firing a cannon. In addition, the theatres would have a herald who announced the new play on street corners. It is a question how much the audience understood of the often pompous and poetic language the actors used. But what is certain is that the theatre was immensely popular with people of all categories and classes.

Elements and Techniques

The plot could often be quite complicated, and it included all the popular elements such as sword fights, murder, unrequited love, revenge, betrayal, ghosts, witches, and sorcery. The playwrights knew how to take advantage of the fact that most people were superstitious. Another technique, which is still a common feature in both tragedies and comedies, was to let someone have information which was not intended for him, for example by letting him overhear a conversation from a concealed position. This eavesdropping would then incite him to take action, and the play was on. In many of Shakespeare's plays another popular element is mistaken identity. The protagonist would then dress up in disguise, perhaps even as a woman, and in that way be able to alter the course of the plot for his own benefit. This technique is widely used in comedies, as the audience then has information which is kept from some of the characters; and the complications that follow have an imminent comical potential.

The Tragedy

As mentioned, the playwrights often borrowed plots and intrigues from the ancient Greek theatre tradition. This is true especially for tragedies. Many renaissance tragedies, both in England and France have elements that can be traced back to the father of Greek tragedy, Aiskylos. A tragedy is a particularly strong way of moving an audience. Certain features usually separate the tragedy from being just a sentimental piece that just makes you sad. Some of the basic tragic elements are for example when the protagonist is forced into fatal actions caused either by a flaw in his personality or by circumstances beyond his control. In a tragedy, disaster will strike against the good forces and the positive elements will eventually be defeated by the evil. The innocent and benevolent character is somehow driven into an escalating line of destructive actions that will usually end in death. The last scene of Romeo and Juliet is a classic example; it is not only that the two lovers can't have each other; they both perish in an unnecessary and self-inflicted death. Death was in general a mandatory ingredient of a tragedy, in most cases the death of the good protagonist caused either by himself directly or by circumstances that he has incited himself. A tragedy is supposed to make you sad and angry, but not everything that makes you sad and angry is a tragedy.

Romeo and Juliet

Opphavsmann: Brian Sibley

Hamlet - an Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Hamlet - an Introduction (88074)

Along with Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet is Shakespeare's most famous, most played and most quoted tragedy. Like many of his plays, the original plot is borrowed from other sources; in this case a legend from Danish history, or, as later research has it, from an ancient Irish myth. In any case, Shakespeare has taken the story and turned it into a great drama of man's struggle with his own imperfection and vulnerability. The drama has all the expected ingredients of a tense and thrilling tragedy: seven people dead either by stabbing, poison, or suicide, a ghost, revenge, mistaken identity, unfulfilled love, insanity, sword fights; and in the middle of all this a bewildered protagonist who is betrayed into a course of action with fatal consequences.

Plot Summary

Hamlet
Fotograf: Corbis

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (which is the full title of the play) returns from studies abroad to find that his father, the King, is dead, and that his uncle, Claudius, has declared himself king and is going to be married to his mother. His father's ghost appears to Hamlet and tells him that he was murdered by his brother. Hamlet is bewildered and thinks of different ways of avenging his father, he even contemplates suicide. By accident, he kills the King's counsellor, Polonius, when he mistakes him for his uncle hidden behind the drapes of his mother's cabinet. Polonius's daughter, Ophelia, is fond of Hamlet, and he of her, but as Hamlet puts on an act of insanity to cover up his quest for revenge he puts her off quite brutally and she commits suicide. Hamlet arranges a play that is an imitation of the murder of the king. Claudius interrupts the play, revealing his guilt, and that he knows that Hamlet knows. He then unsuccessfully tries to have Hamlet murdered. In the last, dramatic scene there is a mock sword fight where one of the swords has a poisoned blade, and this is meant for Hamlet. The Queen drinks from the cup of poison by mistake and dies. The conflict now takes a serious turn. Hamlet is hurt, but his fighting companion is by accident hit with the poisoned sword, and dies. Then Hamlet stabs the king with the same sword and the King dies. Eventually Hamlet finds that he cannot live with all this and takes his own life and dies in the arms of his friend Horatio.

Hamlet, a True Renaissance Man

Though the play may seem a bit overdramatized and melodramatic to us today, it gives a good impression of what Shakespeare and other poets and playwrights of the era were occupied with: Man's complexity and his struggle to come to terms with his own universe. This is what the term humanism refers to, and Hamlet is a prominent example of this approach to understanding human nature. In his bewildered and confused state of mind Hamlet becomes the very image of man's shortcomings, contradictions, beliefs and fears. He struggles with his own duality to have his revenge and find redemption. This is illustrated brilliantly in the famous quote, "To be or not to be, that is the question" when Hamlet is reflecting on suicide as a way out of his predicament. But more importantly, in his anguish he turns to himself to sort out his calamities rather than to God or to some spiritual advisor. He may have our sympathy for what he is up against, but he clearly has his faults and flaws. Consequently, although the drama may be a bit over the top, we can still believe in Hamlet, because he is not a hero, he is human.

The Language of the Elizabethan Age

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Language of the Elizabethan Age (88236)

“Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee –
I have thee not and yet I see thee still!
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?”

You may not get it at first glance, but read it again, and read it aloud. Listen to the way the poetic language seems to flow freely in a melodic rhythm along the lines. It is the language of the Renaissance theatre.
The lines are from Shakespeare’s Macbeth (Act II, Scene I) when Macbeth is getting ready to murder King Duncan of Scotland.

Anglo-Saxon

From 1200 to 1400 the situation in England was quite chaotic when it comes to language. Celtic, French, Norse, and Anglo-Saxon were spoken in different parts of the country, and no attempts were made to standardize. The Normans were keen on introducing French as an official language, but the language that gradually manifested itself was Anglo-Saxon, which was spoken by a majority of the people, and is what developed into standard English. The language of the church was Latin, but in 1539 the Bible was translated into English. So the everyday language spoken in the 16th century was largely what we would recognise as modern English. Grammar and vocabulary were slightly different from today, but the language would be clearly recognisable. There would of course be varieties of spoken English depending on social identity and class, and Celtic survived in “the fringe” - the northern part of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, where it is spoken even today.

The Language of the Theatre

The language we today associate with Elizabethan English is what we meet in poetry or texts written for the theatre, and that kind of language is not exactly what we would call everyday English. The poets and playwrights played with words, they invented new ones, and words pop up that are today obsolete or archaic. And the texts would often include references to Greek or Roman mythology. This will naturally make the texts somewhat difficult to understand for modern readers, but nonetheless they demonstrate an artful and masterly control of language that really should be both appreciated and admired.

A Midsummernight's Dream by William Shakespeare

If you take a closer look, there are some traits that to a certain degree seem to be common characteristics of this language. Verb forms would for example often have endings determined by the subject, e.g. thou dost instead of you do, and he doth. The pronouns would be thee, thou and ye instead of you, and thine and thy instead of your / yours. Abbreviations were different from what we would use today: 'tis instead of it's and lock'd instead of locked for example. The characters would also ask questions without the auxiliary verb "to do" – like: "What say you?" or "Goes Fleance with you?" Shakespeare could for example also create verbs out of nouns, e.g. "He words me" instead of "He speaks to me" and people would understand though it had never been used before. Other poetic techniques were for example unexpected juxtapositions like "Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair" which make you stop and reflect. Besides this particular one has a beautiful alliteration (words beginning with the same letter or sound). Playwrights like Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare had a stunning creativity and gift with words, and seemingly an enormous vocabulary.

Many of Shakespeare's texts are written in so-called "blank verse" which is a style of poetry that does not rhyme, but has a certain rhythmic pattern, or meter. This gives the lines a melodic sound and a floating diction that comes alive when it is read aloud. The lines from Macbeth (top of page) are a good example.

Activities

1. Choose some lines from Shakespeare and read them aloud, and see how the rhythm and poetic language make the text come alive.
2. Shakespeare is probably the most quoted writer of all times. Go on the net and find some famous quotes by Shakespeare.

Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare (18983)

Romeo and Juliet has been immortalised in ballets, paintings and operas. Most people are familiar with the movie adaptations with Olivia Hussey as Juliet (1968) and Leonardo diCaprio as Romeo (1996). Why does Shakespeare's play keep captivating people? Is it because it raises the always relevant question; does love conquer all?

Romeo and Juliet / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/47635

(*Read the text and then go to:Romeo and Juliet - Tasks*)

Romeo and Juliet

The most famous scene in *Romeo and Juliet* is Act 2, Scene 2, which is commonly referred to as the balcony scene, even if Shakespeare did not mention any balcony in his play. Romeo has just met Juliet at the ball arranged by her family and instantly falls in love with the young girl. Because of a feud Romeo's family, the Montagues, have with Juliet's family, the Capulets, Romeo is in disguise. In this scene, we meet Romeo after he has climbed the wall into the Capulets' garden. Candlelight appears in Juliet's bedroom window and this enthralls him.

Search for *Romeo, Juliet, balcony scene, 1968* on YouTube. In the 1968 version of the movie the seventeen year old Olivia Hussey is starring in the role as Juliet. Watch the scene.

yonder	over there
that	because
thou her maid art	you her maid is
vestal livery	virginal costume worn by the ancient Roman goddesses
discourse	narrate, tell
entreat	beg
doth	does
thou art	you are
wherefore	why
bestride	step across
thy	your
thou wilt not	you will not
thyself	yourself
owes	owns
doff	get rid of
and for thy name	and in exchange of
thus bescreened	concealed that way
stumblest on my counsel	talk
if either thee dislike	if you don’t like any of the names
how camest thou hither	how did you come here
kinsmen	relatives
henceforth	from now on

o'erpertch	climb over
no stop	no obstacle
alack	alas
enmity	hostility
and but thou love me	unless you love me
prorogued	postponed
wanting	lacking
prompt me to inquire	made me ask
wert thou	were you
else	otherwise
bepaint	paint with colour
fain	willingly
dwell on form	do things correctly
dost thou	do you
Jove	Jove, or Jupiter, was the king of Gods, he was repeatedly unfaithful
nay	no
too fond	too foolish
havior	behaviour
strange	distant
but that thou overheard'st	except that you overheard it
ere I was ware	before I was aware of it
impute	relate to
discovered	revealed
yonder	the distant
orb	the elliptical path the moon has around the Earth
lest	for fear that
idolatry	worship of idols
beauteous flow'r	beautiful flower
frank	generous
anon	right now
afeard	afraid
procure	manage
beseech	beg
falc'ner's voice	a person that hunts with falcons calling for his falcon
to lure this tassel gentle back again	the falcon is lured back by his master's call
Echo	a nymph in Greek mythology who loved her own voice
attending	listening
wanton	a person that is playful or immoral
gyves	fetters

What is referred to as the Balcony Scene, is Act II, Scene II. Read the full script here. Use the vocabulary list and Romeo and Juliet - explanatory notes when necessary.

Romeo and Juliet (ca. 1591)

Act 2, Scene 2

[Capulet's orchard.]
ROMEO [Coming forward.]:

JULIET appears above at a window.

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET
Ay me!

ROMEO
She speaks:
O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET
O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO
[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO
I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET
What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO
By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET
My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO
Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET
How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO
With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET
If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO
Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET
I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO
I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET
By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO
By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET
Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'
And I will take thy word: yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries
Then say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse an say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO
Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops--

JULIET
O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO
What shall I swear by?

JULIET
Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO
If my heart's dear love--

JULIET
Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

ROMEO
O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET
What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

ROMEO
The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO
Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

JULIET
But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

Nurse calls within
I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

Exit, above

ROMEO
O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET, above

JULIET
Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse
[Within] Madam!

JULIET
I come, anon.--But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee--

Nurse
[Within] Madam!

JULIET
By and by, I come:--
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.

ROMEO
So thrive my soul--

JULIET
A thousand times good night!

Exit, above

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from
their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

Retiring

Re-enter JULIET, above

JULIET
Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

ROMEO
It is my soul that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET
Romeo!

ROMEO
My dear?

JULIET
At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO
At the hour of nine.

JULIET
I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO
Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET
I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO
And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET
'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone:
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO
I would I were thy bird.

JULIET
Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! parting is such
sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

Exit above

ROMEO
Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.
Exit

Further Activities

- Romeo and Juliet - Tasks

Compare *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*

- West Side Story

William Shakespeare - His Life and Works

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
William Shakespeare - His Life and Works (19341)

William Shakespeare / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/47631

Even though **William Shakespeare** (1564 – 1616) is recognised as the greatest poet and playwright in the English language, little is actually known about him.

Church records confirm that he was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a small country town, a four days' walk from London in Elizabethan England. It is assumed that he attended the local King's New Grammar School where boys were provided with basic reading and writing skills. Shakespeare's works are on the curriculum at universities throughout the world, but there is no record that the great writer attended one himself. We know, though, that he, as an eighteen-year-old, married a woman who was 8 years his senior and that they lost their son, Hamnet, when he was 11.

Career in London

William Shakespeare Grave,

It is not confirmed exactly when Shakespeare left for London and his acting career, but it is documented that he performed as an actor before Queen Elizabeth I and he is listed as a shareholder in a theatre company by the name of Lord Chamberlain's Company in 1594. At least two years before that he must have started his immense writing production because a rival playwright described Shakespeare as an "upstart crow"! In 1599, Shakespeare's name appears again as one of the owners of the theatre that will always be associated with his name, the Globe Theatre, which today is reconstructed and located on the banks of the River Thames in London. James I succeeded Elizabeth I on the throne, and in 1603 Shakespeare's name appears among the crew in the theatre company, The King's Men. This entitled the actors and playwrights to perform before the king and his court and it provided extra money. It is generally assumed that his famous play *Macbeth* was written as a tribute to James I and his patronage. Furthermore, the playwright Ben Johnson acclaimed his contemporary rival's work as "not of an age, but for all time."

Almost forty plays, among them tragedies such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, and comedies such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, along with 154 sonnets, are credited to Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's Last Will

Shakespeare's tombstone in Stratford-upon-Avon reveals one of his last wishes:
"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare (forbear)To dig the dust enclosed here! Blest (blessed) be ye (you) man that spares thes (these) stones And curst (cursed) be he that moues (moves) my bones".

In his Last Will he expressed another wish. The only thing he wanted his wife to inherit was his second best bed.

Cobbe painting of Shakespeare

Since little is known about Shakespeare, how do we know what he looked liked? According to one of the most distinguished Shakespeare scholars this painting may be a portrait of the great writer from ab. 1610. The painting which has been in a collection belonging to an old Irish family, the Cobbes, appeared just a few years ago.

Shakespeare in Love

Even if the romantic comedy film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) is not historically accurate, it might give you an idea of the young William Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) at the threshold of his playwright career and Elizabethan London. To a great extent the film is fictional, but it contains many references to Shakespeare's works, and a lot of the characters that we meet were his actual contemporaries. The film is set in London in 1593 and we meet the young writer when he is suffering from a writer's block pondering how to approach the play we recognise as *Romeo and Juliet*. Christopher Marlowe, a fellow playwright whom Shakespeare was on friendly terms with, ignites his inspiration, when suggesting that the play with the preliminary title, *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter*, should portray Romeo and Ethel from two contesting families in Verona. In contemporary England, women were barred from Elizabethan theatre stages, and men had to play female characters.

Suggested Further Activity

1. William Shakespeare, His Life and Works - Tasks
2. Romeo and Juliet
3. History of English in 10 Minutes, Chapter 3 - Shakespeare

Shakespeare's Sonnets

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Shakespeare's Sonnets (99015)

William Shakespeare was not only a celebrated playwright; he was also a skilful poet. His plays are a demonstration of poetic talent, and they often include songs that are lyrical comments on the plot or declarations of love between the protagonists. But Shakespeare was also a master of a particularly artful kind of poetry – the sonnet.

The Sonnet

This kind of poetry is not for the amateur. A sonnet is a poem that has to comply with a certain system of rhyme and rhythm. The Shakespearian sonnet has fourteen lines with the rhyme scheme abab, cdcd, efef, gg, in a 4+4+4+2 structure. The sonnet will open for the writer's creativity within these strict rules, like a sport for poets who wants to excel and show off their word craft. The sonnet may present the poet's view on certain aspects of life, the world, himself – but most often the sonnet is about love. Many of Shakespeare's sonnets look like passionate love letters to a lady he is in love with, while others are a sort of dialogue with a friend. Scholars have ever since wanted to find out the autobiographical background of Shakespeare's sonnets, but so far no one has succeeded in any identification of the characters. His first collection of sonnets was published in 1609 (probably without Shakespeare's approval) and tells the tale of a romantic narrator who conveys his love to a lady or renders his reflections of different aspects of life. Some of them may seem like poetic finger exercises and a bit monotone in their rigorous style. But still, Shakespeare's sonnets clearly demonstrate his poetic skills and his immaculate way with words.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot in the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

One to Watch: Shakespeare in Love

The John Madden film *"Shakespeare in Love"*,from 1998, is an interesting story about Shakespeare's work as a young playwright and how Shakespeare may have been inspired to write Sonnet 18. The film plot is purely fictional, but gives a credible presentation of how young Will was infused by love for the beautiful lady Viola, and wrote her secret declarations of love. The film is also a documentation of the writing conditons of a playwright at the time. It was much like an industrial process, where the owner of the theatre was waiting impatiently for another success, and the playwright had to deliver. The film has references to elements from Shakespeare's plays, such as the protagonist in disguise, which was a common Shakespearian effect. In addition, the affair between William and lady Viola bears a clear resemblance to another famous Shakespearian couple – Romeo and Juliet. The film casts a line of prominent actors, such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Joseph Fiennes, Ben Affleck, and Judy Dench as Queen Elisabeth I. Highly recommended.

Joseph Fiennes as young William Shakespeare
Fotograf: Laurie Sparham

Activities

- Read the sonnet above out loud and note how its rhythmic pattern comes alive.
- Go over it carefully and see if it complies with the rhyme scheme of the sonnet.
- What is the theme of Sonnet 18?
- Point out the line where the poet declares the everlasting beauty of his lady.
- The poet even proclaims the everlasting life of his poem - in which line? How did his prediction turn out?
- Try your hand at the sonnet. Choose your theme (it may be love, but not necessarily) and remember to follow the rhyme pattern described in the introduction.

Elizabethan Lyrics

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Elizabethan Lyrics (99030)

These were the pop songs of the 16th and 17th century. People loved the lyrics and tunes of the latest hit, and the musicians and singers were highly esteemed by the public. Hymns and chorales were sung in the churches, and singing was a popular entertainment at any social get-together. In the streets the ballad singers rendered traditional folk songs or perhaps a musical comment on a recent event. Many of the songs were collected in books of “ayres” (an ayre, or air, is the same as a tune or melody). The first compilation, *Songs and Sonnets*, was published in 1557 and became the inspiration and reference for many poets and singers / songwriters of the Elizabethan Age.

Shakespeare included songs in many of his plays. This song from *Twelfth Night* (1602) is one of his most famous and most quoted songs.

If Music Be the Food of Love, Play On (William Shakespeare, 1664-1616)

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.

Renaissance Music

Poetry is the language of love both today and in the Elizabethan Age. Thomas Campion’s poem is a beautiful declaration of love for his lady:

There is a Garden in Her Face (Thomas Campion, 1567-1620)

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow which none may buy
Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow.
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,
Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,

Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till cherry-ripe themselves do cry.

The following two jesting songs praise some familiar human vices.

The Drinking Song (John Fletcher, 1579-1625)

Drink to-day, and drown all sorrow,
You shall perhaps not do it to-morrow.
Best, while you have it, use your breath;
There is no drinking after death.

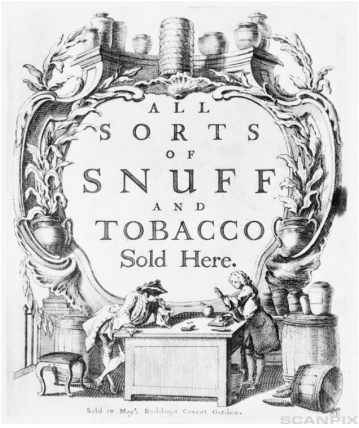
Wine works the heart up, wakes the wit;
There is no cure 'gainst age but it.
It helps the headache, cough, and tisic,
And is for all diseases physic.

Then let us swill, boys, for our health;
Who drinks well, loves the commonwealth.
And he that will to bed go sober,
Falls with the leaf still in October.

("tisic" is short for "phthisic" which was then another name for consumption or tuberculosis, for which alcohol was a good remedy according to Fletcher…)

Tobacco, Tobacco (Tobias Hume, d. 1645)

Tobacco, tobacco, sing sweetly for tobacco!
Tobacco is like love, oh love it;
For you see, I will prove it.
Love maketh lean the fat man's tumour,
So doth tobacco.
Love still dries up the wanton humour,
So doth tobacco.
Love makes ken sail from shore to shore,
So doth tobacco.
'Tis fond love often makes men poor,
So doth tobacco.
Love makes men scorn all coward fears,
So doth tobacco.
Love often sets men by the ears,
So doth tobacco.
Tobacco, tobacco,
Sing sweetly for tobacco.
Tobacco is like love, oh love it;
For you see I have proved it.



Tobacco Advertisement from the 17th century
Fotograf: Corbis

(The song indicates the popularity of smoking after it was introduced from the American colonies by Sir Walter Raleigh in the early 17th century.)

John Dowland's poetry is another manifestation of love as the universal poetic theme.

Come Again (John Dowland, 1563-1626)

Come again:
Sweet love doth now invite,
Thy graces that refrain,
To do me due delight,
To see, to hear, to touch, to kiss, to die
With thee again in sweetest sympathy.
To see, to hear, to touch, to kiss, to die
With thee again in sweetest sympathy.

Come again
That I may cease to mourn,
Through thy unkind disdain:
For now left and forlorn,
I sit, I sigh, I weep, I faint, I die
In deadly pain and endless misery.

All the day
The sun that lends me shine,
By frowns do cause med pine;
And feeds me with delay,
Her smiles my springs, that make my joys to grow.
Her frowns the Winters of my woe.
Her smiles my springs, that make my joys to grow.
Her frown the winters of my woe.

All the night
My sleeps are full of dreams,
My eyes are full of streams
My heart takes no delight.

John Dowland was a musician who composed his own songs and played the lute, a common instrument in the Elizabethan Age. The Queen herself played both the lute and the virginal, which was an early sort of keyboard.
John Dowland died nearly 400 years ago. It is an interesting fact that British rock star Sting made an album of Dowland's songs in 2006 ("Songs from the Labyrinth"), which goes to show that his songs are still appealing material for a contemporary performing artist.

Activities

- How do you think these poems would have been written today? Try and make a transcription into a modern language.
- Go on the net and find other poems by John Dowland. Choose one you like and read it out loud in class.
- Check out YouTube for the Sting performance of "Come Again".

The Enlightenment

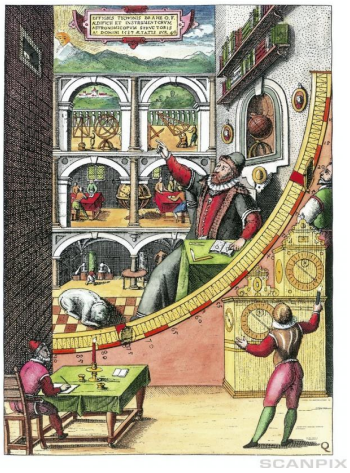
The Enlightenment - An Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Enlightenment - An Introduction (88484)

It is interesting to see how different trends and eras of our cultural history emerge as reactions to the previous period. The correlation between action and reaction drives a cultural development forward in what could be called the dialectics of culture. The period we call the Enlightenment came as a response to the cultural trend of classicism, and the Age of Reason (the Enlightenment) would later be succeeded by the Romantic Period, which again would pave the way for Realism.

The Age of Reason

There is also a close connection between culture and contemporary traits in society such as science, politics and religion. For example the birth of modern science during the late 16th and early 17th century manifested itself in the way the writers and painters presented their arts. Gone were the ideals and references to ancient Greece and Rome, the theatre was no longer fashionable; now people wanted to read about or be told facts about the fascinating universe around them. The 18th century was a busy period for travellers and seafarers, and people were curious about what was out there.



Science Comes Alive (Tycho Brahe, Danish Astronomer)

The French philosopher Rene Descartes died in 1650 and he left a legacy which would be carried on by a group of scholars who were called The French Encyclopaedists. This was the new trend – facts and figures categorized and sorted alphabetically. What was interesting was only what could be understood, explained, and proved. Scholars and intellectuals would argue that man's capability to reason was the basis for his very existence. Man's rationality was a gift from God; this was clearly argued by the philosophers, and even launched as a proof of God's existence. But in general the religious view was only vaguely addressed as the spiritual aspect did not go along with the demand for scientific evidence. The two main contributors to the English literature of the Enlightenment were Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" (1719) and Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" (1726) are both prominent examples of how the writers of the era endeavoured to enlighten people. The two books are monumental in world literature, and nearly three centuries later are still acclaimed by readers and critics.

The New World

The 18th century was also a period of industrial development and overseas trade. The expansion of the British Empire soon stretched from the colonies in North America to India and Australia. New companies were established (e.g. The East India Company and The Hudson Bay Company) to secure the shipping of raw materials for the mills in England during the first industrial revolution. Tea, cotton, timber, furs, spices brought huge profits for the companies, and the money was invested in new profitable enterprises. Both the Bank of England and the London Stock Exchange were founded during this period.
The colonies in North America won their independence in 1776 after their war of liberation from England, and the United States was born. That same year James Cook set foot on a continent on the other side of the world, and Australia was on the map. The British navy was strong and seemed undefeatable. “Rule Britannia” was not just an empty slogan, Britain definitely ruled the waves. This British supremacy would increase and go on for another two centuries until the mid-20th when the Empire was dissolved and the leading position in the world was taken over by the USA.

Fact or Fiction?

The Literature of the Enlightenment was marked by this interest in the new world and the attention to scientific progress. Travelling accounts and guides, reports, journals and factual descriptions dominated. The writers would often take a professional liberty to freshen up factual texts with fictive elements and fantasies. But the public didn’t care as long as they were entertained by thrilling descriptions of some unexplored and distant place with fantastic creatures and people. Monthly magazines appeared on the literary scene with articles about new discoveries and inventions. Some writers of the Enlightenment would also take an interest in the political agenda and criticise what they saw as immoral or uncivil practice. An effective method to do so was the political satire, of which Jonathan Swift was the master.

Jonathan Swift and Gulliver's Travels

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Jonathan Swift and Gulliver's Travels (88091)

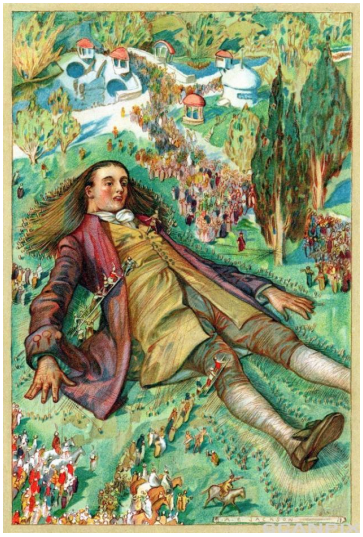
Jonathan Swift is one of the most profiled writers of the Enlightenment. His most famous work is*Gulliver's Travels*, which is a fantastic account of Gulliver's voyages to remote and unknown territories. But it is more than a fantastic story, it is a biting satire of what Swift saw as ridiculous and immoral practice in his contemporary 18th century England.

Swift and His Times

Jonathan Swift's works clearly demonstrate the down-to-earth rationalism that characterises the intellectuals of the era. Swift was a keen critic of his time and its political leaders, and was not afraid of challenging what he saw as foolish and ridiculous traditions and practice. Swift was born in Ireland in 1667 and moved to London to study theology; he later returned to Ireland and was ordained as a priest in the Church of Ireland.
In his essays and pamphlets he wanted to reveal the vanity and often immoral practice of the rich and powerful, including the church. His writing was sharp and his method was the satire. Satire is a particularly bold way of exposing blameworthy or suspect phenomena in public affairs. His most famous work is *Gulliver's Travels* which was published in 1726.

Gulliver's Travels

Gulliver's Travels is the classic Enlightenment story, and it can be read at many levels. Imaginative stories about travels to exotic places inhabited by strange people and creatures were popular entertainment during the Enlightenment. Many children have also over the years been thrilled by the exciting adventures of Gulliver. But it is in fact much more than a children's tale or a travel narrative. Primarily *Gulliver's Travels* is a biting satire on the absurdities of 18th century England. But the story can also be read as a parody of other popular travel accounts, e.g. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe which was published some years before Gulliver. It is interesting that the Danish/Norwegian Ludvig Holberg also picked up this trend in "Niels Klim's Travels to the Underworld" (1741).



Gulliver in Lilliput

Fotograf: Heritage Image Partnership

Four Voyages

The full title reads: “Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In four Parts, by Lemuel Gulliver, first a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships.” (They had a way with book titles at the time.) The four parts include: 1) A Voyage to Lilliput, 2) A Voyage to Brobdingnag, 3) A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubbdubdrib, Luggnagg, and Japan, 4) A Voyage to the Land of Houyhnhms. The book also has a section of maps to give evidence that these countries really exist. This is a well-known technique used in tales and legends to make the stories more credible. However, Gulliver’s maps are of course rather inaccurate…

On his voyages to “several remote nations” the narrator encounters different people and experiences a “reality” that at second glance bears a clear resemblance to Swift’s contemporary environment. Like for example when he on his first voyage meets the small “lilliputs” that are at an endless and pointless war with neighbouring Blefescu. Later he escapes from pirates, finds himself on a flying island, becomes the guest of honour in the court of Brobdignag – in short, it is a spectacular tale of imagination that was both cherished and criticised at the time. The book has today a monumental position in world literature and is an object lesson in the art of satire.

Satire

The method that Swift uses is to put the narrator in a position where he has the chance to describe his own society, for example, in a conversation with an interested listener.

Our extract is a brilliant example of how this technique works. It is from the fourth journey where Gulliver has arrived in the land of Houyhnhnms – which is inhabited by a civilized and highly intelligent race of horses. (If you pronounce the name it will sound close to the neighing of a horse.) These horses have a race of creatures that they use for slave labour, called the Yahoos. They are primitive, savage, and disgusting, and gradually it becomes clear that they are actually human beings. Due to his resemblance to them Gulliver is suspected of being a Yahoo, but as he learns the language of the Houyhnhnms he can explain that he belongs to a superior race, Man, and is again invited to explain and describe his own world to his “master”. But it appears that some phenomena in Gulliver’s world are hard to understand for his listener.

In the extract you will find several references to incidents and practices in Swift’s own 18th century England. For example, at the time there was an on-going debate about the use of symbols and images in religious worship, and about the symbolic meaning of the Holy Communion. His readers would clearly recognise the references, and some would be offended and accuse him of blasphemy, but many of them would see Swift’s point and agree with him.

The Master is curious and finds Gulliver’s account both interesting and at the same time hard to believe, but gradually he concludes that Gulliver’s race must be closely related to the Yahoos.

(It is an interesting fact that the internet search engine Yahoo is named after the work force in the land of Houyhnhnms.)

Follow the link below and read the two extracts from Gulliver's Travels, then work in groups with the following tasks.

From Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

Activities

1. Make a list of the institutions, phenomena, and professions Swift satirizes in these excerpts.
2. Do you, as a modern reader, recognise some of Swift’s descriptions? Give examples of modern events that fit with Swift’s satire.
3. Why does “The Master” suspect Gulliver’s race of being closely related to The Yahoos?
4. The Hoyhnhnms are intelligent and clever and belong to a race far above the Yahoos, yet we recognise them as horses. What do you think is the point Swift tries to make?
5. How does Swift present the legal system and court of law in Gulliver’s account? Do you see any relevance with today’s law

practice in his description?

6. Swift's writings were both cherished and criticised by his audience. Who do you think would criticise his work, and what were their arguments?

Satire - Definition and Approach

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Satire - Definition and Approach (88487)

A satire is a subtle and bold literary technique. It can be a striking tool to pinpoint and raise criticism against e.g. political practice or other official affairs. The satire may as such be a strong weapon for opponents who want to reveal faulty, silly, or immoral practices by the authorities. It is also a way to highlight common proceedings that in fact are questionable or even foolish. But writing a good satire takes some skill and one will have to step lightly not to overexpose the object and give away the point too early. A well-written satire will cunningly strip down a certain practice and make it come out as the folly it really is.

To write a satire you have to take a step back and create some distance to the phenomenon you want to focus on, and describe it in an objective and unbiased manner. The narrative must be set in a credible context. That is, the satire will only work when the story or plot comes as an unpretentious presentation, and is told in a natural and effortless style without lecturing or exaggerating. A relevant technique is to let the narrator be either a somewhat naïve observer, e.g. a visitor from a foreign country or different culture, or someone who is given the chance to describe a phenomenon to an inquisitive audience. The clue is not to give away the critical attitude, but just to give an objective account and leave the rest to the reader. It is also important that the topic is both familiar and recognisable for the reader.

The optimal effect of a satire comes when the reader, after being entertained by the presentation, gradually or eventually gets the message. The good satire is a parallel so close to the real-life phenomenon that it will take some reflection to understand its satirical nature. The satire should not be confused with irony or parody which may be used for the same critical purpose, but are quite different approaches to the object.

Write Your Own Satire

Below are some themes for possible satirical texts. First read the definition and suggested approach above. Then choose a topic that you think deserves a satirical presentation and write your own satire.

Halloween
Norwegian graduation celebration (“russefeiring”)
American presidential campaign and election
Young people’s partying traditions
Irony in everyday communication
Royalty and traditions
Court practice (the truth doesn’t count if it can’t be proved)
Loneliness and a thousand “friends” on Facebook
Blogging practice
Professional sports (money talks)
TV shows with celebrities who are challenged to make fools of themselves
Big Brother TV

A Modest Proposal by Jonathan Swift

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
A Modest Proposal (92941)

The following text is an abridged version of an article which was published in 1729 and written by Jonathan Swift. Its full title was: *"A Modest Proposal for preventing the Children of poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country; and for making them beneficial to the Public"*

A Modest Proposal is a masterpiece of ironic logic and its scientific approach clearly puts it in an enlightenment tradition. It the text Swift is suggesting a "remedy" for the poverty and overpopulation in Ireland. Swift was a minister in Dublin, Ireland, and he was strongly appalled by how the Irish people were subdued by the English government and its local representatives.

A Modest Proposal

By Jonathan Swift

I am assured by our merchants that a boy or a girl, before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most on the Exchange, which cannot turn to account either to the parents or to the kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males, which is more than we allow to sheep, black-cattle, or swine, and my reason is that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year old be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune throughout the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year if tolerably nursed increaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Working with the text

1. Satire is a subtle style to criticise questionable practice, often political or public affairs. Check the related material “Satire – Definition and Approach” and compare with Swift’s article.
2. Do the same with the related excerpt from Gulliver’s Travels, and compare with this article. Do his technique and approach differ in the two texts?
3. Find examples in the article of Swift’s style and language that classifies him as an Enlightenment writer.
4. Discuss an interpretation of the last paragraph of the article.
5. Swift hopes that his thoughts would *“not be liable to the least objection”*. How do you think this text was received? Would the reaction be different today?
6. Consider both this article and the related excerpt from Gulliver’s Travels; what do you think was Swift’s agenda with his writing, and what do you think of his approach?

Another approach to A Modest Proposal

A Modest Proposal by Jonathan Swift

A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General (104217)

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was a master of irony and satire. He was a Protestant minister in Dublin and witnessed how the English colonialists treated the Irish population, particularly the Catholics. He wanted to alert the public about pompous and self-important aristocrats and politicians whose practice brought misery on the common people. His most famous work is Gulliver's Travels (1726), where he gives Gulliver (and himself) the opportunity to describe the English society to a stranger who becomes both surprised and appalled by Gulliver's account.
Satire and irony are difficult literary devices, as the writer runs the risk of being misunderstood. So in the following poem, Swift reveals his satirical agenda already in the title, to make it clear that this "elegy" is not to be taken seriously. But if the elegy is unserious, Swift's point is certainly not. An elegy is usually a sort of obituary to commemorate the deceased in a praising manner. But in Swift's elegant satirical style, the late general is given a most unflattering posthumous reputation.

A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General

His Grace! Impossible. what, dead!
Of old age too, and in is bed!
And could that mighty warrior fall,
And so inglorious, after all?
Well, since he's gone, no matter how,
The last loud trump must wake him now,
And, trust me, as the noise grows stronger,
He'd wish to sleep a little longer.
And could he be indeed so old
As by the newspapers we're told?
Threescore, I think, is pretty high;
This world he cumber'd long enough;
He burnt his candle to the snuff;
And that's the reason some folks think,
he left behind so great a stink.
Behold his funeral appears,
Nor widows' sighs, nor orphans' tears
Wont at such times each heart to pierce,
Attend the progress of his hearse.
But what of that? his friends may say
He had his honours in his day.
True to his profit and his pride,
He made them weep before he died.
Come hither, all ye empty things!
Ye bubbles rais'd by breath of kings!
Who float upon the tide of state;
Come hither, and behold your fate!
Let pride be taught you by this rebuke,
How very mean a thing's a duke;
From all his ill-got honours flung,
Turn'd to that dirt from whence he sprung.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Point out some satirical and ironical elements in the poem.
- What is the irony in the fact that widows and orphans did not weep or follow him to the grave? ("Hearse" is the vehicle carrying the coffin at a funeral.)
- How does Swift comment on the General's age? How old was he?
- Why is it mentioned that the General died in his bed?
- What does it mean that "he burnt his candle to the snuff" – and what was the effect?
- What may be implied in the lines "The last loud trump must wake him now" and "He'd wish to sleep a little longer"?
- Why do you think Swift already in the title announces that this elegy is a satire and not an authentic obituary?
- What do you think is Swift's intention with this text?
- What is the difference between irony and satire?
- Follow the links below and read more about Jonathan Swift and his satirical writing, and about satire as a literary method.

Jonathan Swift and Gulliver's Travels

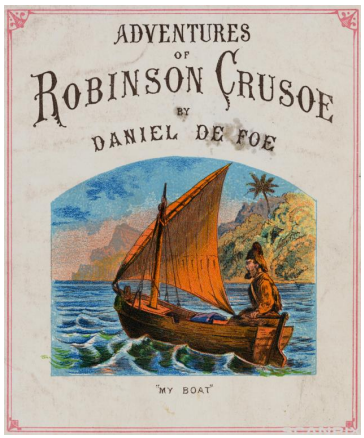
Satire - Definition and Approach

Robinson Crusoe - the Enlightenment Man

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Robinson Crusoe - The Enlightenment Man (88673)

When Daniel Defoe published Robinson Crusoe in 1719 he had obviously studied the popular story about Alexander Selkirk and his “Cruising Voyage round the World”. Selkirk was stranded on an island for five years, his story was told by the captain of the ship that rescued him, and was published in 1712.

These were the times of tales from distant shores and adventurous travels. Reading about remote and undiscovered places was the entertainment that really went down well with the audience of the early 18th century. It was the time of the Enlightenment, and Defoe’s mission was to enlighten and entertain. The full title of the book goes: “The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner: Who lived eight and twenty years in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last strangely deliver’d by Pyrates. Written by himself.” Selkirk was also stranded on an island west of Chile, and Defoe’s story bears a clear resemblance to “The Surprising Account of one Alexander Selkirk written by his own hand”.



Cover for Adventures of Robinson Crusoe
Fotograf: Corbis

The story of Crusoe’s adventures fits brilliantly with the cultural agenda of the Enlightenment. The archetypical enlightenment stories were travelling accounts and diary notes told in a first person narrative where the protagonist had to fight the untamed nature to survive. And that is exactly what Robinson does. With what he can rescue of tools and equipment from the shipwreck, he builds his own little universe, making use of whatever he can find of raw materials on the island. He has to rely on himself entirely, because like he says: “I could not wait for any divine interference to get by.”

And it is not only nature that is wild and untamed. Robinson encounters savage cannibals who come to his island to feast on captives from some other tribe. He rescues one of these captives who is to be eaten by his savage enemies, and he calls him Friday. They end up in a rather peculiar relationship; Friday becomes Robinson’s project. He wants to teach this savage the ways of the civilised world, and convert him to Christianity, the quest of a true English gentleman. In a current perspective this is a somewhat dubious enterprise, but at the time it was only what was expected from a civilised representative of the enlightened world.

Robinson’s progress on the island, as well as with Man Friday is the way man wanted to be seen during the Enlightenment – the conqueror of the primitive and rude, capable of creating a civilised universe around him by a systematic and scientific approach.

The first link is a brief extract from the novel with some task, the second one will give you some issues to discuss in a broader perspective.

From Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

Considering Robinson Crusoe

Benjamin Franklin and Poor Richard

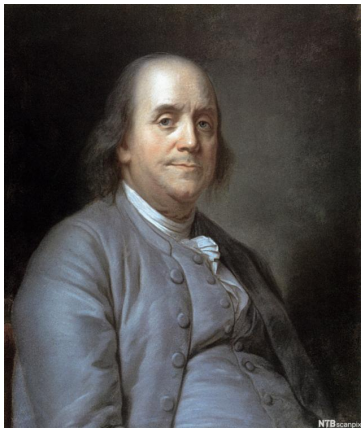
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Benjamin Franklin and Poor Richard (115897)

gifted, editor, printer, archetypical, embodiment, chandlery, frugality, retire, welfare, negotiate, reconciliation, draft(v), culminate, temperance, humility

Throughout our cultural history there are many examples of artists who have displayed their talents in different fields of creativity; writers who also were painters, or even musicians and composers, poets and painters who at the same time were scientists, philosophers or active politicians. These gifted individuals certainly stand out as impressive with their multiple talents; but few, if any at all, can match the multi-genius of Benjamin Franklin (1706-90). He was a writer, an editor and printer, a scientist and inventor, a musician and composer, a philosopher, and a diplomat and politician. He is the archetypical embodiment of the spirit of the Enlightenment, and has more than anyone defined the American idea of the self-made man.

Life and Times

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1706. In his early years he worked in his father's chandlery, as he took little or no interest in school and formal education. He was more interested in his older brother's print shop, which he took over at the age of 16. A year later he moved to Philadelphia, found employment as a printer, and soon after became the owner of his own print shop. His enterprise, frugality and wise investments enabled him to retire from active business at forty-two. From then he dedicated his work and incredible energy to science, politics, diplomacy, and interest in the general welfare of people.



Benjamin Franklin

Fotograf: Joseph Siffred Duplessis

Franklin spent long periods overseas in London and Paris, where he worked as a diplomat, work that was based on his experiences from negotiating a treaty with the Ohio Indians some years previously. As a diplomat and negotiator he worked for a reconciliation between England and the American colonies, but when independence for the colonies was within reach Franklin was one of the key figures arranging the terms of the treaty that ended the American Revolution. He was also chosen as a member of the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The Enlightenment Man

Benjamin Franklin's curiosity and remarkable creativity resulted in a series of successful experiments and inventions. He researched the causes of earthquakes, the benefits of the Gulf Stream to navigation and the connection between nature and electricity which resulted in a theory that culminated in his famous kite experiment and the invention of the lightning rod. He also promoted the idea of public libraries, and was among the pioneers and founders of the American Philosophical Society. His strong belief in the progress of man based on reason and a rational co-existence with nature makes him the prototype enlightenment man.

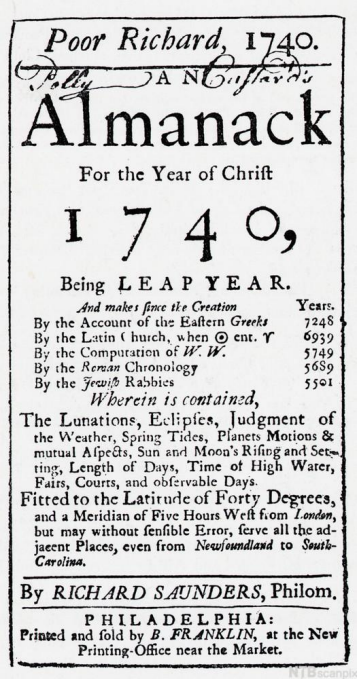
One might ask how is it possible to find time to achieve all this in just one lifetime. The answer may be found in Franklin's two main literary works, *The Autobiography*, which he wrote for his son, and *Poor Richard's Almanac*, which he published in yearly instalments between 1732 and 1758. Franklin tried to lead a frugal and simple life based on a list of moral virtues such as temperance, order, moderation, and humility, mentioning Jesus and Socrates as good role models. Most historians and scholars agree that multi-talented Benjamin Franklin stands out as a unique personality in our cultural history. But despite all his merits and achievements, and although numerous academic and international honours had been bestowed upon him, true to his humble nature he introduced his will with: "I, Benjamin Franklin, of Philadelphia, printer…"

Poor Richard's Almanac

The series of yearly sequels that constitute *Poor Richard's Almanac* is meant as a guideline for conducting a virtuous life and a successful business enterprise. The articles are written in a proverb-like style (*"Remember, time is money."*) and contain information about practical matters such as currency and weather, but also educational reminders and advice for inspiration and guidance. In a somewhat moralising tone the advice is given through "Poor Richard", who is Benjamin Franklin's alter ego.

From Poor Richard's Almanac

“Friends, says he (Poor Richard), and Neighbours, the Taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the Government were the only Ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our Idleness, three times as much by our Pride, and four times as much by our Folly, and from these Taxes the Commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an Abatement. However let us hearken to good Advice, and something may be done for us; God helps them that help themselves, as Poor Richard says in his Almanack of 1733."



Poor Richard, 1740.

AN Almanack

For the Year of Christ

1740,

Being LEAP YEAR.

And makes since the Creation	Years.
By the Account of the Eastern Greeks	7248
By the Latin Church, when ☉ ent. ♈	6939
By the Computation of W. W.	5749
By the Roman Chronology	5689
By the Jewish Rabbies	5501

Wherein is contained,

The Lunations, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aspects, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Fairs, Courts, and observable Days.

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London, but may without sensible Error, serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newfoundland to South-Carolina.

By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.

PHILADELPHIA: Printed and sold by B. FRANKLIN, at the New Printing-Office near the Market.

Title Page of Poor Richard's Almanac for 1740

Fotograf: Bettmann

“Early to Bed and early Rise, makes a Man healthy, wealthy and wise.”

“Work while it is called To-day, for you know not how much you may be hindered To-morrow, which makes Poor Richard say, One To-day is worth two To-morrows; and farther, have you somewhat to do To-morrow, do it To-day.”

“Methinks I hear some of you say, Must a man afford himself no Leisure? I will tell thee, my Friend, what Poor Richard says, Employ the time well if thou meanest to gain Leisure; and since thou art not sure of a Minute, throw not away an Hour. Leisure, is Time for doing something useful.”

“Remember what Poor Richard says: Buy what thou hast no Need of, and ere long you thou shalt sell thy Necessaries.”

“Beware of little Expenses; a small Leak will sink a great Ship.”

“When the well’s dry, they know the Worth of Water. But this they might have known before, if they had taken his (Poor Richard) Advice; If you would know the Value of Money, go and try to borrow some, for, he that goes borrowing goes a-sorrowing; and indeed so does he that lends to such People, when he goes to get it in again.”

“But, ah, think what you do when you run in Debt; You give to another, Power over your Liberty. If you cannot pay at the Time, you will be ashamed to see your Creditor; you will be in Fear when you speak to him; you will make poor pitiful sneaking Excuses, and by Degrees come to lose your Veracity, and sink into base downright Lying, for, as Poor Richard says: The second Vice is Lying, the first is running in Debt”. And again, to the same Purpose, Lying rides upon Debt’s Back. Whereas a freeborn Englishman ought not to be ashamed or afraid to see or speak to any man living. But Poverty often deprives a Man of all Spirit and Virtue: T’is hard for an empty Bag to stand upright, as Poor Richard truly says.”

Tasks and Activities

1. Why is it appropriate to call Benjamin Franklin a typical representative of the Enlightenment?
2. How would you define “a self-made man”?

3. Explain the term “Founding Father”.
4. Discuss the statement: “The ideals presented in *Poor Richard’s Almanac* are what built America.”
5. What do you think of the much quoted Benjamin Franklin statement: “Remember, time is money”?
6. Can you point out some advice in *Poor Richard’s Almanac* that you think is still valid today?
7. Comment on the quote “Leisure is time for doing something useful”.
8. What does he mean by saying “Buy what you don’t need, and before long you will be selling your necessities”?
9. How do you interpret the phrase: “Lying rides upon debt’s back”?
10. Some may call Benjamin Franklin a moralist – is that a positive or a negative label? Explain your answer.
11. In the last quote he mentions “a freeborn Englishman” – why not “a freeborn American”?
12. Point out some examples of style and spelling that were typical of the Enlightenment era.
13. What do you think of the fact that the multi-genius Benjamin Franklin “took little or no interest in school and education”?
14. On the draft of the Declaration of Independence Benjamin Franklin worked with George Washington, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Find out about their positions in American history.
15. Check YouTube for clips about Benjamin Franklin, including a reconstruction of his kite experiment, and his invention of a special musical instrument.

6 Literature 1780 to 1840

Romantic Poetry

The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe

The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe (14161)

Having read the poem below, use this link for further study:

The Raven Study Guide

The Raven / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/15589

The Raven

The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
`'Tis some visitor,' I muttered, `tapping at my chamber door -
Only this, and nothing more.'

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; - vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow - sorrow for the lost Lenore -
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore -
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me - filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
`'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door -
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; -
This it is, and nothing more,'

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
`Sir,' said I, `or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you' - here I opened wide the door; -
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, `Lenore!'
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, `Lenore!'
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
`Surely,' said I, `surely that is something at my window lattice;
Let me see then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore -
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; -
'Tis the wind and nothing more!'

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door -
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door -
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
`Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,' I said, `art sure no craven.
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the nightly shore -
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!'
Quoth the raven, `Nevermore.'

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning - little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door -
Bird or beast above the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as `Nevermore.'

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only,
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered - not a feather then he fluttered -
Till I scarcely more than muttered `Other friends have flown before -
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before.'
Then the bird said, `Nevermore.'

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
`Doubtless,' said I, `what it utters is its only stock and store,

Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore -
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore
Of "Never-nevermore."'

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore -
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking `Nevermore.'

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
`Wretch,' I cried, `thy God hath lent thee - by these angels he has sent thee
Respite - respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore!'
Quoth the raven, `Nevermore.'

`Prophet!' said I, `thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil! -
Whether tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted -
On this home by horror haunted - tell me truly, I implore -
Is there - is there balm in Gilead? - tell me - tell me, I implore!'
Quoth the raven, `Nevermore.'

`Prophet!' said I, `thing of evil! - prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us - by that God we both adore -
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels named Lenore -
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels named Lenore?'
Quoth the raven, `Nevermore.'

`Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!' I shrieked upstarting -
`Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken! - quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!'
Quoth the raven, `Nevermore.'

And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted - nevermore!

Annabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Annabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe (89604)

Annabel Lee is one of Edgar Allan Poe's beautiful and mystic poems. Poe's life was also in many respects mystic and enigmatic. He secretly married his then 13-year old cousin, Virginia, who died of tuberculosis shortly after. This poem is most likely dedicated to his young, dead bride. Note how the rhythm and melody of the poem come alive when you read it out loud.

Annabel Lee

By Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love -
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.
And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud; chilling My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulcher
In this kingdom by the sea.
The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me
Yes! that was the reason
(as all men know, In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we
Of many far wiser than we
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.
For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,
In the sepulcher there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Why, according to the poet, did Annabel Lee die?
- What makes the poem sound like the narrative of a fairy tale?
- Repetition is a poetic method to emphasize certain elements in a poem; do you see any examples here?
- Point out some lines that you think are particularly melodic.
- How can we say that this poem reflects Poe's own life and writing? See the introduction and follow the link below and read more about Edgar Allan Poe.

Edgar Allan Poe - An Introduction

The Solitary Reaper by William Wordsworth

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Solitary Reaper by William Wordsworth (89606)

William Wordsworh is the archetypical romantic poet. His contemplative poetry inspired by nature sums up the very essence of the romantic ideals. In this poem Wordsworth paints the pastoral scene in a poetical, but still a simple way. Read the poem and do the tasks which follow.

The Solitary Reaper

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing to herself;
Stop here or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! For the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands;
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In a spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened motionless and still;
And as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Point out some typical romantic ideals that come to life in this poem.
- Wordsworth took long walks in the countryside for inspiration and to feel the closeness of nature. Where, specifically, do you think he is walking in this poem? What are the clues?

- The poem has references to far-away and exotic places. Why do you think they are mentioned?
- Wordsworth wanted his poetry to reflect the language of ordinary people. How does that show in this poem?
- Look at the rhyme pattern and see if you can spot some irregularities.
- Follow the link below and read more about William Wordsworth.

William Wordsworrth - a True Romantic

The Tables Turned by William Wordsworth

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Tables Turned by William Wordsworth (89607)

“The Tables Turned” is another of William Wordsworth’s famous poems that are so typical of the Romantic era. It is in a way a declaration of Wordsworth's romantic project, and it manifests a break with the scientific approach of the Enlightenment. Read the poem and do the tasks which follow.

The Tables Turned

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Up! Up! My Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you’ll grow double:
Up! Up! My Friend and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain’s head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! ‘tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! On my life,
There’s more wisdom in it.

And hark! How blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless –
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things: -
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Point out some lines that in your opinion reflect the ideas and values of the Romantic period.
- What would you say is the theme of the poem?
- How can we say that this poem is a manifesto of the romantic period?
- Who is the author addressing in the poem?
- What defines this as a poem (and not prose)?
- The title is a well known saying. What does it mean that "the tables are turned"?
- Comment on the line: "Close up those barren leaves".
- Follow the link below and read more about William Wordsworth.

William Wordsworth - A True Romantic

Upon Westminster Bridge by William Wordsworth

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Upon Westminster Bridge by William Wordsworth (99974)

In most of Wordsworth's lyrical writing he praises the natural beauty of the surroundings of his home area, The Lake District in the north of England. In that respect this, which is one of his most famous poems, is somewhat untypical. During the romantic period cities were in general seen as ugly and gloomy places compared to the beauty of landscapes and pastoral scenes. But even though this is not a typically romantic poem, you may, if you look closely still spot some clear traces of the true romantic poet both in language and imagery.

Sonnet composed upon Westminster Bridge,

September 3, 1802 by William Wordsworth

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Westminster Bridge, 1831
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Where can you see indications of the romantic ideals and images in this poem?
- Make a list of the adjectives Wordsworth uses to describe the city. Do you spot any contrasts?
- Find examples of metaphors and simile in the poem.
- The poem is composed as a sonnet. Follow the link below and read more about sonnets.
- The poem was written when Wordsworth was on his way to France to settle some unfinished business with a French girl before he could marry at home. Follow the link below and read the story about Wordsworth's "French connection".

The Sonnet

William Worsdworth - a True Romantic

Two Critical Poems by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Two Critical Poems by Percy Bysshe Shelley (99147)

Percy Bysshe Shelley had a rich poetical production that contains some of the finest poems in English literature. Though he had a rebellious nature and, by the standards of his time, a scandalous lifestyle, he was a burning idealist who wanted to stand up for injustice and what he saw as political misrule. Of his radical writing, these two poems stand out as his most poignant.

Song to the Men of England

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat – nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, bees of England, forge
Many weapon, chain and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed, - but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth, - but let no imposter heap;
Weave robes, - let no idle wear;
Forge arms, - in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes and cells;
In halls ye deck, another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.

England in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king, -
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public storm – mud from a muddy spring;
Rulers, who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow;
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field, -
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield -
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay, -
Religion Christless, Godless – a book sealed;
A Senate, - Time's worst statue unrepealed, -
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illuminate our tempestuous day.

A Closer Look at the Poems

1. Song to the Men of England

- Give some examples of the strong visual imagery in the poem.
- It is fairly clear where Shelley's sympathy lies; what metaphors does he use about the ruling class and the exploited workers?
- What is Shelley's dismal conclusion?

2. England in 1819

- Point out a line or two that you think sum up Shelley's message in this poem.
- Which metaphors does Shelley use to describe the Church, the Parliament, the Army, England?
- Comment on the two last lines of the poem.

Research

1. Shelley was a radical poet who criticised his home country from his exile in Italy. Search the net for information about what may lie behind Shelley's harsh criticism of England. Key words: Industrial Revolution, poverty, working class, political situation (why 1819?), expanding British Empire. Make a presentation based on your research and the two poems.
2. Percy Bysshe Shelley was a rebel and led a dramatic and short life. He was married to Mary Shelley ("Frankenstein") and he died in 1822 only thirty years old. Follow the link below and read about Shelley's dramatic life and how he died "the death of a poet". Percy Bysshe Shelley - A Romantic Rebel (right click to open in new tab)

Tam o' Shanter by Robert Burns

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Tam o' Shanter by Robert Burns (89872)

"Tam o' Shanter" is one of Robert Burn's most well-known and often quoted poems.

Tam o' Shanter / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/95752

Tam o' Shanter is a farmer and the main character in the poem, which begins at the end of a market day in the town of Ayr, and goes on to weave in a traditional tale of ghosts and witches. Tam and his neighbours are enjoying themselves in the pubs, getting “fu and unco happy.”

Tam o' Shanter Inn

Fotograf: Eli M. Huseby

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet;
As market-days are wearing late,
An folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

Burns continues with a marvellously colourful description of Tam and his drinking habits. Tam's wife has told him that he is a "blethering, blustering, drunken blellum" that is drunk every single market day from "November till October", but that has not made much impression on him. In the pub, he is enjoying the cheerful company of his cronies, especially Souter Johnnie;

"Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither."

However, time is flying, the evening is growing late and it is soon time to leave;

"Nae man can tether Time nor Tide,
That hour approaches Tam maun ride"

The story continues with Tam riding somewhat unsteadily home on his grey mare Meg or Maggie. He comes to the old Kirk of Alloway which is abandoned, and there he sees lights in all the windows and hears music. He has had quite a few drinks and is feeling brave so he climbs up in order to look through a window into the church and there he sees a terrible sight. All the coffins are open and the dead are lying there in their funeral clothes. Sitting on the communion table is "Old Nick" or the devil playing the fiddle furiously. The church is full of witches and warlocks who are dancing wildly to the music, which gets even faster and more furious. All the dancers are pretty ugly but there is one young witch who has not yet lost her looks. She is wearing a short petticoat or “cutty sark” and Tam calls her Nannie. After watching for a while, Tam is so engrossed in the spectacle that he forgets where he is and suddenly shouts out “Weel done, Cutty Sark” and ...

..in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When 'Catch the thief!' resounds aloud:
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi monie an eldritch skriech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! Ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
An left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Burns finishes off with a warning to all men.

Now, wha this tale o truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty sarks rin in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
Remember Tam o Shanter's mare.

You will find the complete text of the poem here, Rabbie Burns Poems.

Here are some excerpts from Tam o' Shanter accompanied by short videos.

Translation

Use the dictionary http://www.scots-online.org/dictionary/ to translate the beginning of the poem into Standard English. Compare and comment on the two versions. What effect does the language have on the atmosphere created in the poem?

Analysis

Use the excerpts above to answer the following questions.

1. What in this poem is characteristic of the Romantic Period?
2. What type of poem is this?
3. Who is speaking in the poem?
4. What about the rhyme and rhythm? Does this vary in different parts of the poem? (Watch and listen to the videos)

The Echoing Green by William Blake

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Echoing Green by William Blake (99176)

In ancient Greece they defined inspiration as being mesmerised by a god (to be “in-spirited”). Romantic poet William Blake was one who possessed that divine madness that inspired him to pass on his impressions of nature and colour. His early works contain poetry in a seemingly simple but still metaphorical language; later poems became longer and more complex. The Echoing Green is an early poem, simple – almost naïve, but reveals a closeness to nature and peaceful surroundings. His poetic project was, in his own words, “To see a world in a grain of sand, And a heaven in a wild flower”. Blake was also a painter and illustrated many of his own poems.

The Echoing Green by William Blake (1757-1827)

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells’ cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
“Such, such were the joys
when we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green.

Till the little ones, weary
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

Engraving after Portrait of William Blake
by Thomas Phillips
Fotograf: Corbis

A Closer Look at the Poem

- How does it shine through in this poem that Blake also was a painter?
- This poem belongs to Blake's so-called "Songs of Innocence" - does that show in any way?

- A romantic ideal was the connection and inspiration from nature; how is that reflected in the poem?
- How do you interprete the cast of characters that are mentioned in the poem?
- Look at the last line of the three stanzas - how do they work as we read the poem?

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (104145)

If we presume that a poet is a sensitive and dreamy sort of person, Samuel Taylor Coleridge fits such a characterisation perfectly. Coleridge is one of the most influential poets of the Romantic age, and many of his poems have become classics in English literature. His, perhaps, most famous poem is “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, which is a long ballad of one hundred and forty two stanzas; it is divided into seven parts, out of which we present the first one here. The theme of the poem is presented by the author as an introduction called “Argument”.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In his childhood and youth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was a pensive and somewhat precocious character. Like so many other writers and poets, he was more into self-studies than regular school work. He went for long walks in the countryside where he could feel the inspiration of nature and indulge in his dreams and fantasies. He made friends with William Wordsworth, which turned out to be a stormy, but also a very fruitful companionship. The two poets wrote together, inspired and criticised each other. Together they published the epoch-making little volume “Lyrical Ballads” (1789), which included “The Rime…” along with other well-known poems of the Romantic era. But Coleridge had a difficult nature, and his shifty and impulsive personality defined his life negatively in more than one way. As a child, he went after one of his brothers with a knife, ran away from home and caught a fever that would trouble him for the rest of his life; he was headstrong and made many enemies, he ended up in a miserable marriage, neglected his wife and children, and he fell into drug abuse and slothfulness. However, his contribution to Romantic literature stands out; critics claim that Coleridge was the most versatile and abundant poet of his age.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Argument

How a ship having first sailed to the equator, was driven by storms to the cold country towards the South Pole; how the ancient mariner cruelly and in contempt of the laws of hospitality killed a sea-bird and how he was followed by many and strange judgements: and in what manner he came back to his own country.

Part I

It is an Ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
“By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me?

The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;

The guests are met, the feast is set:
May’st hear the merry din.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,
“There was a ship”, quoth he.
“Hold off! Unhand me, grey-beard loon!”
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye -
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years’ child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guests sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon – “
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast;
Yet cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

“And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping pasts and dipping prow,
as who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,

"And southward aye we fled"

Fotograf: The Granger Collection

And it grew wondrous and cold:
And ice, mast high came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken -
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled
Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us though"

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, though fog-smoke white
Glimmered the white Moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! -
Why look'st thou so" – "With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

"With my crossbow I shot the Albatross"

Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Note 1

This first part is the offense, where the mariner breaks the law of love and hospitality and kills the bird of good omen.
In the second and third parts, the Mariner is punished for his violation, and suffers isolation and loneliness. The bird is hung around his neck as a symbolic and physical reminder of his offense.
The next parts of the poem tell how the mariner must do penance to gain absolution ("The Albatross fell off my neck").
But at the end, the deed of evil (breaking the laws of love) turns out to be an unforgivable act and the mariner must face the consequences of his fatal offence.

Note 2

The message, as described in the "Argument", is a commonly used theme in Romantic writing: He who breaks the idyll or turns against the good forces of God and nature must in some way pay the price.

A Closer Look at the Poem

Literature of the romantic era would often be inspired by medieval ballads and folk tales. Do you see any examples in this poem?

The narrator tells his story to a man on his way to a wedding. In what way do you think that is a point?

How does the mariner tell that the ship had passed the equator?

The albatross is, in old legends, referred to as "the pious bird of good omen". What does that mean?

Discuss the symbolic meaning of the albatross, the killing, the ship and its voyage.

In what way do you think Coleridge's unhappy life and shifty nature was typical of Romantic poets? Follow the links below and read about Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Wordsworth and compare.

Find the poem on the net and read the full-length version. What do you think? Does this kind of poetry have any relevance today?

William Wordsworrth - a True Romantic

Percy Bysshe Shelley - A Romantic Rebel

So We'll Go No More a-Roving by Lord Byron

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
So We'll Go No More a-Roving by Lord Byron (99182)

Lord Byron

Portrait of Lord Byron

Lord Byron, or by his full name, George Gordon Byron, was indeed a colourful figure in the cultural society in England in the early 19th century. He was an enormously popular poet in England and Europe. His most famous poems are long action filled epics e.g. “Don Juan” and “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage”. He inherited his title from his father, and had, for a short period, a seat in the House of Lords in the Parliament. But he was a restless character and was leading a life that by established moral standards at the time was seen as scandalous. After numerous love affairs, separation and divorce, and alleged incest, he had become an outcast, and left England in 1816.
With a friend he travelled on horseback across the European continent and the Middle East, and settled in Italy never to return to England. His home in Italy became the refuge of other poets exiled from England, such as Percy Bysshe Shelley. Byron died in Greece where he had devoted his last years to supporting the Greeks in their fight for independence from Turkey. This poem may not be his most famous, perhaps not even typical, but it is beautiful in its simple, yet strong poetic language.

So, We’ll Go No More a-Roving by Lord Byron (1788-1824)

So, we’ll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out its breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we’ll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Does the poem indicate anything about the lifestyle of the exiled poets living in Italy?
- Comment on the two first lines of the second stanza.
- Poetic language will often violate rules of grammar; do you see examples of that in this poem?
- In what way does Byron's life (see introduction) stand in contrast with this poem?

In the same way that rock star, Sting, has made an album of Elizabethan lyrics by John Dowland, it is an interesting fact that this poem by Lord Byron is included on Canadian rock poet Leonard Cohen's album *Dear Heather* from 2004. See if you can find it on YouTube.

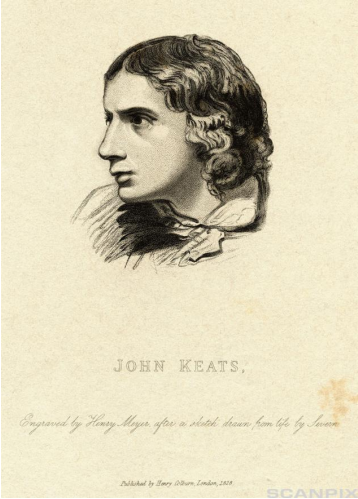
The Human Seasons by John Keats

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Human Seasons by John Keats (99362)

John Keats belonged to the group of romantic poets who were the celebrities of the time; Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and William Wordsworth. However, Keats never had the same popularity and acclaim as the others, nor was his life as scandalous as some of his contemporaries. His genius was not acknowledged until after his death, and he is now cherished among the most prominent English poets of the Romantic era. He suffered from tuberculosis and died in Italy only 25 years old.

The Human Seasons by John Keats (1795-1821)

Four seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet hoves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness – to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.



Portrait of English Poet John Keats

A Closer Look at the Poem

- In what way does this poem focus on one of the most common themes of romantic poetry?
- How does this poem stand in contrast to Keats's own life?
- What does the last line mean?
- The poem is composed as a sonnet. This pattern is called Shakespearian sonnet as opposed to the Petrarcian sonnet, which has slightly different structure and rhyming scheme. Follow the link below and read more about the Shakespearian sonnet.

Shakespeare's Sonnets

Romantic Prose

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
Introduction to Wuthering Heights, A Novel by Emily Brontë (115100)

Wuthering Heights Movie Poster

Wuthering Heights, the passionate love story between the wild and uncouth Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, was voted as Britain's favourite love story in a poll published in the British newspaper, The Guardian, in August 2007. It has been a favourite novel for adaptations to TV, radio and film. Perhaps you have seen one of these adaptations?

Romantic Trends

Wuthering Heights, published in 1847 under the pen name of Ellis Bell, is considered one of the classic examples of Romantic literature. We know from biographies written about Emily Brontë and her siblings, that they were well versed in the literary trends of the times. All the Brontës were familiar with the major romantic poets and writers such as Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary W. Shelley, George Gordon, Lord Byron, William Blake, and William Wordsworth. Many romantic influences are woven into the fabric of *Wuthering Heights*. During the Romantic period (1789-1832) there was a return to the aesthetics, norms, and principles of medieval times. *Wuthering Heights* has been defined as romantic fiction written in the genre of the Gothic novel. As modern readers, we become overwhelmed by the complexities of the story.

Gothic Elements

Wuthering Heights is a tale of two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons. It is told through the voices of the faithful servant Ellen Dean and Heathcliff's tenant, Mr. Lockwood. The novel spans fifty years, and past and present are juxtaposed throughout. The story is set in an extreme landscape on the wild moors, weather-beaten by icy winds, storms and rain. Although not a ruined castle, Wuthering Heights has many Gothic characteristics. It is dark, lit with candles, and has hidden rooms, passages, oak paneled beds, stairwells and banisters. Characters are imprisoned or confined in Wuthering Heights. The ghost of Catherine Linton appears in the opening chapters and we are witness to dreams, visions and supernatural incidents. The story of the Earnshaws and Lintons spans three generations and is full of torture, tyranny and intolerable cruelty. It hinges on the soul consuming and obsessive love between Catherine Earnshaw/Linton and Heathcliff. Their passionate love leads them to various forms of physical and mental madness that transcends death. There is even a hint of necrophilia when Heathcliff opens Catherine's coffin years later.

Yorkshire Dales National Park, an area which can be wild and windswept, close to Haworth where the Brontes lived.
Fotograf: Colin Dutton

Characters

Brontë develops Heathcliff's persona around the myths and mysteries surrounding vagabond gypsies, another literary trend at the time. Heathcliff, the villain-hero, lacks ancestral origins. He is dark, mysterious, primitive and rebellious. Catherine Earnshaw is not your typical Gothic heroine, swooning and in distress. She is far from what is expected of a daughter of landed gentry. For all her education and love of books, she is wild, selfish, self-willed and demonstrates both violent fits of temper and cruelty. Only Nelly Dean is able to put up with her.

Catherine's and Hindley's father finds a starving orphan on one of his trips to Liverpool. He is named Heathcliff after a son who had died in childbirth. The Earnshaws view Heathcliff as an usurper. He is humiliated and forced to endure Hindley Earnshaw's jealous sadism. Catherine befriends him and they grow up together on the windswept moors. Their intimacy binds them together heart and soul. Heathcliff's entire existence revolves around his compulsive love for Catherine. When old Earnshaw dies, Hindley's physical and mental abuse of Heathcliff drains the poor creature of any compassionate humanity. Taking revenge becomes Heathcliff's main obsession and his plans take on diabolical proportions. Hindley loses his wife, Frances, to tuberculosis. He falls into alcoholism, gambling and despair. His little son, Hareton, is abused and neglected. One of Heathcliff's acts of vengeance is to acquire all property rights to Wuthering Heights and Hareton's inheritance. Once this is accomplished, he refuses to educate Hareton leaving him a brutal, illiterate, savage.

Storyline Complexities

The Linton family estate, Thrushcross Grange, and the Lintons are in stark contrast to Wuthering Heights and the Earnshaws. Catherine encounters the Lintons through an accident involving their dogs. She is attracted by the light and gaiety at Thrushcross Grange and the children, Isabella and Edgar Linton. It is inevitable that her association with the Lintons will lead to her marriage to Edgar. This solidifies her "gentile" social station in life but it maddens and infuriates her soulmate, Heathcliff. Brontë portrays Edgar and Isabella Linton as spoiled, but gentle, weak and naïve. Heathcliff takes advantage of this on several occasions. He becomes even more diabolical and ensnares Isabella into marriage only to degrade and violently abuse her. Forever torn between Heathcliff and Edgar, Catherine dies wailing and delirious giving birth to Edgar Linton's daughter, Cathy. Twelve years later, Heathcliff continues his insane revenge on Cathy whom he detests. His derangement further affects his treatment of his own son, born to Isabella, Linton Heathcliff.

The Next Generation

The births of Cathy Linton and Linton Heathcliff mark the next stage of the story. The decay and weakness of the Linton family is symbolized by the consumptive Edgar and his effeminate nephew, Linton. Linton's illness, selfishness and whining self-loathing fill us with disgust as well as pity. He plays upon Cathy's kind heart and uses his hypochondria to manipulate her. Heathcliff is callously cruel towards his dying son. Playing on Linton's bad character, Heathcliff cajoles, tricks and finally forces Cathy to marry Linton. Fearful of being tortured and tormented, the dying Linton signs all of his property, including Cathy's, over to his father. The final circle of revenge is completed. Heathcliff now owns all property rights to. Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, as well as any inheritance left to Cathy, Hareton and Linton.

Final Scenes and Developments

Heathcliff administers the same savage treatment to Cathy as he once experienced himself. However, Heathcliff does not anticipate the relationship that slowly develops between Hareton and Cathy which will eventually lead to their marriage. At first, appalled by his coarseness, primitive dialect and illiteracy, Cathy abhors Hareton. Nevertheless, stripped of land, money, inheritance and friends, she slowly accepts him and teaches him to read. Haunted by the images of Catherine Linton, Heathcliff is suddenly disarmed by Cathy's and Hareton's resemblance to her. His behavior changes abruptly and Heathcliff no longer takes enjoyment in Cathy's and Hareton's destruction. Catherine's ghostlike haunting makes him yearn to be with her in death. Heathcliff's final scenes of suffering and madness take on intense forms of erratic behavior. Open to several symbolic interpretations, the romantic tale ends in accordance with Gothic traditions. Peace finally descends on Wuthering Heights.

Tasks and Activities

Text of the Novel

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

Comprehension Tasks

Chapter by chapter comprehension tasks: Tasks to *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë

Literary Analysis

Literary Analysis to *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë

Read More About the Author

Emily Brontë - the Author

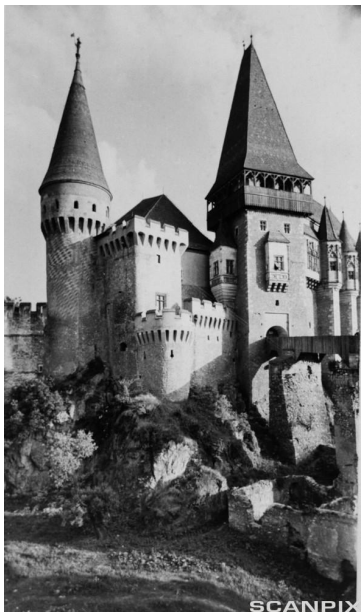
The Gothic Novel

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Gothic Novel (88565)

The Romantic prose was not only sentimental stories about suffering and unfulfilled love. As a reaction to the more or less realistic prose of the time some writers turned to a mystic and supernatural universe filled with horror, violence and morbid elements. And the readers seemed to love this kind of literature which became immensely popular during the late 18th and early 19th century.

Medieval Scenes

The gothic novel was rooted in a medieval atmosphere with superstition and mystic events. Bad omens, ghosts and dark satanic forces were basic ingredients of this literature. The setting incorporated medieval elements, such as old castles, ruins of derelict churches or towers with hidden doors and dark corners. Horace Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto" (1765) was the trendsetter. The protagonist, the malicious Prince Manfred rejects his virtuous wife and wants to marry his daughter-in-law who escapes, helped by a mysterious knight, through a hidden underground tunnel leading to a monastery. It is a sentimental and violent story where the writer casts a line of evil characters enacting all kinds of medieval savagery. The number of editions shows the popularity of the book and this particular type of romantic literature.



Medieval Castle

The Grotesque

Some of these stories (e.g. Sophia Lee's "The Old Manor House", 1793) will today clearly seem like self-parodies, since they are so stacked with the same exaggerated elements of secrets stairways, thunder and lightning, and evil forces that keep innocent lovers apart, and most of these books are forgotten today. But Ann Radcilffe's "The Mysteries of Udolfo" seems to have survived, and is still read, probably because of its literary qualities, such as a clever composition and an intriguing plot. Matthew Lewis was another writer who took the gothic tradition further, maybe to its limits. In his books visual and grotesque details from torture scenes during the inquisition are mixed with perverted sexuality and occultism.

The Thrill

The question remains – why were so many readers thrilled by this kind of story? Why did they want to indulge themselves in these vulgar and detestable scenes? It is hard to say, but the tradition seems to be kept alive even today. Occultism and dark forces still seem to appeal to some people, and there certainly is a market for horror movies and films that explicitly show abhorrent and grotesque details. Perhaps the answer lies in a secret attraction to the forbidden and the dark sides of human nature. We all like to be thrilled, and for some it takes more to feel the thrill…

The word gothic springs form The Goths, a Germanic people who were living in what is now eastern parts of Germany around 1-300 A.D. They were reputed as wild and savage warriors and were one of the toughest enemies of the Roman Empire. They were also called Barbarians, simply because they were bearded. “Gothic” is also used in medieval art and church architecture; the pointed arcs of windows and hallways broke with the traditional Roman round ones. Today many will connect the word to the culture and fashion style of some young people wearing black clothes and long black hair

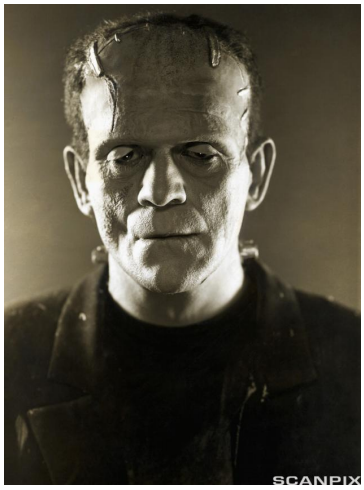
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (88545)

The novel Frankenstein represents an interesting aspect of the Romantic era. Romantic prose was a somewhat underestimated genre, since most of the romantics expressed themselves through poetry. But writers like Sir Walter Scott, Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley were just as genuine agents of the romantic ideals as any contemporary poet. Frankenstein was published in 1818 when Mary Shelley was only 21. An anecdote has it that it emerged as a result of a bet between Mary Shelley and her friends, who thought that the literature of the time was dull and unexciting.

Allegory

The novel stands out as a good example of what we call the gothic tradition in Romantic literature. All the ingredients of the gothic tale are there – the castle, the stormy weather, a monster, violent death, gory effects and passionate love. And since it is such a visual and dramatic story, it has been filmed many times. It can be read at many levels; today most people will associate it with a classic horror story. However, considering its full title, “Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus”, one understands that there is more to it than just a horror story and morbid entertainment. According to Greek mythology Prometheus was punished by Zeus for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to man. Zeus had him chained to a mountain as a prey for vultures that would come and peck at his liver. His liver was renewed every day, so Prometheus was facing a never-ending punishment. On that background the story of Frankenstein can be read as an allegory, that is, a narrative with a symbolic meaning, where the characters are personifications of more abstract ideas as, in this case, human ambition and wayward self-righteousness.



Boris Karloff as Frankenstein
Fotograf: Corbis

The Moral

After his beloved mother dies Victor Frankenstein becomes obsessed with the question of death as an irreversible state. He studies medicine and tries to create a body out of organs and body parts stolen from fresh corpses, and succeeds in bringing his creation to life by giving it electric impulses. Like he says in the book: “Man is a mere system of flesh and blood and acts only on chemical and electric impulses”. But the monster escapes from Frankenstein’s laboratory, and haunts him until his death. The moral is clear – like Prometheus, the one who meddles with God’s creation must be prepared to take the consequences. The story is genuinely rooted in the romantic tradition. However, many critics also claim that it also reflects the ideals of the Enlightenment, as Frankenstein strongly believes in his scientific approach and systematic experiments to create life.
The monster gradually reveals human traits, it learns to speak, it has feelings and it also needs to be loved. And since it is a lonely freak forced to hide from people, we feel sorry for it; so the tables are turned, Frankenstein becomes the monster and the real monster has our sympathy. It is a fascinating story about human ambition, man’s thirst for knowledge and his ultimate wish: to be in control of life and death. But as the monster says: “Knowledge increased my sorrow.”

The first of the links below will give you extracts from two chapters of the novel with some tasks. The second link raises some issues to discuss the theme of Frankenstein in a broader perspective. The third link is a set of tasks to the 1994 film version of Frankenstein.

From Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

Considering Frankenstein

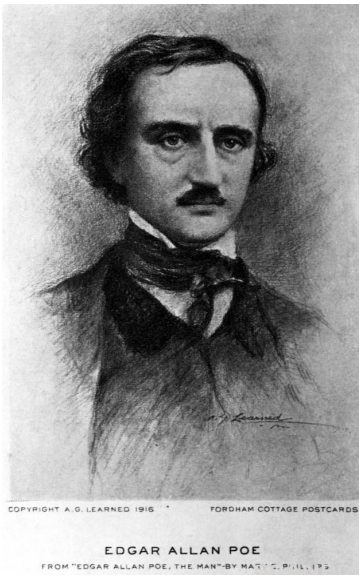
Frankenstein Revisited

Edgar Allan Poe - An Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Edgar Allan Poe - An Introduction (89169)

There are some writers who seem to lead a private life that more or less compares to the literary universe they create. One of them is Edgar Allan Poe, the father of mystery tales. His mere name echoes associations to the gothic and grotesque, and in more than one way his life parallels the mystic scenarios of his stories. He was unofficially adopted by foster parents after his father had mysteriously disappeared and his mother died. He received a good education, but he fell out with his foster father who wanted him to go into his tobacco business. He was expelled from university due to debt problems; and after a short military career (where he enlisted under a false name), he had different editing jobs for publishing companies.

Poe had a talent for writing and published essays, poems, and stories in several periodicals. But his private life was dominated by unrest and a hang to gambling and alcohol. He secretly married his 13-year old cousin, Virginia, who some years later died of tuberculosis. His poems and stories became popular, and he even won a prize of fifty dollars for one of his early short stories. But he was unable to hold any permanent position, due to his elusive anxiety and excessive intake of alcohol. The circumstances around his death in 1849 are mysterious and could just as easily have been taken out of one of his own stories.



Print After Edgar Allan Poe by A.G. Learned

Edgar Allan Poe introduced what later has become an immensely popular literary genre: the mystery plot and the horror story. The reading audience loved, and still do, the thrilling and mystic narrative where strange and disturbing things happen. Poe was a master of his genre; the dream-like settings of e.g. “The Raven” and the strange, mysterious events of “The Fall of the House of Usher” are intriguing and spur the imagination of the reader. His popular and thrilling “The Murder in Rue Morgue” is said to be the first crime story ever. An interesting project is “A Descent into the Maelström” which is a strange story set in Norwegian Lofoten, a place Poe probably never visited.

The legacy of Edgar Allan Poe is there in today’s crime literature and horror movies, and he is still among the most popular American authors. His literary thesis is that man’s response to events and time is more or less universal; whatever happens, the human reaction is the same regardless of setting and personality. His overall production totals only forty eight poems and a dozen or so short stories, but his literary qualities and the originality of his plots put him in the front line of influential writers from the 19th century.

Tasks and Activities

- The writing of Edgar Allan Poe raises the issue of the author's presence in his work. Do you think the author's socio-cultural background is important to understand and appreciate his work?
- Many writers were addicted to drugs and alcohol, and much of their writing may have been produced under the influence. How do you think that affected their inspiration and work?
- Poe belongs to the so-called Gothic tradition of romantic literature. What does that mean? If you don't know, you may read more

here: The Gothic Novel

- Search the net for information about the circumstances around Poe's death.
- As "the father of crime literature", Poe would probably be surprised if he knew what he had started and how the genre developed. Read more about Crime Literature and the construction of The Classic Crime Plot
- Follow the links and read more by Edgar Allan Poe

The Raven

The Tell-Tale Heart

Annabel Lee

The Tell-Tale Heart

Forfatter: Eli Huseby
The Tell-Tale Heart (5033)

Introduction

If you like stories that give you the creeps, Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* will not let you down. However, you should be warned right away - this short story is not for wimps!

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1809. When he died as a 40 year old, he had accomplished reinventing the Gothic tradition of horror tales and thrillers, recreating detective stories and introducing the short story as a new genre. His poetry includes masterpieces such as "The Raven" and "Lenore" where he explores death and the psychological depths of the human mind. Sadly, his source of inspiration may have been his tragic and hectic life. He lost his parents before he turned 3 and had to struggle to overcome disease and poverty. His short life may be blamed on his disastrous addiction to gambling and drugs.

The exploration of death continuously preoccupied Poe. *The Tell-Tale Heart* is no exception.

If you want to read another Poe text, you may follow the link to "The Raven" in the link collection.

The Tell-Tale Heart / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/5039

conceive	danne
vulture	gribb
caution	forsiktighet/varsemd
dissimulation	forkledning
door latch	dørvrider/dørvridar
wex	skake opp
profound	dyp/djup
sagacity	visdom,klokskap
chuckle	humre
pitch black	bekmørk
shutter	vindusskodde/skodde på vindauge
hearken	lytte oppmerksomt/lyde oppmerksamt
groan	grynte
stifle	holde tilbake/halde tilbake
chirp	pip
mournful	sørgelig/sørgeleg
envelop	omslutte/slutte om
crevice	sprekk
stealthily	listig
dim	disig
ray	stråle
fury	raseri
refrain	avstå
muffled	dempet

precaution	forsiktighetsregel/varsemdsregel
concealment	skjuling
wane	svinne
dismember	dele opp
labor	streve
scantling	planke
suavity	høflighet/høflegheit
cunningly	utspekulert
lodge	registrere
depute	beordre
premises	sted/stad
fatigue	tretthet/vere trøytt
audacity	overmot
vehemently	intens
trifle	bagatell
agony	pine
villain	skurk
hideous	stygg

The Tell-Tale Heart / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125081

Suggested Further Activity

After reading and listening to the short story, try these tasks:

The Tell-Tale Heart- Tasks

"The Wizard of the North"

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
"The Wizard of the North" (94470)

What comes to mind when you think of Scotland? If you picture towering mountains, beautiful scenery and great heroes like William Wallace and Rob Roy, much of that romanticised picture can be attributed to the Scottish novelist, Sir Walter Scott.

commemorate, portray, contemporaries, ban, solicitor, contract an illness, ballad, tangled, web, deception, rumoured, vernacular, reap the benefit

If you have been to Scotland you have probably heard of Sir Walter Scott, who is commemorated by an enormous monument on Princes Street in Edinburgh. You will certainly have seen pictures of him since he is portrayed on every Scottish banknote. Perhaps you have seen the film or the TV series, *Ivanhoe*, which is based on one of his novels, but you probably have not read any of those novels yourself. Scott was extremely popular in the nineteenth century, both at home and in Europe, and was praised by many of his contemporaries. However, his style of writing, with detailed descriptions at the expense action, does not appeal to modern readers.

Scott Monument, Edinburgh
Fotograf: Anne Scott Hagen

Scott gained the nickname “The Wizard of the North” for the popularity of his novels set against a background of historical events in Scottish history. The nickname could perhaps also reflect what he achieved with respect to Scotland. For despite being a Conservative and supporter of the Union with England, he created an romantic image of Scotland which is reflected in how people see Scotland today – majestic scenery and an independent people. Scott has been criticized for creating a false image of Scotland, but it cannot be denied that his novels were a strong influence on the early tourist industry. His readers wanted to see for themselves the kind of places he wrote about and Scotland still reaps the benefits today.

In 1822, he organized a very successful visit to Scotland by King George IV. It was a national spectacle which was intended to confirm the idea that the king was king of all Britain and it succeeded in its purpose. Scott even managed to have the monarch wear the kilt and have his picture painted wearing it. Considering that it was only 40 years earlier that the ban on wearing the kilt at all had been lifted, this was quite an achievement.

Scott was born in 1771 in Edinburgh, the son of a solicitor. He contracted polio as a child and to recover from the effects of this, he was sent to live at his grandparents' farm in the Scottish Borders. Here his interest in the tales and legends of the area was first awakened and he continued to collect ballads and traditional tales from the Borders throughout his life. A collection of these was published in 1802, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. He attended the Royal High School in Edinburgh and later the University of Edinburgh, where he first studied classics and then the law. He was called to the bar in 1792.
Scott married Charlotte Genevieve Charpentier in 1797 and the couple had five children. In 1799, he was appointed Sheriff of the County of Selkirkshire in the Borders (Sheriff courts were the local courts in Scotland). When Scott started writing professionally; his first published works were ballads translated from German, in 1796. In the following fifteen years, he published several poems. Of those, the romantic, historical, narrative poems, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel", "The Lady of the Lake" and "Marmion" were very popular. From the latter poem come the famous lines:

> Oh! What a tangled web we weave
> When first we practise to deceive!

Scott went into partnership with his friend and publisher James Ballantyne in 1809 and they established a printing business in Edinburgh, but the Borders was the area he loved. There he built his romantic, "fairy castle", Abbotsford, the cost of which, combined with the failure of his printing business, almost ruined him.

Scott Country
Fotograf: Anne Scott Hagen

Scott established the historical novel as an acceptable form of fiction. Up until this time the novel was often considered scandalous, so when Scott decided to try his hand at prose writing, he published his first novel, *Waverly*, in 1814, anonymously. The novels, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary* and *Rob Roy*, which were published in the next three years, are all historical novels set in Scotland. These were also published anonymously. Scott continued this deception, but it was widely rumoured that he was the author and he gained the nickname "The Wizard of the North". In Scott's novels, many of his characters speak in the vernacular, and like Burns' poems this helped to preserve the Scots language, but it makes Scott more difficult for the modern reader. However, despite the decline in the popularity of his works in the 20th century, he is regarded as an important influence in Scottish and world literature.

Useful Resource: The Walter Scott Digital Archive

Discuss

Which elements in Scott and his literature are typical of the Romantic period?

Poems

Here are some excerpts from and links to Scott's narrative poems. Search the Internet and find out:

- where and approx. when the poem is set
- a short summary of the plot
- if the place mentioned in the excerpt is a typical tourist attraction

If thou would’st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
(from "The Lay of the Last Minstrel")

Melrose, The Lay of the Last Minstrel

One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled;
(from "The Lady of the Lake")

Loch Katrine and the Trossachs, The Lady of the Lake

Day set on Norham’s castled steep,
And Tweed’s fair river, broad and deep,
(from "Marmion")

Norham, Marmion

Novels

1. Choose one of Scott's novels (The Walter Scott Digital Archive) and give a brief account of:
   - the setting
   - the plot
   - the main characters
   - Is there a film or TV series based on the novel?
2. The quotation below comes from Scott’s novel, *Heart of Midlothian*, and is reproduced on the wall of the Scottish Parliament. Try and express it in your own words. http://www.scots-online.org/dictionary/

"When we had a king, and a chancellor, and parliament-men o' our ain, we could aye peeble them wi' stanes when they werena gude bairns - But naebody's nails can reach the length o' Lunnon."

Roleplay

The Honours of Scotland (crown, sword and sceptre) were hidden and locked away in a chest in Edinburgh Castle after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 and later “discovered” by Scott in 1818. Their hiding place was known, but no one had opened the chest since 1707. Scott probably used the recovery of the Honours as a PR event to promote Scottish identity.

Imagine you are a TV reporter at the opening of the chest in a dark and dusty room in the depths of Edinburgh Castle in February 1818. Give a live news report of the event.

(You can find more information about the Honours at: The Honours of Scotland)

Jane Austen - Romantic or Realist

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Jane Austen - Romantic or Realist (88576)

Jane Austen was a spinster about whose life we have little information. Her popularity as an author has survived 200 years. What was special about her and her novels?

Watch some or all of the following trailers from films based on Jane Austen's novels and find out:

- to which level of society the characters belong
- what seems to be the main setting
- if the main character is male or female
- what seems to be the main theme
- what the plot might be

- *Pride and Prejudice* Trailer
- *Sense and Sensibility* Trailer
- *Emma* Trailer
- *Persuasion* Trailer

Jane Austen was born on 16th December 1775 – the year after the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, over ten years before the French Revolution, and in the early years of industrialization. Her world was still that of the traditional English village with its landed gentry and its agricultural labourers. However, great social, economic and political changes were underway which would change the face of England and the world. Britain as a great trading nation was spreading its influence to the far corners of the globe.

Jane Austen

Family

Jane Austen was the seventh of the eight children of the Reverent George Austen and Cassandra Leigh Austen. Mr Austen was a clergyman from a middle class background, while Mrs Austen's family was landed gentry. The family lived at the time of Jane's birth in the rectory in the village of Steventon in Hampshire. During her lifetime, Jane also lived in Bath (1801 – 1807), Southampton (1807 – 1809) and finally Chawton village, Hampshire, from 1809 until her death in 1817; it was the countryside which she preferred and which inspired her writing. In a letter to her niece, Anna, who had asked her advice on a story she was writing, Jane comments:

"You are now collecting your People delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life; --- 3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on -----" (*Letter to Anna Austen, September 1814*).

She drew on her knowledge of society in the places she lived for the settings of her novels. Do you think her books reflect and comment on this society or are they purely romantic novels?
Jane had six brothers, James (clergyman), George (mentally handicapped), Edward (inherited an estate from a distant cousin and became landed gentry), Henry (banker and clergyman), Francis (navy - became Admiral of the Fleet), Charles (navy - became Rear-Admiral) and one sister, Cassandra, her closest friend. Jane Austen started to write when she was quite young, in her early teens, but her well-known novels were all completed and published between 1810 and 1817. These were *Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Emma, Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*.

Marriage

Women at this time had little choice in life. They would hopefully make a good marriage, but if not they were dependent on financial support from their family or perhaps they could work as a governess or companion. For Jane Austen and the protagonists in her novels, it was desirable to climb the social ladder and certainly not to marry below their social and economic class. Do you see any parallels to this in our society today?

Jane Austen's grave in Winchester Cathedral

Fotograf: Nina Eirin Rangøy

Jane met and enjoyed the company of Tom Lefroy, later Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, when she was about 20, but neither had any money, so a match between them was out of the question. Later, she first accepted, but then changed her mind and refused an offer of marriage from Harris Bigg-Wither whom she had known for many years. According to her sister, she had another admirer later in life, but she never married. She and her sister lived with their parents and after their father died, they were dependent on their brothers, especially Edward, for support.

Letters

What we know of Jane Austen comes from her letters. She was an avid letter writer both to her sister when they were apart and to her nieces, Fanny, her brother Edward's daughter, and Anna, James' daughter. Many of her letters were destroyed by the family after her death, but since then several letters to friends and others have been found. Her letters with acute observations of people she met, descriptions of minor everyday events and other references to society in general, give an insight into the daily life of the Austen family, to England in the early 19th century and to Jane herself.

Discuss

Based on the information above, do you see any autobiographical elements in the film trailers?

Romantic or Realist

Make a table with two columns. Note down the Romantic and Realist elements you find in the film trailers. (Refer to The Romantic Period - An Introduction for what was meant by *romantic*.)

Further Tasks

Jane Austen -Tasks

Pride and Prejudice

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Pride and Prejudice (89316)

Pride and Prejudice is Jane Austen's best known and loved novel. She wrote the first draught of this novel in 1796-97, and it was finally published in 1813. The love story of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy has never ceased to fascinate. Was Jane Austen's purpose only to write a love story or has she also incorporated issues which were important to society in the early 19th century?

The first two sentences in the novel are:

> *It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.*
> *However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.*

What does this tell you about the theme of the novel? Do you think Jane Austen is being ironical? In which way?

Read the book *Pride and Prejudice* - novel and/or watch the film (Pride and Prejudice, 2005). The novel will give you more insight and detail than the film.

Working With the Novel

Setting

1. Where and about when is the novel set?
2. The Longbourn estate is entailed. What does this mean? Who will inherit the estate when Mr Bennet dies?
3. What conflicts might the militia be involved in at this time?British History Timeline
4. How do we find out about Darcy's estate of Pemberley? Describe it.

Characters

- Who are the main characters? How do the two main characters develop as the story progresses?
- Compare the personalities of the five sisters. What are their strengths and flaws? Is there a heroine among the sisters?
- Mr Bennet is described as being, "so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve and caprice". Do you think that this is a suitable description? Give examples of these traits in his behaviour in the novel.
- How would you describe the relationship between Mr and Mrs Bennet?
- Compare the different attitudes of Mr and Mrs Bennett to their daughters' future.
- Charles Bingley and Fitzwilliam Darcy are both upper class gentlemen. Compare their personalities and their attitudes to class differences.
- Who is George Wickham and how would you describe him?
- Who is Mr Collins and what purpose does he have in visiting the Bennets?
- Who is Lady Catharine de Bourgh and what is Mr Collins' attitude toward her. Why do you think he behaves like this? Find out how clergymen attained their position at this time.
- Describe Charlotte Lucas. Why does she choose to marry Mr Collins?
- Describe Elizabeth's aunt and uncle. To what level of society do they belong and what values are important in their social circle?

Plot

1. Give a brief summary of the plot.
2. How does the plot emphasize important issues in Austen's society?

Themes

What would you say are the main themes in the novel?

SparkNotes - *Pride and Prejudice*

Working With the Film - Pride and Prejudice (2005)

Work with the tasks at the following link:

Film Education - *Pride and Prejudice*

Discuss

1. Why do you think Jane Austen gave the novel the title *Pride and Prejudice*? Find examples of pride and prejudice in the novel. Do these examples reflect what we think of as pride and prejudice today? Are these values eternal or do they change over time? Which part does culture play in this context?
2. If you watch the film, you will see that the director has made certain choices to signify the characters' personality and position. At Fashions of Jane Austen study how the most important characters are dressed in the pictures. What does their dress code reveal about their personality and social position? If you have only read the novel, how does this agree with your impression of the characters?
3. Do you think the story is a true reflection of Jane Austen's times? Give examples.

Writing

Pride and Prejudice has been the inspiration for films, e.g. *Bride and Prejudice*, *Lost in Austen* and for other novels e.g. *Death Comes to Pemberley* by P.D. James and *Pemberley Chronicles* by Rebecca Ann Collins. Make an outline for how you would continue the story of Mr Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet and write the first chapter of your story.

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice 200th Anniversary

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice 200th Anniversary (114136)

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was first published in 1813, which makes 2013 its 200th anniversary. The book has since it appeared been extremely popular, and it is still sold and read by a huge audience. It seems that Austen's themes of love, class and money in the late 18th century continue to appeal to many new readers.

In connection with the anniversary, the English Blog / Reuters have made a short video feature with interviews and comments about the popularity and the different adaptions of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. Follow the link below, listen to the interview and read the transcript. The other links will give you more information about *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Austen's literature.

Pride and Prejudice 200th Anniversary

Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen - Romantic or Realist

The Romantic Era

The Romantic Period - An Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Romantic Period - An Introduction (88502)

There is an ordered correlation between the different trends we have in our cultural history; the periods succeed each other in a pattern of action and reaction. The German word “Zeitgeist” (spirit of the time) covers what is the dominating cultural attitude over a particular span of time. And after the scientific and factual approach that characterised culture during the Enlightenment the pendulum swings again. The period from the late 18th century until around 1850 has, somewhat misleadingly, been labelled the Romantic Period; misleading because what we today associate with the word “romantic” will be representative for only a small part of the culture of that era. The Romantic period was much more than what we may think is “romantic”.

Philosophy and Culture

The scientists and philosophers have always been the trendsetters. The ideas and theories fronted by thinkers and intellectuals often caused debate and controversy, and would eventually catch on with artists after a maturing process over time. Accordingly, the cultural expressions from painters and writers who were inspired by these new theories would usually appear half a century or so later. For example, the culture of the Enlightenment was inspired by scientific innovations and theories from the 17th century, and likewise the trendsetting ideas for the artists of the Romantic era were launched mainly during the first half of the 18th century. The most significant philosopher was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who in 1741 came to Paris and joined the Encyclopaedists, but soon after broke with their rigid and mathematical approach to the understanding of man and his universe. In his works he postulates that man is initially good, but has been corrupted by his surroundings and has to find his way back to his natural and original qualities to restore his balance and well-being.

Literary Themes and Genres

For German and English writers and poets the agenda was to praise the beauty of nature and to incite love and longing for what was natural. Love is a key word – love of nature, of one's country, of the simple life, and of course love between man and woman, often unfulfilled, but absorbingly passionate. Suffering was also seen as a romantic ideal. Goethe's "Die Leiden des jungen Werthers" (1774) is the prime example. The book was actually banned in Denmark – Norway since poor Werther committed suicide at the end, and the authorities were concerned about the possible contagious effect. Other literary projects during the Romantic zeitgeist would revive medieval ideals such as chivalry and bravery with heroes who relentlessly fought for their country or for the love of a woman. The German playwright Friedrich von Schiller and Scottish Sir Walter Scott represent this approach. Other sources of inspiration were myths and legends and old folklore traditions. The longing for the natural and simple life brought on literature that idealised the simple people, the outcast or the misfit and turned its back on aristocratic and academic values. The poets would clearly prefer the innocent countryside child to the urban and sophisticated man or woman. The style and language they used may today seem both sentimental and pompous, but sentimentality was seen as an essential and necessary part of romantic expression.
Many, in fact most of the romantic writers, expressed themselves through poetry. Since poetry traditionally is seen as an adequate way to express feelings, poetry became the genuine voice of romanticism. John Keats, William Wordsworth, Percy B. Shelley, Lord Byron are all prominent English poets of this period. The poetry could be expressing love and praise of nature, or it could be an inflammatory political appeal; many of the romantic poets were political activists. But it was not only poetry; drama and prose were also ways of expressing romantic ideals. American James Fennimore Cooper's stories of the Native Americans are good examples of romantic prose, as are Sir Walter Scott's and Jane Austen's novels. Another genre was the mystery tale with ingredients like monsters, occult forces, and magic. Edgar Allen Poe and Mary Shelley ("Frankenstein") represent this trend. Some writers took this further (Ann Radcliffe) and created what we refer to as the gothic tale, where we find supernatural and dream-like events going on in abandoned castles with ghosts and vampires.

Romantic Images

The painters of this era followed up with their idyllic images of untouched nature in a somewhat overexposed style. They painted beautiful scenery and landscapes with simple people in ordinary everyday situations. The artists would often take the liberty to include details that would enhance the romantic atmosphere, for example, by putting some grazing cattle in a field or a little white church on a hill, details which were not there originally. Some painters also pursued the gothic tendency and depicted mysterious castles or ruins on windswept moors with elements of occultism and other creepy and dark symbolic references.

The Age of Revolution

If we look at the political effects of the ideas of the Romantic period - these are stormy times. The belief in man's natural freedom and independence opened up for radical interpretations and spurred revolutionary movements. This aspect was particularly predominant in France. Monarchs and Emperors were seen as figures with a self-bestowed position which had no legitimacy in a natural concept of life. The great revolutions during this period were inspired by the romantic ideals of liberty and the rights of ordinary people. Even Norway was influenced by this during the process that culminated in 1814.

Liberty Leading the People by Eugene Delacroix
Fotograf: Corbis

Revolution and Love

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Revolution and Love - William Wordsworth, a True Romantic Poet (99976)

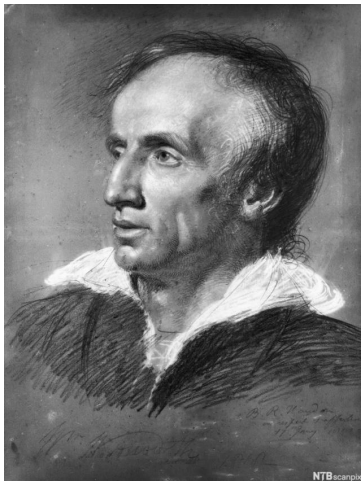
The romantic era was a period of revolution and radical ideas. The belief in liberty and social justice for common people appealed to many writers and intellectuals and resulted in a strong antagonism against the aristocracy and political establishment. These young poets were the rebels of their time, and many of them led lives that were seen as morally scandalous. Some of them felt exiled by the narrow-minded English establishment and settled abroad; Lord Byron, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley all moved to Italy, never to return. William Wordsworth also went abroad, but he returned to England both inspired and distressed by what he experienced in France.

Homeless and Restless

Wordsworth's parents died when he was quite young, which probably induced his feeling of alienation and homelessness. He was a bright student but his education took time because he was more into self-studies and wandering to seek the beauty of nature; and when he finally graduated he refused to take a regular profession. Instead he set out hiking in England and Wales, and he went to France, allegedly to learn French properly. But things turned out differently; in France he encountered the strong forces that were to become the inspiration for much of his poetry: Revolution and Love.

Three Women and a Friend

Wordsworth was intensely excited by the revolutionary spirit in France, and supported the rebels in their insurrection. While he was there he met Annette Vallon, they fell in love, and after some months she became pregnant with his child. But Wordsworth was homesick and felt restless, and his poor finances made it impossible to stay on and marry Annette. So he left France, probably intending to return some day, but his plans were interrupted by the outbreak of war between England and France in 1793. And it was to be nine years until he could see Annette again and meet his then unborn child, and then the purpose of and circumstances around the visit had changed all together.



William Wordsworth
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Wordsworth made contact with his sister Dorothy, and their close company lasted for the rest of their lives. He also made friends and worked with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, another young romantic poet; together they published “Lyrical Ballads” (1789) which stands as a milestone in English romantic poetry. Wordsworth was gradually achieving popularity, but money was scarce until he was left some money by a friend he had helped during his illness. He and his sister moved around in England until they settled in a cottage in The Lake District in the north of England, a short distance from their birthplace. This was Wordsworth’s home-coming, both literally and emotionally. Inspired by the beautiful surroundings of lakes and valleys in the area he wrote many of his cherished poems here. His poetic project was to grasp natural beauty in a fresh approach and to display man’s need for harmony with nature.

Back home he also met Mary Hutchinson, an acquaintance from his school days, and whom he was later to marry. But presently Wordsworth was not rich enough to enter a matrimonial liaison with Mary, and besides – there was another serious obstacle: In France a woman still called herself Mrs Wordsworth. They were not married, but they had a child together, and William felt the obligation to settle things with his “French connection” before he could marry Mary. So in 1802 he headed for France, accompanied by his sister, to meet Annette and his now nine year old daughter, Carolyn. (The poem “Upon Westminster Bridge” was written on this trip.) This meeting could have turned out quite dramatically; such a situation holds quite some “romantic” potential. But after a time they reached an agreement after long talks and walks on the Calais beach. After having settled things with Annette, William and Dorothy returned to England, and back to their cottage in the Lake District where they spent the rest of their lives. William married Mary and they had two children. But this was a period of emotional distress for Wordsworth; in addition to his tormenting love situation he grieved over his friend Coleridge’s moral degradation and drug addiction. Another stressful element was his indignation at Napoleon’s bloody way to power. In some way all these events and elements are recorded in his poetry.

Wordsworth’s Legacy

Though his political views became more lenient and conservative as he grew older, William Wordsworth was still seen as a rebel by the moral standards at the time. He had an illegitimate child and he was living with two women, one of them his sister; these things caused speculations and made people talk. Wordsworth died in 1850 when England was entering a new age and the literary scene was to change radically. Sentimental poetry about natural beauty was no longer trendy – it was time to “tell it like it is”. Wordsworth went on writing in the aftermath of romanticism, but he never reached the same intense and powerful poetic imagery as in his early career. William Wordsworth is for many the incarnate romantic poet who has rendered the reading public, both then and now, some of the most beautiful poems in English literature.

Percy Bysshe Shelley - A Romantic Rebel

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Percy Bysshe Shelley - A Romantic Rebel (99115)

The Romantic era was not only idyllic pastorals and longing for the simple and natural; it was also a time of revolution and protest. The “old ways” of society were challenged by a generation of angry young men and women. In pamphlets and articles they attacked the established values and institutions. The Church, Christianity, the educational system, the legal system, and not least the aristocracy and Royalty were all the targets of a harsh and defiant criticism from these radical writers. One of them was Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose short and dramatic life stands as a symbol of the revolutionary ideas and strong emotions of the romantic period.

The Rebel

Shelley seems to have been rebellious by nature. He was a highly intelligent boy and was interested in science and literature; he was particularly fascinated by the Gothic tradition which was popular at the time. But his school career was to be a line of disciplinary reproaches from day one at Sion House Academy in Sussex until he was expelled from Oxford in his freshman year for “contumaciously refusing to answer questions”. At Eton, he had picked up on radical literature and was reading the works of philosophers like Hume and Voltaire. He also developed a scepticism towards Christianity, and at Oxford he wrote and published a pamphlet called “The Necessity of Atheism,” which was a contributory factor for his expulsion from Oxford.

Portrait of Percy Bysshe Shelley

Love and Morality

In London, Shelley met Harriet Westbrook, who probably was his inferior intellectually – but she was madly in love with him. Shelley was flattered and entered a relationship with Harriet, possibly as some sort of a fling. But as she was disgraced by her parents for being associated with an atheist and a rebel, he was provoked into marrying her. He was nineteen and she sixteen; and entering a marriage on such premises would, not surprisingly, prove to be a mistake. The young couple travelled in Scotland and in Ireland, where Shelley wrote and gave speeches to encourage the work for political reforms. He and Harriet had two children together, but their marriage was withering, and when he, in 1814, met 17-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Goodwin, he was lost; their mutual attraction was electric. They eloped to Switzerland for the summer, and when they came back, Harriet drowned herself in Hyde Park in London. A few years previously, Shelley had published his first important poem, “The Queen Mab,” expressing his socialist criticism of society and his denunciation of Christianity. This, in combination with his somewhat infamous conduct of life was the reason why his appeal for custody of his children was turned down by the authorities; he was seen as “morally unfit,” they proclaimed in the verdict.

In Exile

Percy and Mary moved to Italy in 1818, both because of his bad health and because he felt exiled by the verdict. In Italy they socialised with other English expatriates, like Lord Byron and Edward Trelawny. During his stay in Italy, his writing became richer and more poignant due to influential friends and circumstances that moved him emotionally, for example the death of his little daughter Clara. Percy and Mary had a son when they lived in Florence, which brought some happiness into their lives. Still, Shelley was often depressed and felt anger and pity for "the ways of mankind and the wrongs of the world". But all this inspired his writing. One of his best love poems,"Emilia," was inspired by a beautiful Italian woman (with whom Shelley probably was in love) who was locked up in a convent because she refused to marry the old nobleman her parents had promised her to. The death of his friend, John Keats, in 1821, also moved Shelley to produce some of the finest poetry in English literature. Mary was also active writing, and her famous "Frankenstein" was written during their stay in Italy.

The Death of a Poet

Shelley died in 1822, 30 years old, and the circumstances around his death and cremation were truly befitting a romantic rebel. After a meeting with colleagues in connection with the launching of a new periodical, The Liberal, Shelley and a friend were sailing homewards along the Italian coast. A violent storm broke, and they capsized and drowned; their bodies were found washed up on the shore two weeks later. Italian law required cremation, so the friends who had gathered (Lord Byron was one of them) decided to burn the bodies on the beach. As the flames picked up, and Shelley's body slowly decomposed, Edward Trelawny stepped out and snatched his heart out of the flames, and presented it to Mary; a strong symbolic act resembling the dramatic scene in "Frankenstein," where the monster rips the heart out of Elizabeth's bosom. Another mystic element of Shelley's death was his own forewarning of the way he died; in one of his latest works, "Adonais," which was "a vindication of all poets and their immortality," there are several passages that give a detailed description of death by drowning.

There are many examples of how poets and writers live their literature, or become what they write. Percy Bysshe Shelley is one of them; his short life and dramatic death certainly became a true analogy of the rebellious and ardent ideas that characterized the romantic era.

Activities

- Follow the link and read the two poems by Percy Bysshe Shelley – "Song to the Men of England" and "England in 1819" and see how these lines express Shelley's political views. List some key issues that Shelley addresses in these poems.Two Critical Poems by Percy Bysshe Shelley
- Shelley's radicalism and rebellious nature may not seem so outrageous from today's viewpoint. But in the early 19th century, things were different. What do society's reactions to Shelley's protests tell us about the virtues and values of pre-Victorian England?
- There is an on-going literary debate as to what extent the writer's socio-cultural and personal background is important for the understanding of his work. Discuss how this issue is particularly intriguing regarding a writer like Shelley. If you want more information about this issue you may follow this link: Literature in Theory
- Can you come up with other examples of writers who "lived their literature"?
- Some say that all artists are self-centred narcissists wrapped up in themselves. In what respect can that be true about Shelley? Does his life also indicate that he had empathy and a social conscience?

Robert Burns

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Robert Burns (89586)

Robert Burns, also called Rabbie Burns, was a poet, lyricist and ploughman, who had a great influence not only on Scottish literature, but also on other Romantic poets like William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley. He is known and celebrated all over the world. Some of his songs have even been translated into Norwegian and are sung by the Norwegian folk singer Alf Cranner.
In a poll in 2009 organised by Scottish television Robert Burns was voted the Greatest Scot.

Introduction

Burns was born on 25 January, 1759. Today his birthday is celebrated all over the world with a Burn's Supper where the Scottish speciality, haggis, is served and his poems and songs are recited and sung. He died in 1796, only 37 years old. He had a great appetite for life - and women.

The sweetest hours that e'er I spent,
Are spent among the lassies, O.
*(from the poem "*Green Grow the Rashes O*")*

He created many poems and songs in both Scots and English helping to preserve the Scots language and showing that it was equally possible to express feelings and convey his message in Scots. He also collected and revised folk songs, but struggled on the edge of poverty for much of his life.

Scots and English are similar but different. Here are some Scots words from Burns' poems. Use the dictionary at http://www.scots-online.org/dictionary/ to find the English equivalent: *bonnie, bairn, sleekit, moose, gang, airt, brattle*

Biography

Burns was born in Alloway near Ayr, the oldest of seven children in a poor family. He was educated, but not regularly, from the age of six by a teacher who stimulated his interest in literature. In addition, he learned ballads and folk tales from his mother. He started writing poetry in his teens.
Burns trained as a ploughman and farmed together with his brother. Many of his poems deal with the countryside and the ordinary people. One of these is "To a Mouse", about a farmer who ploughs up a mouse's nest when turning over his fields before winter. Mice were not popular with farmers because the destroyed their crops, but the farmer in the poem addresses the mouse about the trials of life making the point that the animal has as much right to make a life for himself as people do. Listen to a few stanzas from the poem where Burns, the farmer, talks to the mouse.

Birthplace of Robert Burns
Fotograf: Anne Scott Hagen

Mouse - Burns' Museum

Fotograf: Anne Scott Hagen

To a Mouse / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/93595

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an 'men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e.
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

During his short lifetime, Burns had relationships with many women. In 1785 he met Jean Armour, who eventually became his wife and bore him nine children. For her he wrote:

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
(from "Of A' the Airts the Wind Can Blaw"*)*

In addition, throughout his life Burns had affairs with several other women. Some of these liasons resulted in illegitimate children, all of whom he acknowledged. One special relationship was with Agnes McLehose, whom he met in Einburgh. This lasted from 1787 until 1791 when she left to join her estranged husband in the West Indies. He wrote many passionate letters to her addressing her as “Clarinda” and a beautiful farewell poem titled “Ae Fond Kiss” In the last stanza he says:

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-thee-weel thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love and Pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

The first edition of his poems was printed in 1785 in order to raise money to travel to Jamaica where he was offered a job. He hoped to do better there than he had done in farming. However, in the end he decided to go to Edinburgh and was feted by the literati of the time. There he met people who become his patrons and gave him some financial support. Burns also toured the Borders and the Highlands collecting traditional airs (songs). The second edition of his poems came out in 1787.

From 1788 until his death in 1796, he and his family lived in SW Scotland in and near Dumfries where he supported them by working both as a farmer and exciseman (collector of customs and excise payments). He wrote many poems at this time and worked on a collection of Scottish airs, composing songs based on old traditional tunes such as "A Red Red Rose" and "Auld Lang Syne". His death in 1796 was probably due to a rheumatic condition which had affected his heart. He died a pauper, but left behind a legacy of verse which has enriched the world of poetry and song.

The Themes in His Poems

Burns was a philosophical poet, a republican and an egalitarian. He was aware of the fight for the rights of the common man, e.g. in the American Revolution, 1776 - 1783, and the French Revolution, 1789 - 1799. His poems and songs include the themes of man and nature, equality, patriotism, and love and tenderness, as well as satire on certain aspects of society and Scotland's cultural heritage.

His egalitarianism has made him a popular poet in Russia, which was the first country to produce a stamp in his honour, on the 160th anniversary of his death in 1956. At the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, "A Man's a Man for a' That" was sung. The last stanza indicates Burns' hopes for the future of mankind.

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that).
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that,
That Man to Man, the world o'er.
Shall brothers be for a' that.
(bear the gree = will win the victory)

His patriotic poem "Scots Wha Hae" used to be the unofficial national anthem of Scotland. It is a rousing address to the Scottish army from their king, Robert the Bruce, before the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314; the Scots were the victors and won their freedom from the English.

Scots Wha Hae
Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to Victorie!
Now's the day and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power---
Chains and Slaverie!

Burns did not approve of the strict self-righteousness of some Presbyterian clergymen in Scotland and the satirical poem "Holy Wullie's Prayer" reflects this. But perhaps Burns is most famous for his love songs, such as "A Red Red Rose", which is claimed to be Bob Dylan's greatest source of inspiration. Are there any more inspiring lines than these?

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!
Wha for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand or Free-man fa',
Let him follow me!

By Oppressions woes and pains!
By your Sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!
Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us Do ---- or Die!

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi the sun!
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho it were ten thousand mile!

There are many other poems about love, lost love and tenderness – "Mary Morrisson", "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon", "Whistle and I'll Come to Ye, My Lad", etc.

Scottish culture as manifested in the everyday lives of ordinary people occurs in poems such as "A Cottar's Saturday Night", a description of a cottager coming home from the fields to his family on Saturday evening and looking forward to a day of rest on Sunday. Another such poem is "Tam o' Shanter", a tale of a farmer who gets into trouble because of drink and women. Tam o' Shanter by Robert Burns The poem ends with a warning to all men to curb their inclinations in those areas. Was Burns thinking of his own life?

Burns may have enjoyed many of the pleasures of life to the full, but if he had not been the kind of person he was, he might never have written the poetry and songs that he did. They represent a cultural heritage that Scots all over the world are so proud of, that they voted him the Greatest Scot.

Tasks

1. How do Burns' life and his works relate to the philosophy of the Romantic period?
2. Here are some often used quotes from Burns. Can you explain these quotations in your own words ? If necessary, use this online dictionary to translate the Scots words, http://www.scots-online.org/dictionary/
    - The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
      Gang aft agley
      ("To a Mouse")
    - O wad some Power the giftie gie us,
      To see oursels as ithers see us!
      It wad frae monie a blunder free us.
      And foolish notion;
      ("To a Louse")
    - The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
      The Man's the gowd for a' that.
      ("A Man's a Man for A' That")
    - Man,--whose heaven-erected face
      The smiles of love adorn,--
      Man's inhumanity to man
      Makes countless thousands mourn!
      ("Man Was Made to Mourn")
    - Nae man can tether time or tide.

("Tam o'Shanter")
    - But pleasures are like poppies spread;
      You seize the flower, its bloom is shed.
      Or like the snow falls in the river,
      A moment white--then melts forever.
      ("Tam o'Shanter")
    - "Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
      To think how mony consels sweet,
      How mony lengthened, sage advices,
      The husband frae the wife despises."
      ("Tam o'Shanter")
3. "To a Mouse" Take the first two or three stanzas of the poem shown above and translate them into Standard English. http://www.scots-online.org/dictionary/ Compare the two versions and comment on the effect of the language. How does it create authenticity and feeling?
4. Analyse the poem "A Red Red Rose". Who is the speaker and to whom is the poem addressed? Comment on the use of rhyme, rhytm, images, etc. How to Work with Poetry (easy)
5. Listen to Edie Reader singing her version of "My Love is Like a Red Red Rose". Why do you think Bob Dylan has chosen this song as his greatest inspiration?

You will find the complete versions of some of Burns poems here, Rabbie Burns Poems.

7 Literature 1840 to 1900

Authors of the Victorian Age

Charles Dickens - An Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Charles Dickens - An Introduction (89522)

Charles Dickens is not only the most famous of the Victorian novelists, he is also the most typical. Only surpassed by William Shakespeare, he is the most cherished English writer of all times; his books have never been allowed to gather dust on the shelf. His heartrending and close-to-life tales of the human destinies behind the success of industrial England are an important documentation of the Victorian Age.

Pre-reading task: Look at the following Dickens quotations; do they tell you something?

- "It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times..."
- "If there were no bad people, there would be no good lawyers."
- "In this life we want nothing but facts, sir, nothing but facts."
- "It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold - when it is summer in the light and winter in the shade."
- "He was bolder in the daylight - most men are."
- "There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in its contrasts."

Real-Life Characters

A common institution of Victorian England was the debtor's prison, where people ended up when they could not pay their debt according to the terms agreed upon. Dickens's father once had to serve time in such a prison, and young Charles had to work to make ends meet for the family. This experience may have introduced him to what was later to become his literary project. Otherwise, Charles had a fairly happy childhood and a good middle-class education,after which he started a legal career; he learned short-hand and had practice as a gallery reporter in the House of Commons. He also worked as a legal reporter in a court of law, employed by several newspapers and periodicals. Dickens's thematic approaches in his future novels would clearly bear evidence of what he experienced during this face-to-face encounter with political procedures and legislation. He was appalled by what he saw as pompous and silly proceedings from the ruling class to protect its own interests. There were victims and culprits, and in Dickens's enormous gallery his characters all seem, in one way or other, to end up either as wrongdoers or benefactors. Dickens had a lifelong contempt for the aristocracy and any class distinction because he had seen how these institutions were hypocritical oppressors of honest and decent people who struggled to get by during "hard times". His figures take on a universal and symbolic value, and even if he may give them a somewhat stereotypical portrayal, they were rooted in real life. There were many mean factory owners and capitalists like Mr Bounderby, and materialist educators like Mr Gradgrind; the London underworld had many Fagins, and there were many orphans like Oliver Twist, suffering the abhorrent conditions in the workhouses. The corrupt legal practice of *Bleak House*, the debtors' prison of *Little Dorrit* are other examples of how Dickens used his legal competence and his own life experience to create realistic literature.

Charles Dickens, English author

Moralist or Sentimentalist?

The opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities* sum up his literary project brilliantly: "It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times." What were the best of times for some at the top were definitely the worst of times for those who sacrificed their lifeblood and dignity to keep the wheels turning in the "workshop of the world." He fought his battle with humour and satire and his characters are wonderfully portrayed. If he is a moralist, which many critics may claim, his gospel is entertaining and wonderfully told. Dickens's talent for painting detailed and vivid pictures is undisputable, though some of his characters are close to caricatures. Another common objection to Dickens is that he is a sentimentalist. That may be true as well, but he belongs to the realistic trend in literature and he openly manipulates the readers by his narrative technique and his use of child protagonists. His intention is to move the readers and invoke their feelings for these poor victims of greedy mill owners and an unscrupulous ruling class. He also wants to expose the inhumanity of institutions like the Church, the court of justice and the workhouse.

Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens's stories gained a huge audience, and like many of his contemporary writers his first works were published as monthly sequels in periodicals. This was a handy way for a writer to obtain a close contact with his readers. One of his most famous novels, *Oliver Twist*, was published in that way. It is the story of the orphan Oliver who is sold from the workhouse and ends up in the bad company of Fagin and his band of thieves and pickpockets in the dark and foggy backstreets of London. After much drama and commotion Oliver ends up in the care of a nice and wealthy gentleman and the plot has a happy ending. Like so many of Dickens's stories it is moving and vividly told, and has a list of ingredients that in sum give a fairly accurate description of Victorian London, for better or for worse. Read more about Olver Twist here: Oliver Twist's Story

Illustration Depicting Oliver Twist Asking for More Food by J. Mahoney

Dickens's vast production includes titles and characters that are familiar to the reading audience also today. Some of his most famous and popular novels are *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit, A Tale of Two Cities*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *A Christmas Carol* – the list is long. Charles Dickens holds a monumental position in English literature and his works are rated as world classics.

Follow this link for more information about The Industrial Revolution in England
The Industrial Revolution

Comprehension

1. What did Dickens's early career mean for his later work as an author?
2. The literary method of the Victorian Age is also called Realism. How does Dickens comply with that label?
3. What does it mean that some of Dickens's characters are close to caricatures?
4. Many of Dickens's novels were published in sequels in different magazines (like the works of many of his contemporaries.) What would such a publishing process imply for the writer – and for the reading audience?
5. If you check the quotes in the pre-reading task again, you will see there are many references to light and dark. How do you interpret this?

Project Work: Victorian Philanthropists

Conditions in Victorian England were not so black-and-white as history tends to tell. There were many benevolent factory owners who provided health care, education and good accommodation for their workers. These were influential people who saw the injustice and wanted to improve conditions for the workers. Such people are called *philanthropists*, and they worked both practically within their own local community, or politically to bring about the poor laws and different protection acts. These benefactors were often driven by a Christian vocation, like for example William Booth, who worked for the poor in the sordid backstreets of Whitechapel in London. His movement was to be the start of the Salvation Army. Go on the net and research Victorian philanthropists and then make a presentation for the class. Some key figures are:

- Angela Burdett-Coutts
- Sir Thomas Barnardo
- Robert James Lees
- William Booth
- Frederick Charrington

Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad - Late Victoria..

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Stevenson, Kipling, and Conrad - Late Victorian Novelists (89567)

The last decades of the 19th century saw the British Empire at its peak. However, there were dark clouds gathering – uproars in India and Africa, the rebels in Ireland were organising, there was a new world power entering the stage, the USA, and on the continent an armaments race had started and alliances were formed. The literature of the late 19th century was, in different ways, influenced by these circumstances.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson

Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling

Joseph Conrad

Joseph Conrad

Victorian Literature - more than Dickens

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Victorian Literature - More than Dickens (89016)

Charles Dickens rightfully stands as a landmark in English literature, but the Victorian era was an immensely rich and productive period and musters a line of creative writers whose high quality works are still enjoyed today.

William Thackeray

The Victorian Period was the final breakthrough of the novel and one of the English novelists who by many of his contemporaries was seen as a competitor to Dickens was *William Makepeace Thackeray*. They were read by the same audience and were in many books occupied with the same themes. But more than competitors, it is more correct to say that they complement each other. Thackeray's most famous work was "Vanity Fair" and was, like many of the novels at the time, first published in monthly issues, and then came as a book in 1849. It is a humorous and biting satirical presentation of the life of upper-class England in the first half of the 19th century, with an extensive cast of characters and a wide-ranging plot. The novel has by many critics been rated among the best in world literature. One of Thackeray's early novels, "Barry Lyndon" was in 1975 made into a movie by Stanley Kubrick, a brilliant and highly recommended film which took home four Academy Awards.

The Brontë Sisters

Emily, Anne and Charlotte Brontë grew up in a remote house on the windswept Yorkshire moors, which in many ways has left its mark on their work. One of the most read novels in English literature is Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights", her only work and a gripping narrative about absorbing and destructive love. (Follow link to a separate presentation of "Wuthering Heights") Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" was a huge success when it came out in 1847, the same year as "Wuthering Heights". "Jane Eyre" is a kind of Cinderella story but without the happy ending. It is a thrilling narrative of deep and self-sacrificing love, and it is said that it was Queen Victoria's favourite novel. Anne Brontë was not as famous as her two sisters but her novels and poems were also popular with the reading audience at the time. Both "Wuthering Heights" and "Jane Eyre" have been filmed many times.

George Eliot

Marian Evans took the pseudonym *George Elio*t, and is perhaps after Dickens the writer of the period that has been most read and embraced up until today. She was a prominent intellectual who took a public stand against dogmatic Christianity, which was seen as quite controversial at the time. On top of that she lived "in sin" with a married man, who was separated from his wife, but could not get a divorce. Her most popular novel was "The Mill on the Floss", but her masterpiece was "Middlemarch" which was published in 1871. It is a deep and sharp analysis of provincial England degenerated in religious and moral disingenuity. The novel is highly acclaimed even today. She sought to understand human instincts and emotions and portrayed her characters with insight and love. Her style is introvert and partly philosophical as she reflects the mind and psyche of her characters.

Robert and Elizabeth Browning

Robert and Elizabeth Browning belong in the front line of Victorian literature. They were established writers when they met in 1845. They married secretly (Elizabeth's father was very dominating and madly jealous) and moved to Italy where they lived for sixteen years until Elizabeth died. Robert Browning's poetry can in a way be called timeless – that is, it can be truly romantic and at the same time close to what we would call modernist poetry, even though it was written during the Victorian era. His style is said to be deep and difficult, but nonetheless he is one of the most important English poets, and he influenced many modernist poets of the 20th century. One of his most famous poems is called "Home Thoughts from Abroad" and pays homage to his beloved home country in the springtime. Elizabeth Browning wrote the poem "The Cry of the Children" which was a critical comment on the use of child labour in the factories in England.

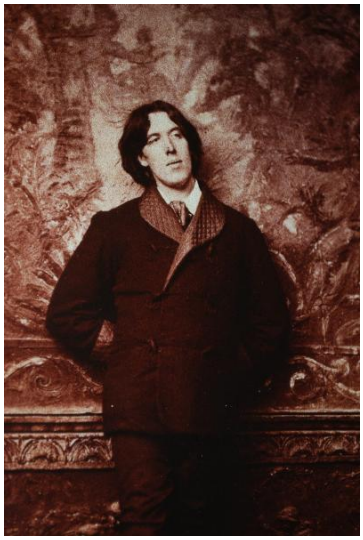
Thomas Hardy

Another of the prominent late Victorians was *Thomas Hardy*. His is an acclaimed novelist who still has a huge audience. He wanted to show how man is helplessly corrupted by evil forces beyond his control, forces like dogmatic religious practice and the many conventional routines and what he saw as pointless formalities in different social settings. His themes were often tragic and he was criticised for presenting a pessimistic view on life, though he thought of himself as being realistic. He has written many very popular novels, such as "Far from the Maddening Crowd", "The Mayor of Casterbridge", and "Tess of the D'Urbervilles", which probably is his most famous work. "Tess" was filmed by Roman Polanski in 1979 and was a huge success, being rated by critics as one of Polanski's best films.

Oscar Wilde - a 19th Century Celebrity

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby, Knut Inge Skifjeld
Oscar Wilde - a 19th Century Celebrity (46175)

Pre-reading activity: Oscar Wilde was a 19th century author who caused scandals, just like Michael Jackson and Britney Spears in the 21st century. What do they have in common?



Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) was an Irish author, poet and playwright. By many he is considered the funniest man that has ever lived. This is maybe why he is one of the most quoted persons in the world. Above all, he worshipped beauty and he surrounded himself with objects that he considered beautiful. In his time he was what we today would term a celebrity.

His way of dressing and his long hair caused public anger, but also admiration, especially among rebellious youths. The moral code in 19th century Ireland and its mother country, England with Queen Victoria on the throne, was very strict. However, his clothes and hair were not what caused most alarm. In 1895, he was sent to prison because of his sexual orientation and practice. Even though he was married and had two children, Wilde had open relationships with young men. When he was released in 1897, he decided never to go back to Britain again, and he died penniless in a cheap hotel in Paris only three years later. However, for generations to come he left behind a great legacy. If you visit Oscar Wilde - Fanpop, you will see that he still has fans all over the world. Among his most important work is his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, his fairy tales *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* and numerous quotations. Below you can enjoy some of the quotations.

****

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension

Oscar Wilde - Multiple Choice / h5p_content

Presentation

Pick at least five quotations that you like and make a digital presentation of them, you may add music and pictures. For inspiration, check out Oscar Wilde - Fanpop.

Quotations

1. A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is fatal.
2. A man can be happy with any woman as long as he does not love her.
3. Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much.
4. Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.
5. I am not young enough to know everything
6. I think that God in creating Man somewhat overestimated his ability
7. If you want to tell people the truth, make them laugh, otherwise they'll kill you.
8. Morality, like art, means drawing a line someplace.
9. One should always play fairly when one has the winning cards
10. Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious.
11. The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.
12. There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating: people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.
13. We teach people how to remember, we never teach them how to grow.
14. Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.
15. Only dull people are brilliant at breakfast.
16. I can resist anything but temptation.
17. Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about

Writing

Creative writing: use your favourite quotation as a point of departure and write a story where the quotation plays a part or is the moral of your story.

Oral

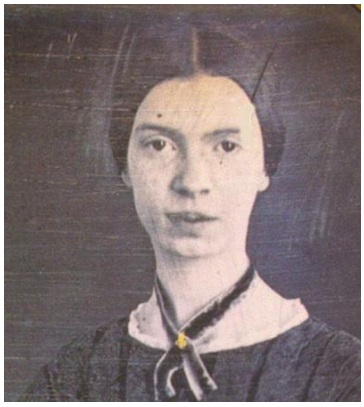
1. Write down your favourite quotation on a slip of paper. Ask your classmates about their favourites and have them explain why they like this in particular.
2. Which - if any - quotation was most popular? Why, do you think this was most popular?
3. Why are quotations so popular? In which contexts can we use quotations?
4. Are there any present celebrities that remind you of Oscar Wilde? Why do you think he caused so much anger? What would it take to shock people today?

American Literature in the 19th Century

Emily Dickinson - Life and Poetry

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
Emily Dickinson - Life and Poetry (20267)

Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886): Emily Dickinson is considered one of the greatest poets ever. She lived a secluded life. How is it possible to produce such wonderful poetry, that generations of people can relate to, if you are a loner and never go anywhere?



Emily Dickinson

A Life of Seclusion

Emily Dickinson was an American poet who was born in Massachusetts. She grew up in a successful family with strong community ties, but she lived a mostly introverted and reclusive life. Among the locals she was considered an eccentric, and she became known for her reluctance to greet guests and for always wearing white clothing. In her later life she hardly ever left her room, and her friendships were therefore carried out by correspondence.

Her Poetry

Dickinson was a private poet, and very few of her poems were published during her lifetime. After her death, her sister found nearly eighteen hundred poems stashed away in a bureau drawer. Emily Dickinson's poems are characterized by short lines, and they most often lack titles. The poems often use slant rhyme as well as unconventional capitalization and punctuation. Many of her poems deal with the themes of death and immortality.

Listen to the song performed by Quoting Napoleon while watching slides about Emily Dickinson and her poetry. (You Tube: Emily Dickinson Tribute Song)

Emily Dickinson - Life and Poetry / fagstoff

http://ndla.no/en/node/20267

Tasks and Activities

Discuss

1. How would you describe Emily Dickinson's life and personality?
2. Emily Dickinson often wore a white dress. Why do you think she did this? What does this color symbolize?
3. Do you think the music they have chosen fits the content? Why/why not?

Poems and Tasks

Hope Is the Thing with Feathers. I'm a Nobody. Who Are You?

Walden by Henry David Thoreau

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Walden by Henry David Thoreau (106187)

Towards the mid-19th century, the cultural scene was changing in Europe. The Romantic ideals were challenged by writers and intellectuals who now wanted to communicate a more realistic approach to literature. In the USA, things were different. The new European trend did not catch on until later in the century; instead, some writers turned to nature to seek an understanding of man's existence in balance with the elements, just like many of the European Romanticists had done some decades earlier. These writers were called the New England Transcendentalists. Two of the most prominent representatives of this direction were Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was a man of many talents and strong convictions; he was an activist who stood up for what he believed in, and he protested against what he saw as social and human injustice. He was even imprisoned for refusing to pay taxes, in protest against his slavery- supporting state. His writings about civil disobedience were inspiration for such legendary activists as Mahatma Ghandi and Dr Martin Luther King. In 1846, Thoreau withdrew from society to build a cabin at Walden Lake, close to his home town in Massachusetts, to live in harmony with nature. His idea was that nature could teach him the essentials of a fulfilled life. He lived there for two years and two months, after which he published "Walden" (1854), from which this excerpt is taken.

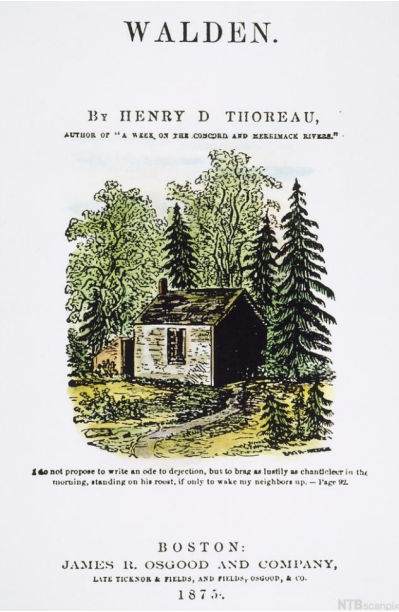
Henry David Thoreau
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Walden

Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber. It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise. The owner of the axe, as he released his hold on it, said that it was the apple of his eye; but I returned it sharper than I received it. It was a pleasant hillside where I worked, covered with pine woods, through which I looked down on the pond, and a small open field in the woods where pines and hickories were springing up. The ice on the pond was not yet dissolved, though there were some open spaces, and it was all dark colored and saturated with water. There were some slight flurries of snow during the days that I worked there; but for the most part when I came out on to the railroad, on my way home, its yellow sand heap stretched away gleaming in the hazy atmosphere, and the rails shone in the spring sun, and I heard the lark and pewee and other birds already come to commence another year with us. They were pleasant spring days, in which the winter of man's discontent was thawing as well as the earth, and the life that had lain torpid began to stretch itself. One day, when my axe had come off and I had cut a green hickory for a wedge, driving it with a stone, and had placed the whole to soak in a pond hole in order to swell the wood, I saw a striped snake run into the water, and he lay on the bottom, apparently without inconvenience, as long as I staid there, or more than a quarter of an hour; perhaps because he had not yet come out of the torpid state. It appeared to me that for a like reason men remain in their present low and primitive condition; but if they should feel the influence of the

spring of springs arousing them, they would of necessity rise to a higher and more ethereal life. I had previously seen the snakes I frosty mornings in my path with portions of their bodies still numb and inflexible, waiting for the sun to thaw them. On the 1st of April it rained and melted the ice, and in the early part of the day, which was very foggy, I heard a stray goose groping about over the pond and cackling as If lost, or like the spirit of the fog.
So I went on for some days cutting and hewing timber, and also studs and rafters, all with my narrow axe, not having many communicable or scholar-like thoughts, singing to myself, -

Men say they know many things;
But lo! They have taken wings, -
The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances;
The wind that blows
Is all that any body knows.


WALDEN.

By HENRY D THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."

I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. – Page 92.

BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.
1875.

Walden
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

I hewed the main timbers six inches square, most of the studs on two sides only, and the rafters and floor timbers on one side, leaving the rest of the bark on, so that they were just as straight and much stronger than sawed ones. Each stick was carefully mortised and tenoned by its stump, for I had borrowed other tools by this time. My days in the woods were not very long ones; yet I usually carried my dinner of bread and butter, and read the newspaper in which it was wrapped, at noon, sitting amid the green pine boughs which I had cut off, and to my bread was imparted some of their fragrance, for my hands were covered with a thick coat of pitch. Before I had done I was more the friend than the foe of the pine tree, though I had cut down some of them, having become better acquainted with it. Sometimes a rambler in the wood was attracted by the sound of my axe, and we chatted pleasantly over the chips which I had made.

A Closer Look at the Text

1. Apart from the little song, this is a prose text - but it still has a clear lyrical mood. Can you point out some poetical passages in the text?
2. The Transcendentalists believed in a harmony between nature and the human soul; can you find examples of this here? (See especially the last paragraph.)
3. Why does he make a point out of the fact that he has to borrow tools?
4. Comment on the little song. (What does it mean that “arts and sciences have taken wings”?)
5. Can you think of a symbolic interpretation of the striped snake and the stray goose?
6. “The winter of man’s discontent” is a quote from Shakespeare’s Richard III – what does it mean?
7. What does it mean to rise to “an ethereal life”, and how can that be achieved, according to Thoreau?
8. The following is a famous quote from Henry David Thoreau. What does he really say – and how is it reflected in his own choice of life?

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer, let him step to the music which he hears, however measured and far away.”

Topics for Discussion

- Like Thoreau, the hippies of the 1960s broke with the established society to lead a simple and non-materialistic life in their own

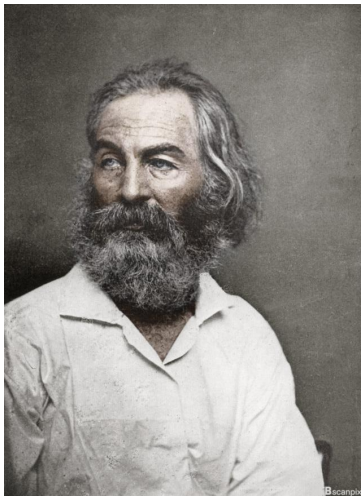
communities. Are such people eccentric dreamers, or are their protests praiseworthy?

- How important is making money in your choice of future career?
- Do you think we live in a materialistic society today?
- What cost can it have to put one's ideals into practice, like Thoreau did? Can you mention some issues you would be willing to make sacrifices to fight for?

I Hear America Singing by Walt Whitman

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
I Hear America Singing by Walt Whitman (109398)

Walt Whitman – a Modernist Ahead of his Time



Walt Whitman, American Poet

Fotograf: The Print Collector

Today Walt Whitman (1819-1892) is ranked among America's finest poets; he did not, however, win much acclaim during his own lifetime. He lived in poverty most of his life, and it was not until the last decade of his life that he was recognised and appreciated as the great poet he was. His beliefs were the basic values of Americanism – democracy and individualism, which in many ways are reflected in his poems, also in this one.

Whitman was born on Long Island which was at that time a rural area populated by farmers and fishermen, with the luring lights of Brooklyn and Manhattan across the great harbour, places that could be visited by means of exciting ferryboats. (One of Whitman's poems is called *"Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*").

He had little formal schooling, and tried his hand at different jobs until he settled with journalism, like so many of his colleagues have done. Whitman lived during a period defined by the growth and expansion of America, but also during the agonizing conflict of the Civil War, where he actually volunteered as a war nurse.

Walt Whitman's poetry has a down-to-earth and ordinary language, and is about everyday subject matters; and his free-verse style is prescient of the style of modernist poets that came half a century later. Walt Whitman has later won acclaim also internationally, and has had a considerable influence on writers both in the USA and in Europe. "I Hear America Singing" is one of his most popular and cherished poems.

I Hear America Singing

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be
  blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work,
  or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat,
  the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter
  singing as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in
  the morning, or at noon intermission at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or the young wife at work,
  or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day – at night the party of
  young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

A Closer Look at the Poem

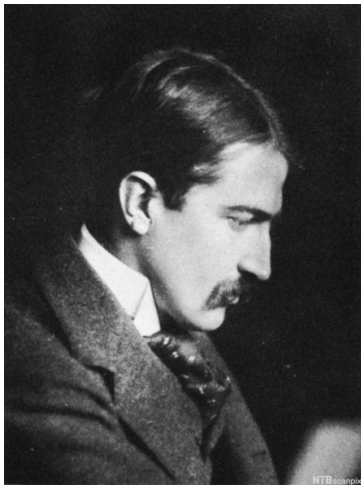
1. Is this poem really about singing?
2. What do all the professions mentioned represent?
3. In what way does this poem reflect Whitman's ideals of democracy and individualism?
4. In the first line the poet uses the word "carols" instead of "songs" – what is the difference, and what is the effect?
5. Comment on the line, "Each singing what belongs to him and her and to none else".
6. How would you describe the mood of the poem?
7. Comment on the structure of the poem.
8. Do you see any traces of traditional poetic elements (rhythm, rhyme, meter, poetic language)?
9. What makes this a poem rather than a prose text?
10. In what way does this poem bear resemblance to a modernist text?

Stephen Crane - An American Naturalist

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Stephen Crane - An American Naturalist (104940)

During the Victorian period, the writers wanted to display reality and to “tell it like it is”. The gloomy aspects of urban life and the harsh conditions for exploited factory workers were common elements in Victorian literature. As the century was coming to an end, there were many writers who took their realistic project even further, and wanted to show how man’s existence was a struggle against forces beyond his control, and how a grim reality brought out degrading and evil sides of his own nature.

Stephen Crane and Naturalism


Stephen Crane
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

It is said about Stephen Crane (1871-1899) that he was a born writer, and like so many novelists and poets, he started his writing career as a journalist. But reporting and literature are different things, so his employers were not satisfied with his descriptive and “literary” journalism; they wanted straight facts and not sense impressions. So Crane devoted his writing to his literary project, and his debut was “Maggie: A Girl of the Streets” (1893): a somber story set in the poverty-ridden backstreets of New York City and Ashbury Park, New Jersey, where street-walkers (like Maggie), pimps, criminals and alcoholics were struggling to get by in a rough reality. And for a couple of years, Crane lived there, among the outcasts and misfits of the established society, and felt the same destitution and hopelessness.

This is a typical naturalist scene – the setting is dark and ugly, and the characters are like puppets that don’t stand a chance up against their surroundings and the brutal forces of nature.

Stephen Crane’s break-through came with “The Red Badge of Courage” (1895), which was an immediate success. It is one of the most famous American novels about the Civil War, focusing on the fate of the desperate soldiers at the Battle of Chancellorsville. As the title indicates, Crane questions the ideals of heroism and courage. The technique is the same as in “Maggie”: Crane describes the soldiers as being sacrificed as pawns in a game which was completely beyond their control. For a young writer with no war experience, it is an achievement to write a novel that is acclaimed by veterans and goes down in literary history as a standard work in American war literature. The book has also been filmed.

Stephen Crane led a short and hectic life; he died of tuberculosis at the age of 28. His writing was in trend with European naturalism. In America, Stephen Crane was before his time, but paved the way for upcoming naturalist writers like Theodore Dreiser and, later, Ernest Hemingway.

Follow the link and read The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky , a short story by Stephen Crane.

Mark Twain - An American Realist

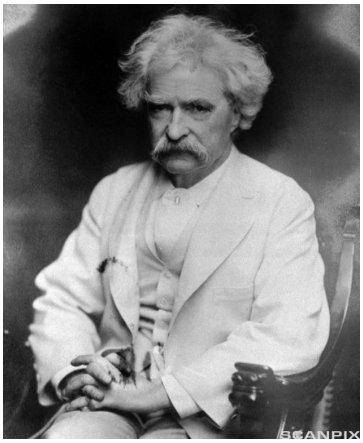
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Mark Twain - An American Realist (96044)

Mark Twain's life and writing are in more than one way symbolically intertwined with the dividing forces that were tormenting America in the late 19th century. The Civil War nearly split the country in half, and like so many other families, Mark Twain's family were divided in their loyalty and allegiance. Also, America was going through a radical transformation; the last three decades of the century saw the birth of modern America, from frontier communities to industrial urbanisation. Mark Twain is the first American writer to be born west of the Mississippi, the great river that runs clear across the continent, from Lake Superior in the north to the Mexican Gulf in the south. This river was Twain's source of inspiration for his most famous and memorable works.

intertwined, to torment, allegience, pilot, prow, to commemorate, preposterous, diverse, mischievous, escapade, sequel, delusive, aptness, scoundrel, petty, sinister, quest, endowed with, to render

Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910) grew up in the town of Hannibal located on the western bank of the Mississippi in the state of Missouri. He loved the river and watched the big paddle steamers and other river boats go by, and he dreamed of one day becoming a river pilot. River navigation was intricate as the waters would change due to shifting sandbanks. So there would be a leadsman or a pilot with a long stick up at the prow calling out: "M-a-r-k three! Half twain! Quarter twain! M-a-r-k twain!" - meaning a two-fathom depth and safe water. In that way Mark Twain took a pseudonym that bears evidence of his love of the great river. His boyhood dream of becoming a pilot on the river was fulfilled, but after a couple of years of piloting, the river was closed because of the Civil War.



Mark Twain
Fotograf: AP

Like so many famous authors Mark Twain started his writing career as a journalist, doing humorous sketches for various papers in big cities both on the East and the West Coast. He gradually developed his writing talent and he was determined to become a writer on a professional basis. His two most famous works are monumental in American literature and have become world classics. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* appeared in 1867 and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1876. They both commemorate Mark Twain's happy childhood on the banks of the great Mississippi river.

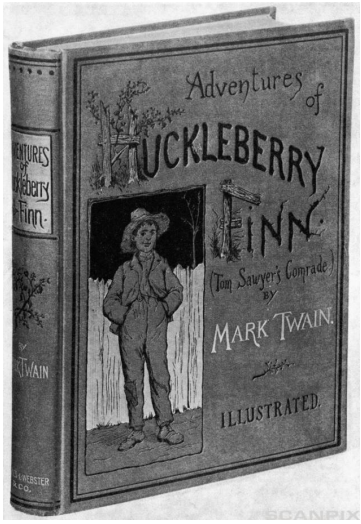
Tom Sawyer

Both Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn have been enjoyed both by grown-ups and children for generations, but it is an interesting fact that according to Mark Twain himself he “wrote them for adults exclusively”. The books were actually banned from the children’s room at certain libraries, whereas other libraries banned them altogether. From a recent perspective it seems quite preposterous, but it teaches us a thing or two about the morality and values at the time. Tom and his friends are portrayed with the diverse personalities typical of real humans, good and bad, kind-hearted and mischievous at the same time. They are not bad rascals, but they steal and they cheat, they play boys’ tricks and have a good time. Consequently, they were not seen as good role models for small children who were supposed to learn the values of a Christian morality. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is based on Mark Twain’s own happy boyhood, but is told in a 3rd person perspective. In an episode-like narrative we follow Tom and his friends on their escapades in the neighbourhood. It is told in Twain’s typically humorous style, but the story takes a more disturbing turn as the boys witness a murder when they visit a churchyard one night. An innocent man is arrested and the boys must testify in court.

The story is dramatic, funny, and brilliantly composed. In addition, it is realistic; because this is what children are like. The ban was of course later lifted both for Tom and Huck – because this kind of realism is what makes good literature, also for children.

Huckleberry Finn

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was originally planned as a sequel to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Tom actually appears in the story about Huck Finn) – but the plan was altered along the way. So *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* stands alone and is beyond doubt Mark Twain's masterpiece. Huck Finn's voyage down the river on a raft with the runaway slave, Nigger Jim, gives rise to universal issues like human relations and moral reflections. The composition is a picaresque-like narrative that in a way resembles the famous story about Don Quixote. Next to the two characters on the raft there is a third protagonist – the mighty and mystic Mississippi, the delusive companion carrying them towards freedom. As in Tom Sawyer, Twain uses his own childhood as a resource, however, Huck Finn is told from a 1st person angle; a technique that gives two benefits; one - the narrative becomes more identifiable for the reader, and two – it opens up the mind of the protagonist, so the reader can follow his line of thoughts and ideas.



Original Cover of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"
Forfatter: Corbis

Huck Finn is in many ways like Tom Sawyer with his boyish reflections and aptness for dealings in the grey zone between right and wrong. But Huck knows the difference and he is by no means a scoundrel; he is constantly struggling with his conscience in connection with what he is doing. For one thing, he is helping Nigger Jim escape, which at the time was considered a serious crime. Secondly, the two runaways (Huck is running away from his dominant father) must steal whatever they need of supplies to get by on their voyage down the river. Huck's moral doubts about his petty criminal activity are what make him come alive. We simply believe in this little human struggling to survive and to save his friend in a sinister world, brilliantly symbolised by the dark riverbanks drifting by and the dubious characters they encounter along the river. This image - a white child and an old Negro slave on a desperate quest for freedom - is a strong thematic frame that lifts the narrative to more than just an escape story. The novel certainly justifies its rank as a classic in world literature.

American Realism

“Tell it like it is” was a slogan for artists during the period we refer to as Realism. This seems to be the drive and success formula behind Mark Twain’s fiction because his characters are endowed with all the aspects of human nature. This is especially evident in Huck Finn who tries to come to terms with his moral dilemmas, but also Tom Sawyer possesses human qualities we can recognise. The language and style are also genuine. The following is an example from Huck Finn where Nigger Jim is talking about ghosts: “Oh, it’s de dad-blame’ witches, sah, en dey do mos’ kill me, dey sky’ers me so.” It takes intimate local knowledge and skill to render the language of this illiterate Negro so realistically.

In American literary tradition Mark Twain belongs to the so-called Regional Realists, writers who experienced and wrote about the great changes in regional America. Post-Civil War America was a turbulent time; industrial America was rising, a massive immigration formed the population, urbanisation and new ways of transport marked the pattern of the nation. Mark Twain lived in the midst of all this, and his two major works reflect a social realism and a moral perspective which were typical and in many ways an accurate documentation of the American reality at the time.

Presentation

1. Search the Internet for information about the Mississippi river (geography, size, history, and significance in American culture). Make a presentation for the class.
2. Read the related article about Reality and Realism in the Late 19th Century America and make an overview (key words) of changes and development in the USA during this period. Present your findings for the class.

Discuss

1. There are a number of books that have been banned for various reasons for shorter or longer periods of time. Can you come up with examples of literature that has been banned by certain groups? Discuss possible reasons for and consequences of banning books and/or films.

2. The word “picaresque” is mentioned in the article. It means a story or a novel composed out of incidents that occur to a protagonist on some sort of travel or journey. Is this a tradition which is alive in film and literature today?

Tom Sawyer

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Tom Sawyer (108876)

From "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" by Mark Twain

Saturday Morning

It was Saturday morning and the summer world was bright.
Tom came out of the gate with a bucket of white paint and a long brush. He looked at the fence, and the joy left his heart. Thirty meters of fence, three meters high! He shook his head as he painted the top board at one end, and then looked at the great length of unpainted fence. He began to think of the fun he had planned for the day. Soon free boys would come past him on their way to all sorts of fun. They would laugh at him because he had to work. He thought of the things in his pockets: a fishing line, a few pieces of string, one or two broken toys, a bone – enough perhaps to buy even half an hour of freedom. He put the things back in his pockets. And then – at this dark and hopeless moment – the great idea came to him. He took his brush and began calmly to paint.
Ben Rogers came in sight – the one boy whose laughter he had feared. Ben was eating an apple and making noises that showed he was the Big Missouri, a great river steamboat nearly three meters deep in the water. He was the steamboat, the captain, and the engine-room bells. As he came near to Tom, he slowed down, leaned far over to the right, and moved in towards the sidewalk.
"Stop her! Ling-a-ling-ling!" The great wheels turned slowly through the water, one side after the other, until the captain had brought his ship close to where Tom was painting. Tom didn't stop. He paid no attention to the steamboat. He looked with an artist's eye at the work he had done. Then he touched it in a few places with his brush.
"Hullo!" Ben said. "You've got to work, have you?"
"Oh, hullo! It's you, Ben. I didn't notice you."
"I'm going swimming," Ben said. "Don't you want to swim? But perhaps you'd rather work!"
Tom stopped for a moment and looked at him. "Work? What do you call work?"
"Ain't that work?"
Tom stopped painting again. He answered carelessly, "Well, perhaps it is, and perhaps it isn't. All I know is, it's all right for Tom Sawyer."

"Ain't that work - ?"
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

"You don't really pretend you like it?"
The brush continued to move. "Like it? Well of course I like it. A boy doesn't get a chance to paint a fence every day." Tom gave a few more touches of his brush, and stepped back to look at his work – added a little paint – put his head on one side, and looked again.
"Say, Tom, let me paint a little."
Tom thought. "No," he said. "I can't let you. Aunt Polly's very proud of this fence – her front fence on the street. It's got to be done very carefully. Very few boys can paint it the way it must be done."
"Is that so? But let me just try. I'll be very careful – I'll give you my apple."
Tom gave him the brush – with doubt on his face, but joy in his heart.
The Big Missouri steamboat changed into an artist, and worked hard under the hot sun, while Tom lay in the shade. He ate his apple, and planned his future victories. There were plenty of these. Boys came along the street, stopped to make fun of the workers –

and stayed to try to be artists. By the time Ben was tired, Tom had sold the next chance to Billy Fisher for an arrow in quite good condition. When Billy couldn't do any more, Johnny Miller bought the next chance for a dead rat and a string to swing it with. And so it went on, hour after hour. By the middle of the afternoon, Tom was rich. Besides the things I have named, he had twelve marbles, part of a drum, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a bit of red chalk, a tin soldier, a frog, six fireworks, part of a door knocker, a knife without a point, four pieces of orange skin, and an old window lock. He had a nice lazy time in the shade, with plenty of company, and the fence had three coats of white paint on it.

Tom went to find Aunt Polly.

"May I go and play now, Aunt?" he asked.

"What! Already? How much have you done?"

"It's all done, Aunt."

"Tom, don't tell me lies. I can't bear it."

"It's not lies, Aunt. It is all done."

Aunt Polly went to see for herself. She expected to see about one-fifth of the fence done. She found the whole fence painted, and even some of the ground in front of the fence. She was so surprised that she went to the cupboard, chose a big apple, and gave it to Tom. While she was choosing it, Tom "won" a tea cake from a plate in the cupboard.

Extract adapted from "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" by Mark Twain.

Tasks and Activities

1. Mark Twain announced explicitly that both Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn were written for adults exclusively; the books were even banned from the children's room at some libraries. Why do you think these books were seen as unsuitable for children at the time?
2. How would you characterize Tom Sawyer in this extract? (Has the author given him certain qualities or personal values?)
3. Comment on the narrative angle / point of view in this episode.
4. The title "Saturday Morning", does not say much about what goes on in this episode. Can you think of a more descriptive title?
5. Aunt Polly is the only adult in the text; what role does she have compared to Tom?
6. Like Charles Dickens, Mark Twain used child protagonists in his novels. How does that work on the reader?
7. Mark Twain belongs to the American regional realists. Do you think this extract is realistic? Why / why not?
8. Follow the link below and read about Mark Twain. Where do you see traces of Mark Twain's own life-experiences in this extract?

Mark Twain - An American Realist

Suggested topics for essay writing:

- The child protagonist: A comparison between Huck Finn and Oliver Twist.
- Realism in literature: Is realism just a replica of reality?
- The generation gap: The relationship between children and adults in literature by Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, and Roald Dahl.
- Role models: Both Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn steal, cheat and lie. How do children respond to naughty protagonists in literature? (You may use examples from Roald Dahl or Astrid Lindgren.)

Reality and Realism in the Late 19th Century A..

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Reality and Realism in Late 19th Century America (95082)

There is usually a close correlation between social and political development and literature. In European literature of the late 19th century there was a strong tradition of critical realism. Writers like Ibsen, Dostoyevsky, Dickens and Hugo were all influenced by and critical to political misrule and abuse of power. But in the USA this tradition was never adopted, which is an interesting fact in itself. When we look at the American society of the late 19th century and the predominant literary production at the time, one may easily conclude that social criticism was not on the literary agenda. The intellectual spirit went in a different direction, and in society in general the motto seemed to be: money talks.

misrule, abuse, predominant, devastatingly, restoration, recession, ambitious, manifest(adj), enterprise, evident, catalyst, trigger, inventive, tariff barrier, asset, pool, trust, emerge, tycoon, aggressive, ruthless, exploit, legislation, illeglize, commerce, outlaw, combat, escalate, profitering, stock exchange, vibrant, speculator, surplus, conscientious, vast, obscure, cherish, devotion,

America Post-Civil War

The Civil War was a massive set-back for the development of the young nation. It was a necessary step to put an end to slavery and save the union, but it came with a cost that would delay American progress by decades. The northern states were not so devastatingly affected by the Civil War as the South, where restoration was a resource-demanding and long process. There were recessions during the 1870s mainly due to ambitious overspending on the construction of the two transcontinental railway lines. The expansion of the nation was driven by “The Manifest Destiny” which proclaimed the Americans’ God-given right to occupy and inhabit the continent. This resulted in confrontations with the native population, but by the turn of the century this obstacle was eliminated. In 1898, the USA was at war with Spain over territories in the south, a war which Spain lost and the USA expanded its borders even more. The USA of the late 1800s was a nation characterized by expansion, progress, enterprise and optimism; it was the birth of modern America.

Signing of the Peace Treaty after the Civil War
Fotograf: Corbis

Trusts and Monopolies

The rise of Big Business was what defined the period and was to become the cornerstone of American economic and industrial progress. There were some evident catalysts that triggered American industrial development. One – the continent was rich with natural resources providing raw materials for an expanding domestic market. Two – industrious and inventive pioneers were eager to set up a business and were free to do so in an unregulated system. Three – transportation systems and infrastructure were rapidly developed. Four – there was a continuous supply of labour due to the immigration both from Europe and Asia. In addition, there were no tariff barriers between the states or regions which served as a protection against foreign competition. Small companies popped up everywhere in an expanding market driven by free enterprise and competition. Smart businessmen gradually saw the potential in creating organisations of competing companies to reduce costs and control prices. What was introduced as a seemingly good business idea was for the next five decades to become the basis of American private asset-building until it all crashed in 1929. Pools or trusts were organised on a large scale and gradually these corporations turned into monopolies that took complete control of the market. The Standard Oil Company emerged in 1882 as the first great trust. Businessmen like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller were two of the ambitious tycoons who made themselves huge profits during this period. Carnegie was behind the big Pittsburgh-based Carnegie Steel Company, and Rockefeller founded the Standard Oil Company in 1870. Their aggressive business methods gave them a reputation for crushing competitors with any means, and for ruthlessly exploiting their workforce.

Standard Oil Monopoly Political Cartoon with J.D.Rockefeller as king of the world

Fotograf: Corbis

Free Enterprise

The federal government saw with concern that the country's natural resources were being exploited and controlled for the benefit of a handful of men in a way that did not serve society. But the liberal and democratic traditions on which American legislation is founded made it difficult for the national government to take action. There were attempts to illegalize monopolies and to introduce an Interstate Commerce Act, but mostly these initiatives were either voted down in Congress or they were inefficiently practised by the state authorities. Even when the Sherman Antitrust Act was passed in 1890, which in practice would outlaw trusts and monopolies, the courts resisted all efforts to enforce the law. The belief in individual freedom along with a legal system that supported the capitalists made it hard to combat the escalating profiteering in private hands. The stock exchange became a vibrant money-making scene where speculators could make millions overnight.

Transcendentalists and Critical Realism

One would imagine that in a society characterised by greed and materialism where there were more losers than winners, there would be surplus material and inspiration for creative and socially conscientious writers. But compared to Europe, social criticism is surprisingly absent in American literature of the late 19th century. Instead the writers turned inward in search of an understanding of man and nature. The cultural trend in the USA from the mid-19th century was to experience nature's coherence with the human soul. The so-called New England Transcendentalists included writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. They were influenced by a romantic idealism and symbolism, and their vast literary production is also today highly acclaimed and ranks among the great classics in American literature. Another more obscure poet of the period is Emily Dickinson, whose minimalistic poetry is also among the most cherished in American literature. Her poems were not published until after her death.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain) is without doubt the most prominent and popular American writer of the 19th century. He had a massive production of essays and fiction that sprang from his devotion to the great river, the Mississippi. His writing clearly belongs in what we would call American realism, and his books are great and cherished literature, but Clemens does not line up with the socio-critical generation of European realists and naturalists. However, there were some American novelists who focused on the social conditions for those who did not make it in the race for material success. These writers belong to what we call a critical realism, and the most famous names were William Dean Howells, Theodore Dreiser, Henry James, Stephen Crane and feminist writer Kate Chopin.

Follow these links for tasks to the article and more information about Mark Twain and Emily Dickinson.

American Realism - Tasks and Activities

Emily Dickinson - Life and Poetry

Mark Twain - An American Realist

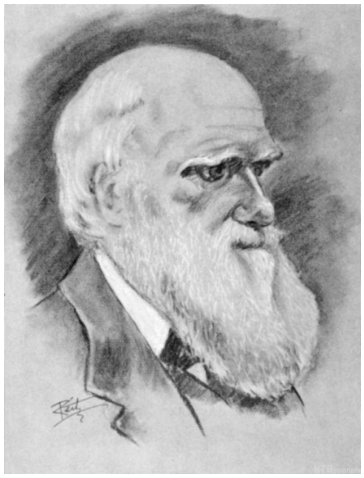
Science and Philosophy during The Vitorian Era

Charles Darwin

Forfatter: Karin Dwyer Løken
Charles Darwin (91194)

There was nothing in Charles Robert Darwin's childhood or youth to indicate that he would become one of the most influential scientists of his own and future generations. He was not a particularly good student, studying both medicine and theology before he started to concentrate on his passion: natural history. The theories he developed through his extensive research came to alter the world's view of nature.

Charles Robert Darwin (1809 - 1882)



Charles Darwin
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Charles Darwin was born into a wealthy family of industrialists and intellectuals in Shrewsbury, England. His plan was to become a doctor, like his father, but after experiencing the trauma of seeing a little girl go through an operation without anaesthesia, he changed his mind and started to study theology instead.

When Darwin had finished his education, it was expected that he would become a country parson. But he was offered the opportunity to sail around the world with the survey ship, the H.M.S. Beagle, in 1831. The trip took five years, and Darwin studied the geology, the flora and the fauna of the places they went to. He collected samples of both living organisms and fossils, and recorded many observations that puzzled him. For instance, he found fossils of mammals in a layer of modern sea shells, indicating that they had become extinct relatively recently - with no sign of any kind of climatic change or natural disaster. So why did they become extinct? Another mystery was that each island had its own kind of finch; all closely related, but also different. How and why did this happen?

When Darwin returned home in 1836, he carried out extensive studies in his attempt to find answers to all his questions, and he posed his theory of evolution: Every individual living being has to struggle for survival. Those who have the best characteristics will survive, procreate and pass on their characteristics to their offspring. In time, most of the population will have these characteristics. This process is called "natural selection", and if it is allowed to run its course, it can cause such radical changes in a population that a new species will evolve. Whether or not an individual survives depends on its ability to adapt to its environment. This is what is commonly known as "the survival of the fittest." Darwin realized that his theory would be more than controversial, and that publishing it would probably cause his family some distress. It is no wonder that he worked on it for twenty years before publishing "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection" in 1859.

In 1868, Darwin went the whole way and published "The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex." Here he introduced the idea that homo-sapiens, too, are the result of natural selection. Needless to say, in a society where most people believed that God created man in seven days, many people attacked Darwin vehemently. Even though Darwin himself never discussed the religious ramifications of his theory of evolution, other writers used the theory to justify their own atheist outlook on life. In fact, the theory of evolution had a profound and lasting effect on the future of religious thought.

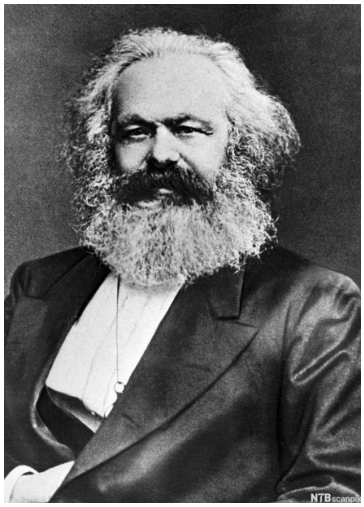
Karl Marx

Forfatter: Karin Dwyer Løken
Karl Marx (91198)

Karl Marx is often called the father of communism, and his writings formed the foundation of most of the communist regimes of the twentieth century. However, many thinkers before him had suggested forms of government based on the idea of common ownership. What Marx did was to redefine communism by developing an entire socio-economic system; a communistic system of government he believed would neutralize the class differences that had arisen in the wake of industrialism.

Karl Marx (1818 – 1883)

Karl Marx, born into a middle-class family in Germany, dreamed of becoming a poet and novelist. His family, however, did not approve of this dream, and his father sent him to the university, where he studied law, history and philosophy. Here he became associated with a group of young people who opposed both religion and society. Turning to journalism after his studies, he wrote articles with such a scathing social critique and with such radical ideas on politics and economy that he was blacklisted by the authorities.



Karl Marx
Fotograf: RIA Novosti

When he was 25 years old, Marx moved to Paris, where he joined the Communist League. It was also here that he met Friedrich Engels, with whom he entered into a lifelong friendship and work partnership. Engel's father owned cotton mills in England, and the two of them spent time there documenting the poverty and the appalling living conditions of English workers. He was eventually expelled from Paris, and spent the next few years in both Belgium and Germany before moving back to Paris in 1848. During these years, he wrote and published several manuscripts, the most famous being the Communist Manifesto.

In 1849, Marx and his family moved to England, where they lived in poverty in a small flat in London for many years. He became an active participant in the growing international workers' movement at the same time as he continued working on his social and economic theories. Marx had a materialist view of history, asserting that history is a process of evolution, and that change in society comes about through material forces. Each generation inherits the previous generation's system of production, develops it to fit their times and subsequently hands it on to the next generation to do the same. Throughout history, man has entered into different relations with each other regarding production: the hunting and gathering of food in prehistoric times; the relationship between the landowning lords and their serfs in the Middle Ages; the contract between the capitalist and his workers in modern times.

According to Marx, labour is not only a means of survival. Labour is also essential to a human being's self-conception and feeling of identity. Capitalism deprives workers of these feelings of self-worth and identity by alienating them from the entire production process. The only thing the workers own is their own labour – and they are forced to sell that to a capitalist who will attempt to get as much labour as possible for as small wages as possible. The means of production (the tools, machines and the factories) belong to the capitalists, as do the finished products, which the capitalists sell for a profit which they use as they wish. Finally, the workers were alienated from other human beings.

They are divided by class from the capitalists. The nature of modern industry demands specialization of labour. So the workers are alienated from other workers by having

different tasks in the production process and by sometimes having to work different shifts.

This new class of capitalist industrialists – the bourgeoisie – will go on oppressing the working class – the proletariat – until the workers one day join forces to overthrow their masters. Private ownership, the source of societal inequality, will be abolished. Everyone will have an equal stake in society, which will be based on the Marxist idea: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” (Karl Marx: Critique of the Gotha Program. 1875) Capitalist societies all over the world will inevitably go through a proletarian revolution which will lead to a socialist society in which the state will be a dictatorship. These socialist societies will gradually evolve into pure communist societies in which classes do not exist, and the state will therefore be redundant.

In the course of the 1800s, England carried out several social reforms, for instance extending the franchise and a series of factory acts regulating the use of child labour, working hours etc. – within the framework of a liberal, capitalist society. However, other countries adopted Marxist theory and developed their own brand of communism; for instance the Soviet Union, China and Cuba.

Hard Times

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Hard Times by Charles Dickens (109342)

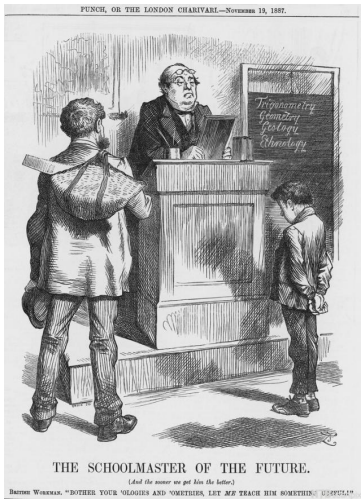
Rivalled only by William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens ranks as the most read and popular English writer of all times. Dickens' documentation of the bleak sides of the industrial revolution and the institutions of Victorian England paved the way for reform laws and a common awareness among people in general. If Dickens had not been a novelist he would have been a great reformer; many would claim that he was both. Follow the link and read more about Charles Dickens.
Charles Dickens - An Introduction

Hard Times

When Dickens in 1854 published *Hard Times*, the squalor of industrial England was at its worst. From his experience as a gallery reporter in the House of Commons and in the courts of law, he saw how the aristocracy and legislators were exploiting people to protect their own interests. *Hard Times* is said to be the harshest of Dickens' novels with its severe criticism of the system which he believed was turning his country into a feudal society inhabited largely by capitalists and slaves. In *Hard Times* he points out how the educational principles at the time were designed to serve the system of hard economics and materialism. With his sharp portrayal of the square-shaped school master, Mr Gradgrind, and his fact-based teaching, Dickens brings to light the way children were taught and brought up in the spirit of materialism.
Hard Times is divided into three books – *Sowing, Reaping*, and *Garnering*, each with a number of subchapters. The following extracts are from the first chapters of *Sowing*.

The One Thing Needful

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle upon which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to facts, Sir!”



The Schoolmaster of the Future

Fotograf: Heritage Image Partnership

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker’s square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster’s sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s mouth, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker’s obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders – nay, his very neck cloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was, - all helped the emphasis.

“In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir, nothing but Facts!”

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

Murdering the Innocents

Thomas Gradgrind, Sir. A man of realities. A man facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and to are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, Sir – peremptorily Thomas – Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, Sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might find hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the heads of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind – no, Sir!

In such terms, no doubt Mr Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general. In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words “boys and girls”, for “Sir”, Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him who were to be filled full of facts.

Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanising apparatus, too, charged with a grim, mechanical substitute for the tender young imagination that were to be stormed away.

“Girl number twenty,” said Mr Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, “I don’t know that girl. Who is that girl?”

“Sissy Jupe, Sir” explained number twenty, blushing, standing up and curtsying.

“Sissy is not a name,” said Mr Gradgrind. “Don’t call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.”

“It’s father as calls me Sissy,” returned the young girl, in a trembling voice, and with another curtsy.
“Then he has no business to do it,” said Mr Gradgrind. “Tell him he mustn’t. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?”
“He belongs to the horse riding, if you please, Sir”
Mr Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.
“We don’t want to know anything about that here. You mustn’t tell us about that here. Your father breaks horses, don’t he?”
“If you please, Sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, Sir.”
“You mustn’t tell us about the ring here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horse-breaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?”
“Oh, yes, Sir.”
“Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier and horse-breaker. Give me your definition of a horse.”
(Sissy Jupe thrown into a the greatest alarm by this demand.)
“Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!” said Mr Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers.
“Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest animals. Some boy’s definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.”
The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the naturel tinge, that he looked as if he were cut, he would bleed white.
“Bitzer,” said Thomas Gradgrind. “Your definition of a horse.”
“Quadruped. Graminivourous. Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hare, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.” Thus (and much more) Bitzer.
“Now girl number twenty,” said Mr Gradgrind. “You know what a horse is.”
(…)
“Now, if Mr M’Choakumchild,” said the gentleman, “will proceed to give his first lesson here, Mr Gradgrind, I shall be happy, at your request, to observe his mode of procedure.
Mr. Gradgrind was much obliged. “Mr M’Chaukumchild, we only wait for you.
So, Mr. M’Choakumchild began in his best manner. He and some one hundred and forty other schoolmasters, had been lately turned at the same time, in the same factory, on the same principles, like so many pianoforte legs. He had been put through an immense variety of paces, and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions. Orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody, biography, astronomy, geography, and general cosmography, the sciences of compound proportion, algebra, land-surveying and levelling, vocal music, and drawing from models, were all at the ends of his chilled fingers. He had worked his stony way into Her Majesty’s most Honourable Privy Council’s Schedule B, and had taken the bloom off the higher branches of mathematics and physical science, French, German, Latin, and Greek. He knew all about the Water Sheds of all the world (whatever they are), and all the histories of all the peoples, and

all the names of all the rivers and mountains, and all the productions, manners, and customs of all the countries, and all their boundaries and bearings on the two-and-thirty points of the compass. Ah, rather overdone, Mr M'Choakumchild. If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!

A Loophole

Mr Gradgrind walked homeward from the school, in a state of considerable satisfaction. It was his school, and he intended it to be a model. He intended every child in it to be a model, just as the young Gradgrinds were all models.

There were five young Gradgrinds, and they were models every one. They had been lectured at, from the tenderest years; coursed, like little hares. Almost as soon as they could run alone, they had been made to run to the lecture-room. The first object with which they had an association, or of which they had a remembrance, was a large blackboard with a dry ogre chalking ghastly white figures on it.

Not that they knew, by make or nature, anything about an ogre. Fact forbid! I only use the word to express a monster in a lecturing-castle, with Heaven knows how many heads manipulated into one, taking childhood captive, and dragging it into gloomy statistical dens by the hair.

No little Gradgrind had ever seen a face in the moon; it was up in the moon before it could speak distinctly. No little Gradgrind had ever learned the silly jingle, Twinkle, twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are! No little Gradgrind had ever known the wonder on the subject, each little Gradgrind having at five years old dissected the Great Bear. No little Gradgrind had ever associated a cow in a field with that famous cow with the crumpled horn who tossed the dog who worried the cat, who killed the rat, who at the malt, or with that yet more famous cow who swallowed Thom Thumb: it had never heard of those celebrities, and had only been introduced to a cow as a graminivorous ruminating quadruped with several stomachs.

To this matter-of-fact home, which was called Stone Lodge, Mr Gradgrind directed his steps. He had virtually retired from the wholesale hardware trade before he built Stone Lodge, and was now looking about for a suitable opportunity of making an arithmetical figure in Parliament. Stone Lodge was situated on a moor within a mile or two of a great town – called Coketown in the present faithful guide-book.

A very regular feature on the face of the country, Stone Lodge was. Not the least disguise toned down or shaded off that uncompromising fact in the landscape. A great square house, with a heavy portico darkening the principal windows, as its master's heavy brows overshadowed his eyes. A calculated, cast up, balanced, and proved house. Six windows on this side of the door, six on that side; a total of twelve in this wing, a total of twelve in the other wing; four-and-twenty carried over to the back-wings. A lawn and garden and an infant avenue, all ruled straight like a botanical account book. Gas and ventilation, drainage and water-service, all of the primest quality. Iron clamps and girders, fireproof from top to bottom; mechanical lifts for the housemaids, with all their brushes and brooms; everything that heart could desire.

The Keynote

Coketown, to which Mr Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it that Mrs Gradgrind hersfelf. Let us strike the keynote, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but, as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black, like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next. (…)

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel here – as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done – they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this only in highly ornamented examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church, a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchasable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

Working with the Text

1. The children are referred to as "vessels" and "pitchers" – what does that imply?
2. Dickens used to name his characters and places in a descriptive and suggestive manner. What associations do the names Gradgrind, M'Choukumchild (the teacher), Sissy, Bitzer, Coketown, Stone Lodge bring to mind?
3. Why are Sissy and Bitzer described in such detail (hair, complexion, eyes, skin…)?
4. What does Dickens say about teachers' training at the time?
5. Comment on the sentence: "If he had learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!" Is such an assertion valid today as well?
6. Comment on the title "Murdering the Innocents".
7. Why is the word "square" repeated over and over in the description of Mr Gradgrind? (See first part of "The One Thing Needful".)
8. Where do you see criticism of industrialism, and which aspect in particular?
9. Compare the descriptions of Stone Lodge and Coketown - in which ways are they similar?
10. How are the Gradgrind children brought up, and what is apparently lacking in their upbringing?
11. How would you characterise Dickens' narrative style? Which literary means can you spot? (Repetition, emphasis, choice of simile, capitalization, sentence structure, use of exclamation marks.)
12. Dickens clearly had a political agenda with most of his writing. Do you think a writer can influence public opinion? Can you think of other examples of tendency writing? Check the link for more information about art with an agenda.
    More than Entertainment

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (109256)

Written by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1886, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* has gone down in literary history as a document of man's search for his other and darker self. "Jekyll and Hyde" has since become a label of a mental condition of schizophrenic duality. Is there a dark and disturbing side of a man that will come to life when called for? Is there an evil alter ego inside a good person? Dr Jekyll wanted to find out; with the best intentions the doctor ventured on a journey to map the contradictive sides of the human soul, and came up with a sinister and disturbing answer – there are certain sides of human nature that are best left alone…

Background

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is Stevenson's most famous book. He tried his hand at different genres developing his talent for storytelling; his first books were adventure stories with children as protagonists, probably best known is *Treasure Island* (1883). Robert Louis Stevenson belongs to the late Victorian novelists who were influenced by the social and political development, both in England and on the continent towards the turn of the century. Victorian England was a many-sided society populated by people from all walks of life, from the criminal classes in the slums of the big industrial cities to the increasingly wealthy middle class, and the aristocracy, who constituted the major part of the ruling class. A possible inspiration for Stevenson was the fact that many highly respected people were leading a double life with a virtuous and respectable life in the daytime, but were involved in criminal activity at night. Another likely motive could be the abuse of different drugs and substances which was increasingly common also among people from the middle classes; cocaine was the new and trendy dope, which Stevenson himself was allegedly addicted to. However, there is little doubt that *"The Strange Case…"* is primarily an attempt to bring to light the self-destructive quest of finding and evoking the dark forces of human nature.

Plot and Composition

"The Strange Case…" is a novella, which means a short novel; it has the characteristics of a novel, but the volume of a long short story. The plot is composed of three different versions of the same story, which is a somewhat original structure that may seem like a prescient approach of the upcoming modernist style. However, the structure is carefully considered by the author; the three parts complement each other insofar as they provide the reader with information from different angles, and the effect is a better understanding of the story as an entity.

Spencer Tracy in a 1941 film version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Part one has the elements of a traditional mystery tale; an elusive criminal is lurking around in the dark back streets of London. Witnesses describe him as small and ugly and wearing clothes apparently too big for his size. He has a way of disappearing, and after he commits a murder, he is wanted, but never apprehended by the police. At the end of part one the murderer, now recognised as a certain Mr Hyde, is found dying on the floor of Dr Jekyll's laboratory, whereas the doctor has disappeared.

Part two is the version given by Dr Jekyll's friend and colleague, Dr Lanyon, who receives a letter from Dr Jekyll instructing him to collect some chemical substances from his laboratory. After having done so Lanyon is visited by the repulsive Mr Hyde, who mixes a potion from the ingredients and drinks it down, and in front of Dr Lanyon he is transformed into Dr Jekyll. Lanyon is of course horrified by what he witnesses:

"I saw what I saw, I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it; and yet now when that sight has faded from my eyes, I ask myself if I believe it, and I cannot answer. My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die."

Part three is the story told by Dr Jekyll himself, from which the following extracts are taken.

Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case

Dr Jekyll reflects on his intentions and motives for going ahead with his project:

"With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to the truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: That man is not truly one, but truly two. (…) It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality of man. (…) If each (of these elements), I told myself, could but be housed in different identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable."

But Dr Jekyll also has his doubts before he decides to test out his theories:

"I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice. I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame the suggestions of alarm. I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a firm of wholesale chemists, a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew, from my experiments, to be the last ingredient to be required; and late one accursed night, I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and

when the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage drank off the potion."

The effects were agonising and horrifying; but gradually he feels like "coming out of sickness" and describes the sensation as "incredibly sweet":

"I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine. I stretched out my hands, exulting in the freshness of these sensations; and in the act I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature. (…) I saw for the first time the appearance of Mr Hyde. (…) I have observed that when I bore the semblance of Mr Hyde, none could come near me first without the misgivings of the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: And Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind was pure evil."

Then Edward Hyde is out in the dark and foggy back streets of London giving way to his purely evil self. Dr Jekyll is fascinated by the success of his experiment, since he can undo his transformation just like that:

"Think of it – I did not even exist! Let me but escape into my laboratory-door, give me but a second or two to mix and swallow the draught that I had always standing ready; and whatever he had done, Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror; and there in his stead, quietly at home, trimming the midnight lamp in his study, a man who could afford to laugh at suspicion, would be Henry Jekyll."

But Dr Jekyll also has his doubts and reproaches Mr Hyde for his malicious activity, so he needs to talk himself into self-approval:

"It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone that was guilty. Jekyll was no worse, he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired; he would even make haste, where it was possible to undo the evil done by Hyde. And thus his conscience slumbered."

But now his experiment takes an unexpected turn, as he one morning wakes up and his eyes fall upon his hand:

"I smiled to myself (…) when in one of my wakeful moments my eye fell upon my hand. Now the hand of Henry Jekyll was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white, and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bed-clothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor, and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde. (…) Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awaked Edward Hyde. How was this to be explained? I asked myself; and then with another bound of terror – how was it to be remedied?"

The tables are turned. Dr Jekyll has lost control of his experiment; his evil alter ego, Mr Hyde, is taking over, and now he must take the drugs to restore his original personality. This scares him as he understands how his two egos are struggling for control, and for a couple of months he manages to refrain from further experiments. However, the abstinence becomes too strong and "in an hour of moral weakness" he takes another dose of the transforming potion:

"My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring. I was conscious, even when I took the draught, of a more unbridled, a more furious propensity to ill. (…) Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged. With a transport of glee I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow; and it was not till weariness had begun to succeed, that I was suddenly, in the top fit of my delirium, struck through the heart by a cold thrill of

terror."

On one of his nocturne escapades Edward Hyde kills a prominent member of society, and after being witnessed and identified he is now on the run. But Dr Jekyll is now unable to control his transformations, and one day as he is sitting on a bench in Regent's Park, Mr Hyde is back:

"I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts, a greater boldness, a contempt of danger, a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde."

He now desperately needs the drugs to restore his Dr Jekyll countenance, but he cannot go to his apartment and get them because he is wanted by the police, so he has to call on his colleague Dr Lanyon for help. Lanyon is asked to go to Jekyll's laboratory to get the drugs for him. Lanyon is then visited by the hideous Mr Hyde who in Lanyon's presence mixes the potion, drinks it down and turns into Dr Jekyll. Lanyon is of course shocked (see Lanyon's reaction in part two above), but Dr Jekyll has a more serious concern:

"When I came to myself at Lanyon's, the horror of my old friend perhaps affected me somewhat: I do not know, it was at least but a drop in the sea to the abhorrence with which I looked back upon these hours. A change had come over me. It was no longer the fear of the gallows, it was the horror of being Hyde that racked me."

Dr Jekyll returns to his house, but soon the "raging and freezing passions of Hyde" take hold of him again, and he pours down a double dose of the draught to regain himself. But this time in vain – the potion is without effect, and life is over for Dr Jekyll:

"Will Hyde die upon the scaffold? Or will he find the courage to release himself at the last moment? God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the unhappy life of Dr Jekyll to an end."

Tasks and Activities

Literary Analysis

1. The three parts have different points of view. The first part is told in a 3rd person voice, the second part has a 1st person perspective, while the third part has a bit of both. Explain the use of the different narrative angles.
2. Comment on the title. How should we interpret the choice of words, "The Strange Case…" instead of "The Story of…"?
3. Comment on the name "Hyde". Why do you think Stevenson has chosen to call him this?
4. Read the first passage of Dr Jekyll's statement again. What are his praiseworthy intentions for the experiment?
5. In what way is the setting important?
6. What is the theme of the story?

Topics for Discussion and Research

1. Is it possible to take this story literally? (Can the intake of certain substances change one's personality?)
2. In general, what does the story tell us about life in late-Victorian London?
3. Why do you think Mr Hyde commits suicide in the end?
4. Do you think this story works as a warning of some sort; if so, a warning of what?
5. Do some research to find famous examples of respectable Victorians who were leading a double life. (Dr Neill Cream – "The Lambeth Poisoner" is one of them.)
6. *The Strange Case…* has a massive dramatic potential for film. What do you think is the challenge for a film maker who wants to produce this story as a film? (There is a small YouTube clip from a 1932 film version that shows an example of this.)
7. Like so many works of literature *Jekyll and Hyde* has been turned into a musical. What happens in such a transformation? Does it affect our understanding of the story? (Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* is another example.) Check YouTube for clips from the musical *Jekyll and Hyde*.

8. The theme of a person with an alter ego is quite common in literature as well as on film. Can you come up with examples from modern popular culture where the protagonist has two identities?

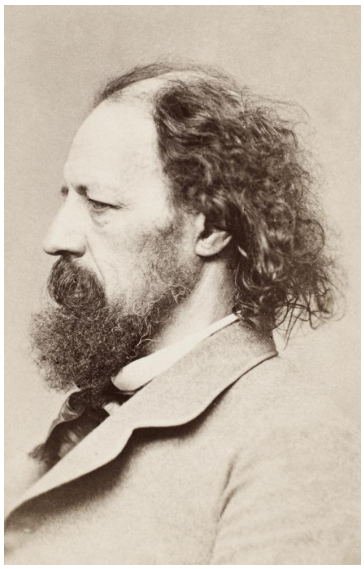
The Lady of Shalott

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Lady of Shalott (104661)

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) is one of the most prominent English poets and is, even today, both read and cherished by a big audience. Tennyson's early writing is clearly inspired by the Romantic tradition, though most of his work was published during the Victorian period. The Lady of Shalott is one of his most famous poems, and was published in Tennyson's first collection of poems in 1832.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Like so many writers and poets,Tennyson took little interest in his school work and studies. He went to Cambridge, but he idled through his studies and never took a degree. He sought company with friends who inspired him and encouraged him to follow his poetic vocation. However, his early writing was not given much esteem by his contemporary critics. But Tennyson was determined to succeed and was indefatigably working to perfect his art. During the 1840s, he gradually won the acclaim of the reading public, and in 1850 he was appointed Poet Laureate by Queen Victoria; a prestigious honour to be bestowed on a living poet. (Tennyson succeeded William Wordsworth as Poet Laureate). Tennyson was very productive during his later life; he was a versatile writer with a wide horizon. His writing includes poems, drama, essays and religious and philosophical reflections. His popularity and his contribution to Victorian literature have given him an undisputable position in English literary tradition.



Alfred Lord Tennyson
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Lady of Shalott by Alfred Lord Tennyson

I
On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
    To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
    The island of Shalott,

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever

By the island in the river
   Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and for gray towers
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
   The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
   Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
   The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly
   Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, "'Tis the fairy
   Lady of Shalott.

II
There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say
A curse is on her if she stay
   To look down on Camelot.
She know not what the curse may be
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
   The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
   Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls
And the red cloaks of market girls,
   Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
   Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two;
She hath no loyal knight and true,

The Lady of Shalott

Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

III
A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot.
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather;
The helmet and the helmet feather
Burned like one burning flame together.
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror;
"Tirra lirra" by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,

She saw the helmet and the plume,
    She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
“The curse is come upon me,” cried
    The Lady of Shalott.

IV
In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
    Over tower’d Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
    The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river’s dim expanse –
Like some bold seer in trance,
Seeing all his own mischance –
With a glassy countenance
    Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right –
The leaves upon her falling light –
Through the noises of the night
    As she floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken’d wholly,
    Turned to tower’d Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
    Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,

The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? And what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot;
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, “She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott”.

Getting to Grips with the Poem

1. Rather than trying to understand the full poetic narrative word by word, it may be more fruitful, to begin with, to take in the atmosphere and the use of legendary references. What elements do you think create the mystic and fairy-tale like atmosphere? Which old legend does the poem refer to?
2. The poem contains a number of archaic (old and obsolete) words that add to the feeling of a mystic and legendary past. Point out some examples of such words; how would they sound today?
3. The poem is divided into four parts. What information do we get in each part? How does the narrative develop during the different parts of the poem?
4. The rhyming and rhythmic patterns of the poem come alive when the poem is read out loud. Give some examples of how repetition and alliteration are essential elements.
5. Find the rhyming pattern of the poem and check if the poet sticks to it all the way through. Do you think that a rhyming structure is an important element of poetry in general? Why / why not?
6. Pay attention to the line structure of the poem. What is the effect of the indentation of lines five and nine in each stanza?
7. There are many common poetic symbols in the poem (the loom, weaving, a river, an island in the river, a mirror, a curse, etc.) Discuss an interpretation of these symbols both in general and in this poem particularly?
8. Where do we find traces of romantic and gothic themes and imagery in the poem?
9. What is a “red-cross knight”?
10. This is a quite physical poetic narrative with a distinct setting. Point out some descriptions of landscape, the island, the weather, the looks of the characters, and colours and sounds.
11. Tennyson presumed that his readers were familiar with the legend of King Arthur, Sir Lancelot and Camelot – are you? If not, you may want to search the net for information about this famous legend in English history. (Note that The Lady of Shalott does not appear in the legend, but Sir Lancelot and Camelot do in Tennyson’s poem – what is the effect of that?)

Home-Thoughts From Abroad by Robert Browning

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Home-Thoughts From Abroad by Robert Browning (89018)

Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth, lived in Italy for sixteen years. When his wife died in 1861, Robert went back to his beloved England. This poem is clearly written during his Italian years by a homesick Robert Browning, longing for the beautiful springtime in England. It is one of Browning's more straightforward poems, but still very beautiful in its romantic clarity.

Home-Thoughts From Abroad

By Robert Browning

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England – now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dew-drops – at the bent spray's edge –
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower –
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- The poem is written in the Victorian period, but it clearly carries traces of romantic poetry; can you mention some?
- Which bird will sing "each song twice over"?
- How many different birds and flowers are mentioned in the poem?
- What does it mean that the buttercups are "the little children's dower"?
- Why do you think that many poets and writers write so well and emotionally about their home country when they are abroad?

The Cry of The Children by Elizabeth Barrett B..

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Cry of The Children by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (89019)

Child labour was common in the factories and mines in England during the industrial revolution. Many narrow mine pits were accessible only for small people. Besides, children represented a cheap and expendable workforce. "The Cry of the Children" is a long poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning; here we present an abbreviated version.

The Cry of the Children

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning *(Adapted)*

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers---
And that cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west---
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!---
They are weeping in the playtime of the others
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?---
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago---
The old tree is leafless in the forest---
The old year is ending in the frost---
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest---
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's grief abhorrent, draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy---
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;"
"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak!
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the old why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,---
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the young children, "it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year---the grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her---
Was no room for any work in the close clay:
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries!---
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her, For the smile has time for growing in her eyes---
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud, by the kirk-chime!
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have!
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city---
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do---
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty---
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap---
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping---
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark, underground---
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,---
Their wind comes in our faces,---
Till our hearts turn,---our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places---
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling---
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall---
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling---
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.---
And, all day, the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moaning)
'Stop! be silent for to-day!' "

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity;---
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,
And your purple shows your path;
But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath.

A Closer Look at the Poem

- Look at the structure of the two first stanzas - do you see a pattern?
- Who is the poet addressing in the poem?
- Whose voices do we hear in the poem?
- What happened to little Alice?
- Why do you think the children say that "it is good that we die before our time"?
- Find some explicit references to the work in the factory.
- What is implied in the line "How long, O cruel nation will you stand to move the world, on a child's heart"?

Research

- Find out more about the Industrial Revolution and child labour.
- Do you think such poetry could make a difference? Go on the net and find out about the different reform laws that were passed in the mid-19th century.

Alice in Wonderland

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Alice in Wonderland (112112)

Literature for children was for a long time discredited by critics and writers; it was not seen as proper and serious literary art. Children's literature of the Victorian age presented children as small adults, who were supposed to be good role models with adult values and morals. But this kind of literature was, not surprisingly, discarded by the children, and most of it is forgotten today.
But one writer at the time seemed to crack the code of what it takes for literature to appeal to children: Lewis Carrol. His major works *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) were ground-breaking in the genre and have become timeless classics of children's literature.
Follow the link below and read more about literature for children.

Kids' Stuff

Lewis Carrol

When Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) decided to have his stories printed and published he did so under the penname Lewis Carrol. Charles had a happy childhood which he thought of as "the happiest time of his life". He had a talent for games and storytelling and loved to entertain his ten younger siblings.
Charles loved children, particularly young girls. There have been speculations about his possible paedophile inclinations, but let us leave that to the historians and biographers. There was one girl in particular that Charles was fond of, Alice – one of the three Liddell sisters. He loved to tell them stories and invent games and puzzles for them, and he also took them on outings. One of these outings (4 July 1862) became legendary. In his personal notes Charles wrote: "I made an expedition up the river to Godstowe with the three Liddells, we had tea on the bank there, and did not reach Christ Church till half past eight (…) on which occasion I told them the fairy tale of Alice's Adventures Underground, which I undertook to write out for Alice." This was the birth of one of the most beloved books in English literature, and at the same time an odd masterpiece of Victorian writing.

Lewis Carrol
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

Alice

The Alice books are an attempt to see the authoritarian and rigid Victorian world through the eyes of a child. In both books Alice encounters strict and bossy adults in the form of mythological figures, chess pieces, strange animals, and so on. These characters represent the absurdity of the adult world, like it would seem for a child. Alice also goes through bizarre changes after eating a magic mushroom or drinking a strange brew from a bottle that said “Drink me”. There is a constant fear of death by eating, making it look like a scary nightmare. Alice is not a naughty child, but she is curious and unafraid as she stands her ground against the stupid characters she meets on the way. She is self-confident and never helpless or sweetly innocent; which makes her different from the traditional moralist approach that was typical of Victorian literature, both for children and adults. The books are richly illustrated by Sir John Tenniel who was a famous cartoonist and book illustrator. His imaginative illustrations complement the story in a brilliant way, and are as legendary as the text itself.

From Alice in Wonderland

The story begins, just like the river bank outing, with young Alice sitting next to her sister on a river bank. Her sister is reading a book, and Alice is bored and sleepy, but she suddenly sees a white rabbit run by who says: “Oh dear, oh dear, I shall be too late”, looking all the time at his pocket watch. Alice is not at all surprised and follows the rabbit to its hole; she goes after him, and falls down and down, and ends up in Wonderland. After many strange encounters she ends up in a garden where she spots a small house:

For a minute or two she stood looking at the house wondering what to do next, when suddenly a footman in livery came running out of the wood – (she considered him to be a footman because he was in livery; otherwise, judging by his face only, she would have called him a fish) – and rapped loudly at the door with his knuckles. It was opened by another footman in livery, with a round face, and large eyes like a frog; and both footmen, Alice noticed, had powdered hair that curled all over their heads. She felt very curious what it was all about, and crept a little way out of the wood to listen.

The Frog-Footman and The Fish-Footman
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Fish-Footman began by producing from under his arm a great letter, nearly as large as himself, and this he handed over to the other, saying in a solemn tone: "For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet." The Frog-Footman repeated in the same solemn tone, only changing the order of the words a little, "From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet."

Then they both bowed and the curls got entangled together.

Alice laughed so much at this, that she had to run back into the wood for fear of their hearing her; and, when she next peeped out, the Fish-Footman was gone, and the other was sitting on the ground near the door, staring stupidly up into the sky.

Alice went timidly up to the door, and knocked.

"There's no sort of use in knocking," said the Footman, "and that for two reasons. First because I'm on the same side of the door as you are; secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you." And certainly there was a most extraordinary noise going on within – a constant howling and sneezing, and every now and then a great crash, as if a dish or a kettle had been broken to pieces.

"Please, then," said Alice, "how am I to get in?"

"There might be some sense in your knocking," the Footman went on, without attending to her, "if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were inside, you might knock, and I would let you out, you know." He was looking up into the sky all the time he was speaking, and this Alice thought decidedly uncivil. "But perhaps he can't help it," she said to herself; "his eyes are so very nearly at the top of his head. But at any rate he might answer questions. "How am I to get in?" she repeated, aloud.

As she did not receive any answers from the Frog-Footman, Alice just walks into the house.

Tasks and Activities

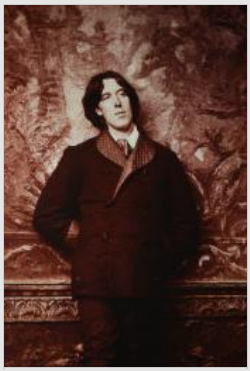
1. What are the main elements that make *Alice in Wonderland* appeal to children?
2. Alice thought her sister's book was boring because "it was a book without pictures or conversations". Does that indicate something? (This can be called a "meta-comment" – what does that mean?)
3. Does the rabbit in some way represent adult values as they were / are seen by children?
4. In what way do the Footmen reflect the Victorian class system?
5. The two Footmen are both in the shape of animals. What point does Carrol try to make by that?
6. How is Alice regarded by the Footman?
7. What could be an interpretation of the fact that the Footman's eyes are at the top of his head?
8. One of the creatures Alice meets is the Caterpillar, who (rudely) asks her: "Who are you?" In what way is this question an indication of the theme of the story?
9. Why do you think *Alice in Wonderland* is enjoyed by so many adult readers as well as children?
10. *Alice in Wonderland* has been filmed many times, both as a cartoon and as a regular feature film. Search the net for clips from the film(s) and compare the versions.
11. Study the famous illustrations of the many strange characters from *Alice in Wonderland*; which is your favourite? Give reasons for your answer.
12. Follow these links and read the poems Jabberwocky and The Walrus and the Carpenter from *Through the Looking-Glass* by

Lewis Carrol.

The Selfish Giant (Oscar Wilde)

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
The Selfish Giant (Oscar Wilde) (46171)

One of the fairy tales you might remember from your childhood is Oscar Wilde's The Selfish Giant. It is from his fairy tale collection, The Happy Prince and Other Stories. Can fairy tales like this teach us a lesson or two?



Oscar Wilde

Winter

Oscar Wilde was an Irish author and dramatist. In his time he was more famous for his life than his work. People were shocked by the way he lived. In 1895, he was sent to prison for homosexuality. Today, many people think he is among the funniest men that have ever lived. Enjoy this fairy tale about a very selfish giant.

Further Reading

If you want to know more about Oscar Wilde and why many people think he was one of the funniest men that have ever lived, you should read this: Oscar Wilde - a 19th Century Celebrity

The Selfish Giant - By Oscar Wilde - Narrated By Grant Raymond Barrett (April 4, 2009) / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/47179

The Selfish Giant (Oscar Wilde) / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125065

The Victorian Period

The Victorian Period - An Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Victorian Period - An Introduction (88999)

Another relevant denomination of this period is “realism”. Literature now turned from its romantic presentation of idyllic nature to a more realistic and true presentation of human life and its environment. And life in Victorian England certainly was a source of inspiration for artists who wanted to depict how the reality affected human lives.

The English Century

The 19th century could quite appropriately be called the English century, like the next one would be called the American century. The 19th century belonged to England in every way – the Great British Empire covered large parts of the world, Britain’s overseas trading surpassed that of Italy, France and Germany combined, and in 1870 it was nearly four times the size of the American overseas markets. There was (largely) peace throughout the Empire – it was called Pax Britannica. England “ruled the waves” and at home industry was flourishing. The thriving and industrious Victorians represented the cutting edge of enterprising and innovative industry – railway, postal service, steam ships, spinning machines; it all happened in 19th century England, “the workshop of the world.”

At Heaven’s Command

The period bears the name of Queen Victoria who was the British sovereign from 1837 until her death in 1901, the longest reigning monarch in British history. Her role as a sovereign and figurehead of the era cannot be overestimated. She was the symbol of Britain’s supremacy internationally, and a unifying role model at home. She was proclaimed Empress of India, and indeed from a modern perspective, she and her henchmen were pure imperialists who put nearly three quarters of the world under British rule “at Heaven’s command” as they boldly put it. There are more places in the world named after her than after any other person. This little lady dressed in black (after her consort Prince Albert died) became the icon of the greatest nation in the world.

Queen Victoria at her coronation in 1837

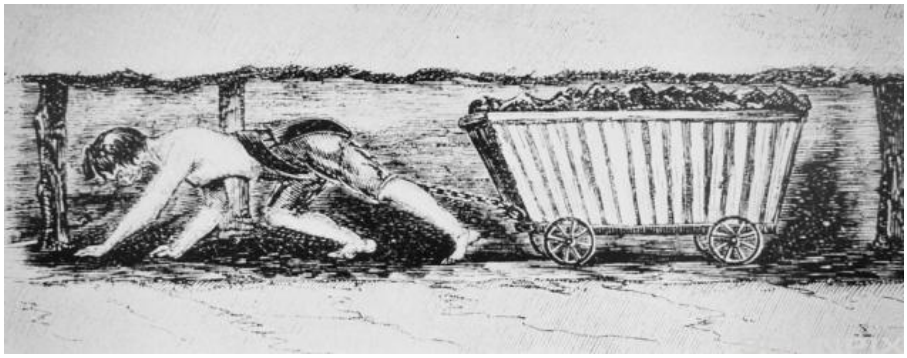
Fotograf: ILN

The Class System

A consequence of the industrialisation of England was a migration to the fast growing cities, particularly in the Midlands and the North; cities that were not prepared for taking on the rapidly growing population. Poor and overcrowded accommodation with no sanitary facilities, unregulated and often dangerous working conditions in factories and mills – these were the circumstances for the increasing working class in mid 1800s England. At the same time another group emerged in increasing numbers, the middle class; factory owners, proprietors and business men. They were hardworking, thrifty and frugal family men with moral standards, living in moderate luxury according to the standards of the age. And they increasingly challenged the leadership of the aristocracy / upper class in setting the political and economic agenda. The Victorian period definitely defined and cemented the class system that has characterised English society since then. At the bottom of the system there were the unemployed and destitute people in the city slums, who either ended up in the workhouse or on the street trying to make a living in the so-called criminal classes; thieves, pick-pockets and prostitutes.

Literature

An interesting feature of the literature of the Victorian age is that much of it appeared in monthly publications, which provided the writers with a unique contact with their readers. The writing project became a sort of collaboration where the author could alter his plot according to the reader's wishes, and perhaps produce a happy ending by public demand. A common theme for many Victorian writers was the relationship between the workers and their employers, and this finger pointing approach was intended to give the bourgeoisie a bad conscience for how the poor workers were treated by mean factory owners. Reforms were slow; the act that would limit working hours to ten hours per day for women and children was introduced in 1833 after heavy resistance. The domestic scene was loaded with material for dramatic (and melodramatic) stories about the fate of unhappy and exploited workers. Many of these novels would have child protagonists, since child labour was quite common in the mills and coal mines. But the overseas situation also became a source of inspiration for writers, for example the many consequences of English colonisation. Another dramatic setting was the misrule of Ireland, where thousands of people suffered badly during the potato famine in the late 1840s.



Child labour was common in Victorian England

Some writers were occupied with the relationship between the materialistic attitudes that dominated English society, and man's religious and moral obligations. One of the virtues of the Victorians was to lead a morally straight and impeccable life, but at the same time crime and vices like prostitution flourished in the growing underworld of the cities. Some prominent Victorians were even revealed to have an irreproachable public position on the surface while at the same time they were involved in shady business and crime.

A more or less timeless theme for writers has been the problematic correlation between religion and science. During the mid-1800s this issue was raised more fundamentally than before. Geologic findings and new research led to the acknowledgement of the age of the planet, and incited doubt about the biblical account of Genesis. The Church was also criticised for being a part of the oppressing system that kept the workers down. Karl Marx launched his political theories about the class system in 1867. But there was another study that really would shake the religious basis of the Church, and that was Charles Darwin's "The Origin of Species" which was published in 1859. In many respects, these were stormy times for the Christian Church, not only in England but all over the European continent. The conflict between creationism and the evolution theory is a hot issue many places even today. It is an understatement to say that fiction in the Victorian period had an abundancy of material and inspiration from the factual world.

The Correlation between Science and Literature..

Forfatter: Karin Dwyer Løken
The Correlation between Science and Literature during the Victorian Age (91200)

The Victorian era was a period of soaring industrialism and innovative commercial enterprise, of great advances within the natural sciences and the development of the social sciences. It was a time of both prosperity and social inequality, causing an upheaval of the established social order, which in turn led to extensive political reform. This vibrant, dynamic environment gave nourish to some of the greatest thinkers and writers the world has known.

The theories of Karl Marx and Charles Darwin must be seen as part of a social and scientific development. Ideas of common ownership, evolution and atheism were not new to this era – but people like Marx and Darwin developed upon these ideas to create scientifically based theories.

Alongside the scientific development of the period, fictional writers were also protesting against the social and economic injustices suffered by the working class, against gender inequality, moral conventions, organized religion and more. In 1848, Elizabeth Gaskell, a minister's wife in Manchester, published her first novel; Mary Barton: a Tale of Manchester Life. In it, she wrote about the poverty and hardships of the men working in the mines and the women working in the mills of Manchester. Her work was greatly admired by many of her contemporary writers, among them Elizabeth Barratt Browning and Charles Dickens.

Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) was one of the most prolific of the Victorian authors. Through his massive authorship, he attacked the injustices of the English industrial society. He knew first-hand about the social evils of his age; his family had to spend some time in debtor's prison and he, himself, had to work in a factory under appalling conditions for a period of his childhood. He was deeply influenced by the works of Karl Marx and wrote hundreds of essays with severe social criticism. Oliver Twist, Little Dorrit, Dombey and Son and David Copperfield are examples of his most popular novels dealing with issues like social and economic inequality and the vulnerability of both women and children in society.

The great poets of the day also gave voice to their thoughts on society. Elizabeth Barrett Browning became famous for poetry that took up issues like slavery, child labour and the oppression of women. Her poem, The Cry of the Children, describes the suffering of children forced to work in the mines and factories. The early poetry of Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837 – 1909) often revolted against the moral conventions of the era, through quite explicit sexual themes. Although these poems met massive criticism, many Victorians received them with a mixture of shock and delight. Dolores and Faustine became particularly popular. Matthew Arnold wrote about the difficult transition from the world that he knew to a new world full of uncertainty in Dover Beach; lamenting the decline of tradition and religion.

Now, more than a century after the Victorian Era ended, we have the advantage of being able to look back and see it as a whole. We see how the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution led to demographic, social and economic changes. These changes led to deep societal problems. Some of the greatest thinkers of the times worked to shed light upon these problems and to seek solutions to them. Whether they were scientists, sociologists, economists, poets or novelist, they all contributed in their

own way towards improving their society.

At Heaven's Command

Forfatter: Karin Dwyer Løken, Jan-Louis Nagel
At Heaven's Command (96528)

The British Empire is the largest empire to have existed in the history of the world. At its height, at the end of the 19th century, the British Empire comprised about 20% of the world's population and about 22% of its land. Britain had colonies in every corner of the world - America, Africa, Asia and Oceania – thereby inspiring the phrase, "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

It is customary to divide the development of the British Empire into different stages, the first based on economy, the second on expansionist ideology justified by religion and evolutionist theory.

At Heaven's Command - The British Empire

At Heaven's Command - the British Empire Tasks

Literature of the First Empire

Literature of the Second Empire

At Heaven's Command - Literature Tasks

8 Literature after 1900

Contemporary Literature

A Close Study of the Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
A Close Study of The Grapes of Wrath (99706)

Comprehension Questions for " The Grapes of Wrath

Chapter 1

1. How does the setting set the stage for what is to come?
2. What are the farmers waiting for? What are the women afraid that will happen?

Chapter 2

1. Although there is a “No Riders” sticker on the truck, how does the hitchhiker con the truck driver into giving him a ride?
2. What does the truck driver mean when he says, "Croppers going fast now" and "One cat' takes and shoves ten families out"? 3. What makes the truck driver think that the hitch-hiker has been in prison?
4. What is the life of a truck driver or truck skinner like?
5. What is McAlester? What had Tom Joad done?

Chapter 3

1. Describe the turtle. What do you think it symbolizes? 2. What happens when the truck tries to hit the turtle?

Chapter 4

1. Why do you think the words of the Preacher stick in Tom’s memory?
2. What is the Preacher singing when Tom first meets him?
3. What memories does the Preacher have of Tom?
4. Why isn't the Preacher a preacher anymore?
5. How does the Preacher seem lost?
6. Why is the Preacher torn regarding his views on women?
7. Why did Tom kill a man at the dance?
8. What was McAlester like?

Chapter 5

1. Describe the owners of the land and explain how they could hide behind numbers and statistics?
2. How is the bank inhuman?
3. Explain the tenant system.
4. What makes ownership according to the farmers?
5. How do the owners of the land justify their actions?
6. What are the tractors compared to?
7. What reason did the tractor driver give for demolishing the homes of his own people?
8. What does property mean to the farmers?

Chapter 6

1. What do Tom and Reverend Casey find when they get to the Joad farm?
2. What crops were being planted?
3. What made Tom think Ma might be dead?
4. Why did Tom think that there was something really wrong?
5. Why didn't Muley Graves leave the land?
6. Why didn't Tom's Grampa kill Willie Freeley, the driver of the tractor, who tried to evict them off the land? How did Grampa feel afterwards?
7. Where had the Joad family gone?
8. What reasons did the owners give for forcing the farmers off?
9. Where did Muley's wife and family go? How had he changed?
10. Why does Casey feel he has to follow the migrants?
11. What is meant by Tom being on parole?
12. Why doesn't Tom see prison as a way of rehabilitation?
13. Why would spending the night on their property be dangerous?

Chapter 7

1. How is the cynicism of the car dealers demonstrated? 2. Describe some of the tricks they used to sell the cars to poor people.

Chapter 8

1. Why do Tom and Casey think that Muley is crazy?
2. What had made Uncle John into the man he was? How does he try to make up for it?
3. How do the Joads personalize their truck?
4. What type of people were the Joads?
5. What is the first thing Pa thinks when he sees Tom?
6. What does Ma mean when she asks if prison made Tom "mad"? What famous outlaw does Ma refer to as an example of turning "mad"?
7. What had happened to Noah at birth?
8. What do we discover about the Preacher during his speech at dinner?
9. What sets Al apart from the rest of the family? What is his relationship like towards his older brother, Tom?
10. What was Grampa's dream?
11. Who was Rose of Sharon married to?
12. What did the Joad family have to do to buy the truck?

Chapert 9

1. How do reactions to being evicted differ between the men and the women? 2. Why were the farmers so depressed regarding the sale of their farm implements and their horses? 3. What hopes and dreams lie in migrating to California? 4. What few things did they take with them? What did they do with the rest of their things they couldn't take with them?

Chapter 10

1. Why is Ma skeptical to moving and picking peaches?
2. How does Tom calm her fears?
3. What did Tom learn about California in prison?
4. What does Ma feel towards the Preacher?
5. Why won't Casey preach or baptize anymore?
6. What childlike qualities do Ruthie and Winfield possess compared to Rose of Sharon?
7. How is Connie Rivers different from the rest of the family?
8. What were Uncle John's vices?
9. What is Al's main responsibility throughout the book?
10. What had made the men so tired and angry in this chapter? 11. Since the houses and fields were dead to them now, what object became the meeting grounds and nucleus of the family?
12. Describe the hierarchy of the family at the outset of their journey to California.
13. What made Ma finally decide to allow the Preacher to accompany them?
14. How does the Preacher show solidarity with the women?
15. What does Ma allow herself to bring with her?
16. What message did Muley want the Joads to relay to his family in California?
17. Why didn't Grampa want to go? What did they have to do to get him to go with them?
18. What does Tom offer up for the family?

Chapter 11

1. What was left after the houses and land became vacant? 2. Why doesn't the tractor man have any understanding of the land?

Chapter 12

1. What does Route 66 symbolize?
2. What makes crossing the desert so frightening?
3. How do people with small businesses take advantage of the migrants on the road?
4. What attitudes are revealed towards the migrants?
5. Why do you think Steinbeck mentions the man who picked up a family of 12?

Chapter 13

1. Describe how Al had become the soul of their Hudson.
2. Why couldn't Ma show that she was scared?
3. What was slowly happening to Granma and Grampa?
4. Why was the gasoline station attendant skeptical towards them? What type of people stopped at his gas station?
5. According to Casey, why is the entire country "movin'"?
6. Why does Tom get angry at the gas station attendant?
7. Why will the gas station attendant also have to move soon?
8. What are Rose of Sharon and Connie mostly focused on?
9. What happened to the Joads' dog?
10. How does Tom rationalize about keeping his parole?
11. How does Tom's appeal towards hospitality affect Ivy and Sairy Wilson from Kansas?
12. Why did Grampa get sick?
13. After Grampa's stroke, how had the structure of the family changed?
14. When Grampa dies why don't they take him to the undertaker? 15. What scriptures do they use to bury Grampa with?
16. What does Casey finally say over Grampa's body?
17. Why was Grampa's grave left unmounded?
18. Why do the Joads and Wilsons decide to go together?

Chapter 14

1. Why are the land owners in the Western States nervous and afraid? 2. What does Steinbeck mean by the change that is taking place among the migrants who have lost their land?

Chapter 15

1. Describe Mae and Al – why do you think they are significant?
2. Compare the behavior of the wealthy drivers and the poor migrants. How do they differ?
3. How does Mae feel towards the successful customers driving huge cars to California? Why does she prefer truck drivers?
4. What is the argument between Al and Mae about with regards to the loaf of bread? How is the dignity of the poor family preserved? 5. Why do you think Mae gives the farmer the candy for the little boys?

Chapter 16

1. Geographically, where are the Joads and Wilsons in this chapter?
2. Why does Steinbeck compare the families to the land turtle?
3. What are Connie and Rose of Sharon's plans for the future?
4. Why didn't the Joads leave the Wilson's when their car broke down?
5. Why did Ma refuse to continue on with Al and the others in the truck while Tom and Casey stay behind to fix the con-rod bearing on the Wilsons' car?
6. What do they all finally decide to do?
7. What does Casey notice while they were on the road?
8. Describe the first camp they come to.
9. What does Tom explain to Al regarding his prison sentence?
10. Why does the man at the junk yard for wrecked cars hate the owner?
11. What is it about the man at the junk yard that angers Tom?
12. Why does Tom demonstrate anger at the owner of the camp? 13. What would happen if he and Al slept out in a ditch and not at the camp?
14. What information did the ragged man at the camp relay to Pa? 15. Who are the "trouble makers" according to the camp owner? 16. What did the coroner say the ragged man's wife and children died of?

Chapter 17

1. Why was there a feeling of Family and togetherness on the road?
2. What codes and rights were established among the people moving westward?
3. How are chores now delegated?
4. How had the social structure of the migrants' lives changed?
5. What courtesies were observed?
6. What examples of developing social structures among the migrants are seen in this chapter?
7. How does the guitar music and singing help the migrants?

Chapter 18

1. What does the border guard ask them when they leave Arizona?
2. What signs of exploitation are seen at the beginning of this chapter?
3. What impressions do the various members of the family have of California?
4. Why is their arrival in California almost anticlimactic?
5 Why are the men from the Panhandle returning?
6. What does the term "Okie" mean to the locals and the law? Why do they hate them?
7. Why isn't Uncle John affected by what the man from the Panhandle says?
8. Why does Noah stay behind at the river?
9. What happened to Granma during the journey?
10. How did Ma respond to the religious, Jehovite woman? Describe the religious meeting.
11. What does the man wearing a pistol, boots, khaki pants and a military cap threaten Ma with?
12. How does Ma's response show that she has changed?
13. How many of the family are left now?
14. What reason do the Wilsons give for not going on? What does Sairy want Casey to do?
15. How do the Joads help the Wilsons before leaving?
16. What was it like crossing the Mohave dessert?
17. Why does Uncle John think he might bring bad luck to folks? 18. Why was Ma hysterical when they got to Daggett?
19. What do they see when they finally cross the Mohave dessert? 20. What was Casey's response to how Ma acted while Granma was dying?

Chapter 19

1. How did the Americans acquire and take over California from the Mexicans? Why did this happen?
2. Make a concise bullet list which traces the development from squatters to store keepers.
3. How had the crops changed?
4. Why did the owners of the land, the store keepers, the town men, little bankers and laboring people all hate Okies? Why were Okies and the dispossessed a danger?
5. What would a homeless, hungry man regard as a sin?
6. What is meant by the term "Hooverville"?
7. What crops were allowed to grow? What was missing from the farms?
8. Why did the deputies do to people who had tried to plan a little patch of land to feed themselves?
9. What excuse did the deputies use to force people from the Hoovervilles?
10. What is Black Tongue?

Chapter 20

1. What did they do at the coroner's office in Bakersfield? Why couldn't they have a nice funeral for Granma?
2. When they drove out in the country, what kind of camp did they find?
3. What had made the so-called "Mayor" of this camp behave the way he did?
4. Why do the authorities keep pushing people around there by keeping them from settling?
5. What information does the young man give Tom about "looking for work" and the "hand bills" that so many had seen? How much was he paid an hour?
6. What strategy do the farm owners use to force men to work for practically nothing?
7. What signs are there that Tom is a born activist?
8. What are some of the techniques used to keep down activists? 9. How did the migrants in the camp suggest Tom should behave? 10. In what way is Casey also an activist?
11. Why do you think Tom tells Casey to stay with them?
12. What does Connie feel about their situation? What does he do?
13. Why did the woman reprimand Ma for giving the children stew? 14. In what way does Floyd Knowles, the man with the car, demonstrate kindness?
15. What happens when Floyd Knowles asks to see the Tulare contractor's license and questions him about wages?
16. What does Casey do when the deputy starts threatening and firing on the men?
17. Why did Tom have to flee the scene?
18. How is Rose of Sharon's panic revealed?
19. What was Uncle John's sin?
20. What would happen later that night in the camp?
21. What did Pa think of Connie's behavior?
22. How does Tom get the drunken Uncle John to leave with them? 23. Why was it necessary to keep the family together?
24. What does Tom mean by saying, "They're workin' on our decency?"
25. How is the Joad family finally able to get out of the camp? Where were they headed?

Chapter 21

1. What changed the migrants?
2. Why was the property owners' fear of the migrants increasing? 3. How did the property owners rationalize and defend their actions?
4. Why was it true that the migrants had no sense of property rights?
5. How did the migrants themselves press the wages down?
6. How were cannery owners able to make a profit?
7. What is meant by "the banks worked at their own doom and they did not know it"?

Chapter 22

1. What is our first impression of " Weedpatch" or Government camp?
2. In what way are both the people running the camp and its tenants different from what we have seen so far?
3. How is this camp organized and run?
4. What happened to the Wallaces' car?
5. The work the Wallaces were able to find laying down pipe for the Gas Company was only temporary, why, then, did they ask Tom to come along?
6. What reasons did Mr. Thomas, the man that had hired them, give for having to decrease their wages from thirty cents to twenty-five cents an hour?
7. Why doesn't the Farmer's Association like the government camps? What methods did they use to disrupt any grievances made by the migrants?
8. By calling any agitator a "red", the authorities, bank associations and land owners seem to justify their brutality towards the migrants. Why is this so?
9. What were some of the activities the Ladies Committee were responsible for? How is it organized?
10. How does the decency of the camp influence Ma?
11. How does Lisbeth Sandry, the stocky, religious zealot frighten Rose of Sharon?
12. How does Jim Rawley, the camp manager deal with her fears? 13. What was the camp's view on charity?
14. What signs are there that the brutality and hostility the Joads have experienced so far have affected Ruthie? 16. What does Ma say to Lisbeth Sandry?

Chapter 23

1. What is significant by the story telling that takes place in this chapter? What morals are revealed through the stories?
2. Find examples of music and rhythm in this chapter. What does this add to the novel as a whole?

Chapter 24

1. In preparation for the Saturday night dance, what did Ezra Huston, chairman of the Central Committee, tell his men?
2. How do the men on the entertainment committee manage to keep peace around the camp during the dance so the deputies cannot arrest them and make trouble?
3. Why do the deputies hate the Okies and the camps?
4. What role did Tom play on the entertainment committee?
5. Why didn't Pa and Uncle John take the job they were offered for twenty cents?
6. What do the dances mean to the migrants?
7. How did the trouble makers manage to get into the dance? How were their actions to start a riot thwarted? 8. What kind of change was exemplified in this chapter by the incident that took place in Akron Ohio at the Rubber company?

Chapter 25

1. How does the description of spring in California contrast to the reality of the migrants?
2. Why can't they pick the cherries?
3. How is pollution and immorality demonstrated?
4. What is meant by "the grapes of wrath"?

Chapter 26

1. How is Ma's strength exhibited through Winfield's attack?
2. What is Pa's reaction to Ma's taking charge? 3. How does Ma placate the frustrated Rose of Sharon?
4. What did Tom fear would happen if they stay at the Hooverville camps?
5. Why are they forced to go North?
6. How do the deputies stop unions from forming?
7. What attitudes do the migrants exhibit to having been burned out of the Hoovervilles over and over again?
8. What happened on the way to the Hooper Ranch?
9. What did they see at the entrance to the Hooper Ranch? What was taking place?
10. What was this ranch like? In what ways are they exploited?
11. How did the little bald man at the Hooper Ranch Incorporated store get the job? What would happen to him if he gave Ma credit? 12. What does Ma learn from the little bald man at the company store?
13. How does the guard act towards Tom when he asks if there was any place he could get a bath?
14. What warning did the guard give Tom when he wanted to take a walk outside the camp? How did he get out?
15. What had Casey been involved in while in prison? What does Casey compare striking to?
16. Why were conditions better at the government camp?
17. What do the Joads think about striking?
18. Why do the State police consider Casey a leader?
19. What happens to Casey when the guards find him? What are his last words?
20. Why is Tom forced to hide?
21. How did the family know that the guards busted the strike?
22. What arguments does Ma use to persuade Tom to stay with the family?
23. Describe Rose of Sharon's outburst.
24. What was Winfield suffering from?
25. How is the Joad family able to sneak Tom out?
26. What makes them stop by the box cars? Where is Tom forced to hide?

Chapter 27

1. How are the cotton pickers exploited?

Chapter 28

1. Describe the box cars?
2. What makes Ruthie expose Tom and his situation?
3. How has Tom been affected by what Casey had been saying? Explain the scripture Casey quoted to him.
4. Sum up Tom's parting words to Ma?
5. Who were the Wainwrights?
6. How do Ma and Pa differ regarding their thoughts on how men and women tackle living?
7. How does Rose of Sharon react to the news that Al and Aggie want to get married?
8. What did they find when they got to the cotton farm at dawn?
9. Why is rain such an ominous sign?
10. What do Ma and Mrs Wainwright do when Rose of Sharon catches a chill?

Chapter 29

1. How do the changes in nature and setting dramatically affect the migrants?

Chapter 30

1. Why does Ma want to keep the Wainwrights with them?
2. Steinbeck uses the rain to emphasize the migrants' situation. Why can't the Joads leave?
3. What must the men do to prevent flooding the box car?
4. When the motors of the cars flood, who does Mr. Wainwright blame for making them stay?
5. Who helps Ma deliver Rose of Sharon's baby?
6. How is Uncle John affected by the birth?
7. What happened to the baby?
8. Why do you think Mrs. Wainwright stayed to help Ma?
9. What does Uncle John do with the body of the baby? Why?
10. How do they save themselves and their things?
11. Who finally takes the lead and moves the family to higher ground?
12. Who did they find once they got to the Black barn?
13. How does Rose of Sharon help the starving man?

Literary Analysis

Setting

The setting in this novel takes on epic proportions.

a) During what period in history does the story takes place?

b) How do settings change from the outset of the story to the end?

c) How do the various settings affect the migrants in their struggles and actions?

d) Find examples of Steinbeck's descriptions of nature and animals.

- What do they represent?
- How is man's attack on nature brought forth in the story?

Characterization

a) Make a character table using the character traits below of the following characters: *Tom Joad, Ma Joad, Pa Joad, Jim Casey, Rose of Sharon, Grampa Joad, Granma Joad, Al Joad, Noah Joad, Uncle John, Ruthie Joad, Winfield Joad, MuleyGraves, Connie Rivers, Ivy and Sairy Wilson, the Wainwrights*

- Age and physical appearance
- Personality traits
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Stereotype
- Static character/developing character

b) What do they symbolize?

c) What is it that you like or dislike about them?

d) What picture do they give of human nature?

e) Who are the villains in the story?

- What side of human nature do they represent?

Plot and Structure

a) Sum up the plot of the story

b) How is the novel structured

c) What do the shorter chapters bring to the story?

d) Turning points

- Make a chart of the turning points in the novel
- What chapter would you consider as the climax of the novel? Why?

Conflict or tension

What is the main conflict in the story?

Tragedy

a) Which scenes or episodes can be said to be most tragic?

Suspense

b) How does Steinbeck build up suspense in the novel?

- Which scenes are the most exciting?

Narrators and Point of View

a) Who are the narrators of the story?

b) How do they differ in point of view?

d) Does the author speak through them?

Theme

Choose one of the following themes and write an essay where you discuss and exemplify how the theme is developed in the novel.

- Intolerance
- Exploitation
- Solidarity
- Sharing
- Perseverance
- Survival
- Helping each other

Style

a) Language

Dialogue and Slang

Dialogue and slang Steinbeck uses slang and dialogue throughout the novel. What are some of the characteristics in the way the Joads speak? Can you find any stock phrases or expressions that are individual to our characters?

Rhythm

Rhythm or “an ordered recurrent alternation of strong and weak elements in the flow of sound and silence in speech” (See Marriam Webster Dictionary) is an important element in the novel. Find examples of Steinbeck’s use of rhythm and explain how the different rhythms echo what is taking place.

b) Tone

- Describe the tone of the story
- Are there any shifts in tone during the novel?

c) Symbols

What do the following symbols or metaphors represent?

- The turtle
- The land
- The tractor
- The name Rose of Sharon
- The land owners
- The bank
- Highway 66
- The truck

Discussion

Discuss the following with a partner

a) The title *The Grapes of Wrath* alludes to the words, “the grapes of wrath” from Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic”. Look up the words to "Battle Hymn of the Republic” and discuss whether the title is appropriate or not.

b) The ending to *The Grapes of Wrath* has been a topic of controversy by many critics. Discuss what you think of the ending. Why do you think Steinbeck ended it as he did? How would you have ended it?

Writing

Essay

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay:

a) The Grapes of Wrath has been called a “social novel”, Why? Start with the social background to the novel and then give a short description of the various social groups that are represented. Lastly, explain how the social background to the novel amplifies the actions of the Joad family.

b) In an essay discuss the economic as well as moral decline of the Joad family. Where is this most evident in the novel? What are they left with in the end?

c) The women in The Grapes of Wrath play various roles. Begin by discussing what these roles are at the start of the book. How do their roles change the further away they get from their home? How does this affect the hierarchy of the family?

Diary Entry

Choose one of the characters and write an entry for his or her diary for one day.

Book Review

Write a book review as it would be presented in a newspaper.

Write an Interview

Choose your favorite character and write an interview for TV or radio. Together with a partner, you may record the interview using a sound editor (e.g.audacity). Go online and find the Woodie Guthrie songs from his Dust Bowl period as background music.

Project Work

Go online and find material on the personal histories of Americans who lived through the Dust Bowl period. Then make a digital presentation of your findings to the class including the music of the times, historical photos from magazines and newspapers found online. Suggested sites:

1. American Experience - Survivng the Dust Bowl
2. New Deal Network - Research and Study
3. American Experience - Riding The Rails
4. American Memory - Voices from the Dust Bowl

"Amundsen" by Alice Munro

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
"Amundsen" - a Short Story by Alice Munro (131104)

When the Nobel Committee awarded the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature to the Canadian writer Alice Munro, they described her as "the master of the contemporary short story". Throughout her writing career, which extends over more than 60 years, she has produced numerous short stories. The American author and Munro fan, Ben Dolnick, compares picking which Munro story to read to choosing "what to eat from an enormous box of chocolates." Here we have chosen to focus on "Amundsen" from her latest collection *Dear Life* (2012).

Amundsen

Many of Munro's stories can be traced to her childhood in a small town in Huron County, Ontario, Canada. The story "Amundsen", however, is set in an even more remote place; a place far from Toronto, but which is accessible by rail. The climate is unfriendly and cold, and the inhabitants are unaccustomed to strangers. As Norwegians we are puzzled by the name Amundsen. Is Amundsen referring to our polar explorer Roald Amundsen? A lot of places in the vast country of Canada are named after our national hero. If you look closely at a map, you will even find a small place in Northwest Ontario by that name. Perhaps it was this place which inspired the author.

Tuberculosis and Sanatoriums

One day, towards the end of World War II, a new female teacher from Toronto, arrives at the remote settlement in the middle of winter. In those days turbercolosis - a serious infectious lung disease - held a nasty grip, especially on the young generation. Sanatoriums were set up to treat those infected and to isolate them in order to prevent the disease from spreading. These sanatoriums were often placed in far-away places. Young Vivien (Vivi) is going to teach the hospitalized children. The prospects for the recovery of the children do not seem too good, and the new teacher is met by a hospital atmosphere, with an air of sadness and defeat.

Read the Story

"Amundsen" by Alice Munro

Task 1

Setting

Alice Munro - Short Stories

Alice Munro

Canada

Roald Amundsen

The Sick Child. Edvard Munch

Answer the questions by making references to the text:

- What kind of place is Amundsen?
- Read the introductory scene. Describe the young woman's first encounter with the place.
- How is the misinterpretation with "Sam" for "San" significant?
- World War II and the deadly disease of tuberculosis make a sinister frame for the story. How?
- The gender gap is apparent in the story. How is this revealed?
- What makes Vivi stand out as an outsider in this community?

Task 2

Characters

Answer the questions by making references to the text

Amundsen as perceived by Vivi

Vivi

- Make a characterization of Vivi
- What makes Vivi from Toronto apply for the vacant position as a teacher in this far-away place, do you think?
- Is she lonely?
- Do you believe her when she says she has a boyfriend? If not, what might be her reasons for making him up?
- What makes Vivi attracted to Doctor Fox?
- Does she really love him?
- What flaws does she see in his character?
- In spite of these flaws, she wants to marry him. Why do you think?
- In what ways is the male world inaccessible to Vivi? How does she feel about it?
- Does she bond with the other women?
- Is she a reliable narrator, do you think?

Doctor Fox

- Make a characterization of the doctor.
- What makes him so powerful in this community?
- Why is he generally admired by the women in this place?
- Why does he propose to Vickie, do you think?
- What makes him cancel the wedding?
- Does he exploit her?
- What might be his reasons for bullying Mary?

- Describe how he bonds with the males.
- Is he an all-bad character?
- Might his name be symbolic? How?

Task 3

The Conclusion and Your Review

Discuss

Munro writes:
"It still seemed as if we would make our way out of that crowd, as if in just a moment we would be together. But it was just as certain, also, that we would carry on in the directions we were going, and so we did." Munro goes on to describe how Vivi walks home; "feeling the same as when I'd left Amundsen...Nothing changes, apparently, about love."

- What is your interpretation of this?
- Do you think the relationship between Vivi and Dr Fox was about love, or something else? If so, what?
- In your view, is this a love story?
- "It was just as certain, also, that we would carry on in the directions we were going, and so we did." Considering the story, could this also refer to the separate worlds of women and men and how we communicate?

Write

Chocolate box

Ben Dolnick, who is a devoted Munro fan, compared deciding which short story to read to making up your mind about which chocolate to taste from an enormous chocolate box, he goes on:

" -- and, while you're very likely to choose something delicious, there is the slight but real possibility of finding yourself stuck with, say, raspberry ganache."

*ganache=glaze, filling

Do you think this characterization applies for this short story? Did you like the story? Write a brief review of "Amundsen".

In your review you might also consider:

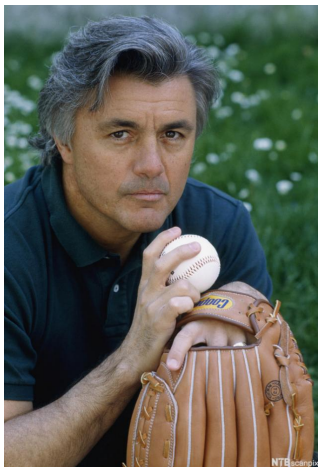
- Do you think the persistent focus on gender, as it appears in the story, is irrelevant today?
- Would Doctor Fox stand out as admirable to women today?
- Will women always be fascinated by powerful men?

Further Work

Alice Munro and her literary work Alice Munro - Writing Her Life

The Cider House Rules by John W Irving

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
Introduction to The Cider House Rules by John W. Irving (119943)



American Novelist John Irving
Fotograf: Sophie Bassouls

The Cider House Rules (1985) by John W. Irving centers on the life and development of Homer Wells, one of the orphans at St. Cloud's, which is both an orphanage and an abortion clinic. The orphanage is administered by Dr. Wilbur Larch who is both an obstetrician as well as covert abortionist. He has to inhale ether to withstand the pain he suffers from catching gonorrhea as a young man. Its prolonged use turns him into an ether addict. Under the influence of ether fumes, he rewrites *The Brief History of St. Cloud's* to fit his personal views and philosophies on the meanings of "being of use", the spiritual and physical needs of the orphans, as well as his own wishful imaginings of their lives. After personally experiencing the plight of women who have undergone illegal abortions, as well as and the sad lives of abandoned children, Dr. Larch attacks the existing, puritan views on abortions. Homer becomes both his protégé and surrogate son, whom he tries to protect from harm by creating a fictitious heart condition for him. There is a natural gloomy depression over the rural setting of St. Cloud's. The orphans are lulled to sleep each night by readings from Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations* and Charlotte Brontë's, *Jane Eyre*. Dr. Larch sends them to sleep with his, "*Good night— you Princes of Maine, you Kings of New England!*". Rebelling against Dr. Larch's views on abortion, Homer tries to escape by driving off with a beautiful couple, Candy Kendall and Wally Worthington, who come to St. Cloud's for an abortion. They both work at and Ocean View Apple Orchard, the second setting in the novel. There is a huge range of characters, where their histories and harsh milieus are minutely described. Homer falls in love with Candy and while Wally is "missing in action", Homer even fathers her child. However, in the end he must choose between either leaving a girl to bear a baby by her own father or performing an abortion on her. This procedure is a precursor to his greatest decision whether or not to return to St. Cloud's and carry on the medical traditions after Dr. Larch.
(Editor's Note: *We suggest that you follow the Comprehension Questions 1-7 and 8-11 as a guide while reading the novel*)

Comprehension Tasks

Tasks to The Cider House Rules by John W. Irving
(1)

Chapter 1 The Boy Who Belonged to St. Cloud's

1. Where and when does the story take place?
2. Why were circumcisions practiced at St. Cloud's?
3. How were babies named at St. Cloud's? Explain how Homer Wells received his name and why he was able to keep it.
4. Why didn't Dr. Larch inform the families who adopted the children of the names the nurses at the orphanage had given them?
5. Describe St. Cloud's, Maine and its history. What did it evolve into affecting the lives of its workers?
6. According to Dr. Wilbur Larch., why was the enemy of the Maine forests the Ramses Paper Company?
7. Why did one of the left behind prostitutes write a letter to the officials of the state of Maine? How did the letter affect Dr. Larch?
8. Why did Dr. Larch end up being called Saint Larch?
9. Explain Homer's experiences with the four foster homes and how he ended up remaining at St. Cloud's. What was Dr. Larch's advice to him?
10. Why was Dr. Larch both obstetrician and abortionist?
11. What did routine mean to the orphans of St Cloud's?
12. In which ways was Homer put to "use" at the orphanage? Why didn't he feel "of use" at the Drapers?
13. What sad memory is Homer forced to recall in order to fall asleep at the Draper's?
14. What lie initiated Homer's return to the orphanage from the Drapers?
15. Why did Dr. Larch think it necessary to withhold love at the orphanage? How did he make an orphan of Homer?
16. Describe Homer's schooling and teachers. What did he experience at Three Miles Falls?
17. Why were Dr. Larch's nightly readings to the orphans from Charles Dickens' Great Expectations and David Copperfield such an essential routine?
18. The fourth foster family who want to adopt Homer, Billy and Grant Winkle are fanatically sports oriented. Why didn't Dr. Larch think Homer would really fit this type of life?
19. What was it about the Winkles that impressed Dr. Larch?
20. How do they die?
21. How did Melony get her name?
22. What did Dr. Larch first say to Homer when he had returned to St Cloud's after the tragic accident?

Chapter 2 The Lord's Work

1. Explain Wilbur Larch's family background. How was this significant to his choice of careers?
2. What was so ironical regarding Wilbur Larch's father and the Prohibition Movement and temperance reform?
3. Why was Wilbur Larch a “whale of a student”?
4. How did Wilbur Larch catch the gonorrhea that spurred his interest in bacteria at Harvard Medical School?
5. Who was smoking a cigar when he woke up the next morning in the prostitute’s bedroom?
6. What did Mrs. Eames, the prostitute, beg Wilbur to do? Why was this a bit ironic?
7. How did the consequences of the disease affect Wilbur Larch both physically, mentally and spiritually?
8. What happened to Wilbur Larch’s family the same year he became a doctor?
9. Why did he become an obstetrician?
10. Why did Dr. Larch become an ether addict? Explain how it was administered.
11. Where did he start his practice? Why was his first delivery both horrid and humorous at the same time?
12. Why did Mrs. Eames come into Emergency in the South Branch of Boston Lying-In? What did Dr. Larch discover when he tried to sew up Mrs. Eames’ uterus? What actually caused her death?
13. Why couldn’t Dr. Larch treat Mrs. Eames daughter? What did she give him?
14. What were some of the aborticides mentioned in this chapter?
15. According to some doctors with religion, when did they define a fetus as having a soul?
16. What was the common-law’s attitude towards abortion?
17. Describe "OFF Harrison". What methods were used there? How did they deal with pain?
18. What was pinned to Mrs Eames’ daughter's shoulder? What significance did it hold for Dr. Larch?
19. Describe the women waiting in OFF Harrison’s waiting room.
20. Why was Dr. Larch unprepared for Mrs. Santa Claus’s aggression and response? What advice does he give her?
21. Why did Dr. Larch end up giving an abortion to the 13 year old girl at the South Branch of Boston Lying-In? How did his life change afterwards?
22. What made Dr. Larch flee Boston?
23. Why is the way Dr. Larch finally cures his gonorrhea ironic?
24. How did Dr. Larch finally end up at St. Cloud’s orphanage?
25. Why was Dr. Larch invited to the upper class Channing-Peabodys of Boston? How had they prepared for him?
26. What could Dr. Larch NOT forgive them for? Why did he pin the panties from Off Harrison to the old surgeon's lapel?
27. What soul searching questions and answers does Dr. Larch realize while returning to Portland?
28. When he doubted himself, what did he force himself to remember about his past?
29. When Dr. Larch serves in World War I what did his replacement at the orphanage call abortions? What was Dr. Larch’s response to this?
30. Why did the nurses consider Homer a possible problem for the orphanage? How would they combat this?
31. What were in the wastebaskets that Homer had to empty into the incinerator?
32. Describe Homer’s first contact with a dead fetus? What were his first impressions?
33. How did Dr. Larch explain what he saw?

Chapter 3 Princes of Maine, Kings of New England

1. How did they treat orphans at St. Cloud's? What did this entail?
2. What effect did reading from *David Copperfield* have on Homer? What does he learn from it?
3. What does the following quote from *David Copperfield* mean to Homer? “Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show”
4. How does Homer respond to Dr. Larch’s famous bedtime quote : “Good night!... “Good night— you Princes of Maine, you Kings of New England!”
5. How does Dr. Larch explain pregnancy and abortion from the point of view of the women to Homer?
6. What is Dr. Larch referring to when he says he helps the women have what they want?
7. How old is Homer at this time?
8. Why does Dr. Larch ask God to forgive him with regards to Homer?
9. Describe the girls’ division. What does Homer read for the girls’ division when he is 15?
10. What is remarkable about about Melony? How old is she?
11. Why was it necessary for Homer to keep his eyes off Melony during his readings from *Jane Eyre*?
12. How were Melony's reactions to the sweeter passages of *Jane Eyre* different from those of Mrs. Grogan and the others?
13. Describe some of the problems the other orphans like John Wilbur or Fuzzy Stone had.
14. What were the routines for births and abortions at St. Cloud's?
15. Why do you think the women who came for abortions were upset to hear new born babies crying?
16. How was Homer “of use” to the women who came to St. Cloud’s?
17. What was one of the “notorious games” the orphans played?
18. How had Melony’s past influenced her anger? Describe some of her experiences.
19. In what ways was Dr. Larch worried about Homer's innocence?
20. How does Melony's contribute to his education? Why didn’t Dr. Larch take away his reading duties for the girls’ division?
21. What was Dr. Larch’s cluttered dispensary a cover up for?
22. What does Melony think Dr. Larch is hiding regarding her background?
23. What is the significance of the pornographic photo Homer and Melony find in the abandoned bunkroom of the Ramses Paper Company? What lingered with Homer longer than the photograph itself?
24. How does Melony coerce Homer into finding her file?
25. Why does the noise of the hawk dropping the snake startle them so much?
26. What was Dr. Larch’s definition of ”adolescence”?
27. What did Dr. Larch's papers actually contain? Why was he more concerned with the orphans’ futures than their pasts? What was Larch’s law?
28. Why did Dr. Larch know what Homer was looking for when he went searching through his office?
29. Why was Melony a perfect example of someone NOT loved? How does she take the news that her history was not to be found?
30. What is Homer's opinion of Dr. Larch's role at playing God?
31. What must Homer promise Melony to calm her down?
32. Why does Homer’s sexual act with Melony leave him impotent? How does she react to his impotency?
33. What did Homer try to do with the pornographic picture? Describe the reactions of the boys and Dr. Larch to the picture. Why does Dr. Larch end up keeping the picture?
34. How does Dr. Larch handle the act of vandalism on the Ramses Paper Company building that Homer and Melony had carried out? What would he teach

Homer?
35. What did Dr. Larch mean by saying that Homer was going to finish medical school before he starts high school? How does he go about teaching Homer?
36. What impressed Homer about the births at St. Cloud's?
37. Melony seems subdued and physically tired. Why?
38. What was the usual bedtime routine at the orphanage when a child had been adopted?
39. What lie does Dr. Larch tell the orphans when Fuzzy finally dies? Why was the final benediction around Fuzzy's different?
40. Why did Fuzzy die? How does Homer demonstrate maturity here?

Chapter 4 Young Dr. Wells

1. What does Dr. Larch mean by saying that there is no "society" at St Cloud's?
2. In which ways does Homer lack choices?
3. What medical procedures had Homer taken part in by the time he was around 20 years old? Why didn't Homer perform abortions?
4. Why did Dr. Larch think Homer needed a sponsor to get into medical school?
5. Why had Melony given up running away?
6. Why didn't the jobs Dr. Larch found for Melony work out?
7. Who were Wallace and Olive Worthington? What were their stories?
8. Why was Olive Worthington more capable of looking after the Ocean View Apple Orchard than her husband Wallace?
9. What did Wallace finally die happy?
10. Why did Homer name the third cadaver that Dr. Larch obtained for him to dissect, Clara?
11. What parallel events take place on the day the cadaver is supposed to arrive? Why can some of the scenes taking place be described as examples of black humor?
12. Why hadn't Dr. Larch returned from the train station when he went to pick up the cadaver?
13. Why had Homer forgotten about the second cadaver?
14. Why is it significant that Homer names the baby he delivers alone, David Copperfield?
15. When Dr. Larch finally complements Homer on his good work, he kisses him. Why did his fatherly kisses mean so much to Homer?
16. What are Dr. Larch's views on falling in love?
17. Compare Candy Kendall and Wally Worthington. How do their backgrounds differ?
18. What was Ray Kendall's background?
19. What does Olive Worthington think of Candy's relationship to her son, Wally?
20. How did Dr. Larch change the history of his orphans at St. Cloud's? Give examples.
21. Why did he give Homer an imaginary heart defect?
22. Why were Wally and Candy not ashamed to tell their parents that Candy was pregnant?
23. Why does Candy slap Wally when he tells her he would have to go to war?
24. From whom did Wally get the proper information regarding abortions?
25. Describe Vernon and Grace Lynch.
26. Describe the lives of some of the people who worked at the orchard.
27. What does Grace tell Wally about St. Cloud's? Why do you think Grace suggests that Candy should not go alone? What was her experience there like?
28. What lie did Wally have to tell Senior Worthington?
29. What did Wally and Candy worry about prior to leaving?

Chapter 5 Homer Breaks a Promise

1. How does the stationmaster's superstitions based on his mail-order religion fit in with the arrival of "Clara", the cadaver?
2. What awakened the stationmaster and why did he scream?
3. Why didn't the stationmaster like the children at St. Cloud's orphanage?
4. Describe the women who came with the morning mail train to St. Cloud's
5. Why did the stationmaster think he saw sorcerers? What did this result in?
6. Why hadn't anyone noticed the stationmaster?
7. Why was Homer so grimly affected by the autopsy he performed on the fetus of the stabbed woman from Three Mile Falls? What does Homer realize at this stage?
8. Who come into the corridor between the dispensary and Nurse Angela's office just as Homer is carrying the tray with the dead fetus in it? Where does Homer end up placing the tray?
9. What state is Dr. Larch in when Homer explains his autopsy findings?
10. What final decision regarding abortions does Homer relay to Dr. Larch?
11. What is Curly Day screaming about? How did David Copperfield end up landing on top of the dead stationmaster's face? What role does Melony play during this scene?
12. Why is this scene a turning point?
13. How had Wally imagined arriving at St. Cloud's for the abortion?
14. Curly Day and David Copperfield mix up the message that is to be given to the railroad attendants regarding the death of their stationmaster? How?
15. What did the stationmaster's assistant mistake Wally's Cadillac for?
16. When Wally asks for directions to St. Cloud's, what did Curly Day think Candy and Wally wanted with the orphanage?
17. Describe the scene with the Curly and David in the white Cadillac. How does Wally react?
18. How does Mrs. Grogan misconstrue their arrival?
19. What frightens Melony? Why is she so engrossed by this beautiful couple?
20. Why does Dr. Larch insist that Homer participate by watching the abortions against his wishes?
21. Why doesn't Dr. Larch interfere with the choices the women make who come to St. Cloud's?
22. Why can't he teach the same procedures to Melony?
23. What are Dr. Larch's thoughts and responses when Homer says he does not want to become a doctor?
24. Why was Curly Day crying in the shower room? What misconception is Curly living under?
25. After his quarrel with Dr. Larch, Homer goes to apologize to Dr. Larch. Why does he end up saying, "I'm sorry and I love you" to the dead stationmaster instead of Dr. Larch?
26. What does Curly want Homer to tell the couple?
27. How do the children behave around Wally, his gifts and the Cadillac? Why are Wally's actions so inappropriate?
28. Why doesn't Dr. Larch realize why the couple is actually there? Who does?
29. Why wouldn't Homer have anything to do with Candy's abortion?
30. How did Wally react to what was happening?
31. What does Wally suggest to Homer? What metaphor does Homer use about Wally?
32. Why does Melony steal the book, *Little Dorrit* from the Cadillac?
33. What is Melony's response to the stationmaster's assistant when he asks to "view" the body?
34. What did the stationmaster's assistant think the Cadillac was for?
35. How does Dr. Larch feel about Homer's leaving? Why does Dr. Larch insist that there demonstration of emotion or affection?
36. What does Dr. Larch tell Candy regarding Homer's condition?

37. Why is Curly so upset?
38. Why does the stationmaster's assistant run out screaming?
39. What is the immediate effect on the inhabitants of St. Cloud's when Homer leaves?

Chapter 6 Ocean View

(2)

1. How did Homer's leaving St. Cloud's affect the routines at St. Cloud's?
2. How does Melony respond to Homer's leaving?
3. Why doesn't Dr. Larch respond positively to Nurse Angela's suggestion that Melony might "be of more use"? Why doesn't he like Melony?
4. What does Dr. Larch think of Mrs. Olive Worthington's letters concerning Homer?
5. Why is Dr. Larch so negative to Homer learning to drive and swim?
6. How do we know that Melony's violent temper is escalating? What did she do to Mary Agnes and why?
7. What was the meeting between Melony and Dr. Larch like? How had she prepared herself?
8. Why does Dr. Larch ask Melony to watch while he sets Mary Agnes' broken arm?
9. What does Melony steal before running away from St. Cloud's? What is her destination?
10. What were Dr. Larch's reasons for asking Mrs. Worthington to tell Homer that Melony took the copy of *Jane Eyre* and if she could please replace it?
11. Describe the ride back in the Cadillac to the coast for Homer, Wally and Candy. How does Homer demonstrate his inexperience with life outside of St. Cloud's?
12. What is Homer's life like at Ocean View? Go through the chapter and describe some of the practical things he learns?
13. In what ways do the letters between Dr. Larch and Homer differ?
14. How is Dr. Larch changing?
15. What do we learn about Senior Worthington and his alcoholism?
16. What were some of the things that Homer had missed at St. Cloud's? Why was it so depressing?
17. Why does Vernon Lynch alarm Homer?
18. How is racism and prejudice brought out in this chapter?
19. Why does Herb Fowler make innuendos and jokes regarding prophylactics?
20. Why can Homer sense that Grace Lynch, Vernon's wife, is a victim?
21. Why does Grace think that although St. Cloud's was an "awful place", she still felt safe there? Why does she think it is "dangerous" in the bunk room of the cider house at Ocean View Apple Orchard?
22. How does Homer feel towards Debra Pettigrew, her family and dogs?
23. What was Homer's impression of the drive-in movie at Cape Kenneth and the film?
24. What rules of dating does Homer learn at the drive-in from Debra Pettigrew?
25. What does Homer compare his love for Candy with after the film?
26. Who had adopted Curly Day? What was his grievance against Homer?
27. Why did the druggist and his wife adopt Curly? What name did they give him?
28. Why do Candy and Wally think that calling the orphans Princes of Maine and Kings of New England could be interpreted as "cynical" and "mocking"?
29. After much deliberation what does Homer end up writing in his letter to Dr. Larch?
30. Describe Dr. Larch's meeting with the board of trustees. Why is this meeting an actual threat to Dr. Larch? What does he ask for?
31. What does Dr. Larch's imaginary correspondence with Fuzzy Stone deal with? Why is it necessary for him to create these letters?
32. What is Homer's dilemma at this time?
33. Why does Dr. Larch give fatherly kisses to all the boys?

Chapter 7 Before the War

1. What had Melony experienced in her search for Homer up to this point? How does she defend herself and gain somewhat of a reputation?
2. Why does the foreman allow her to stay after her attack?
3. What are their responses when she tells the workers at York Farm that she is looking for her boyfriend?
4. What were the Cider House Rules? Why were they put up?
5. Why does Homer go up on the cider house roof? What does he find there?
6. Why does Grace Lynch attack Homer in the vat?
7. What does the Worthington family and Dr. Larch deduce from Senior Worthington's outrageous behavior? Why is Senior Worthington happy about the diagnosis? What do the workers at Ocean View call it?
8. Why did Mrs. Worthington offer Homer a permanent place to stay?
9. What are Homer's immediate plans for education?
10. Why didn't Homer think that Snowy Meadow's suggestion of a reunion was a good idea?
11. What signs are there that Dr. Larch is being pressurized by the board of trustees?
12. How is Dr. Larch able to falsify transcripts for Fuzzy Stone from Bowdoin Harvard Medical School and have them sent to St. Cloud's?
13. What obvious signs are there that Dr. Larch is suffering from exhaustion?
14. What are Wally's plans for the future? What did he make Homer promise while he was away at college?
15. What are the common rules regarding sex according to Debra Pettigrew?
16. What are Homer's views on sexual intimacy?
17. What signs are there that Homer may have a photographic memory?
18. Why did Candy actually get pregnant? How does Homer perceive evil?
19. What does the following quote from *David Copperfield* mean to Homer? "*I have stood aside to see phantoms of those days go by me. They are gone, and I resume the journey of my story*".
20. Describe Homer's biology class.
21. Why does Dr. Larch cry at "Clara's", the cadaver's, funeral?
22. What made Dr. Larch furious with regards to the questionnaire the board of trustees insisted that each adopted orphan was to fill out? How does Dr. Larch reply through Fuzzy?
23. What was Homer's reaction to the questionnaire?
24. What was remarkable about Arthur Rose? Why do they call him Mr. Rose?
25. What was the picking crew at York Farm like? How did the crew boss, Rather, differ from Mr. Rose?
26. Why did the men at York Farm resent Melony but knew better than to mess with her?
27. What happens when Melony is asked to read from *Jane Eyre*? Why does she start crying?
28. How does Mr. Rose threaten one of his crew workers at Ocean View after the man drops a cigarette into the cider vat?
29. Why does the crew think Homer is a good story teller when they are on top of the cider house roof?
30. Why does Mr. Rose want to see the Ferris wheel in Cape Kenneth? What takes plave while they are there?
31. What does Mr. Rose do with his knife at the carnival?

Chapter 8 Opportunity Knocks

1. Why did Melony stay on at York Farm?
2. When did she decide to leave? Where did she go? How did crew feel about her leaving?
3. What does Candy think Wally is selfish?
4. What did Homer master better at school than Mr. Hood, the science teacher?
5. How did Snowy Meadows and Curly Day answer the “Goodhall-Gingrich” questionnaire?
6. What does Dr. Larch write to Homer regarding Homer’s heart condition and the questionnaire?
7. Why are Homer’s so-called heart condition and the mention of stress so ironic at this point to Homer?
8. Why is it hard for Homer to choose between St. Cloud’s and Ocean View?
9. Why does Dr. Larch keep on lying?
10. Does Homer answer the questionnaire?
11. Why does Homer find his Senior Biology class so daunting?
12. What was the work at the shipyard like for Melony?
13. What does Melony tell Lorna about her relationship with Homer?
14. Why did Melony become so attached to Lorna?
15. How do Homer, Candy, Melony, Lorna and Mary Agnes all end up in Bath at the same time?
16. What happens when Homer opens his wallet to pay for tickets in wind? How does Candy react? What does Homer divulge? What are their plan?
17. Why does Homer think he is having a heart attack?
18. When Mary Agnes sees Melony, why is she surprised that Melony is not with Homer?
19. Why did Melony return the barrette that she took from Mary Agnes?
20. How do people react to Pearl Harbor being bombed?
21. How did Homer get out of military duty?
22. Why didn't Candy accept Wally's proposal of marriage?
23. What is the main topic of conversation during Christmas dinner?
24. Where does the military send Wally during this chapter?
25. Why is he a terrible letter writer? What does he ask Candy to do in his letters to her?
26. Why did people at Ocean View start to take care of Homer?
27. What does Lorna say to Melony when she is about to leave the shipyard in Bath?
28. What does Dr. Larch feel he had accomplished concerning Homer?
29. What is Melony’s impression of Curly Day, Roy Rinfret, when she meets him working at Ice Cream parlor? Why do they both resent Homer? How many people are actually looking for Homer at this point?
30. What do Candy and Wally do for the war effort?
31. What did Homer think of the obstetrical procedures at Cape Kenneth Hospital?
32. What was Nurse Caroline's answer to the over use of ether at Cape Kenneth’s Hospital?
33. What does Homer do when a sailor comes in with a knife slash?
34. Why does Homer focus so much on “rules” in this chapter?
35. What rank did Wally finally hold?
36. Why does Homer think he has a right to ask Candy and Wally anything he wants to know?
37. What does Candy say when Homer asks her if she loves Wally?
38. What happens to Wally at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 9 Over Burma

1. Why could the Worthington family feel optimistic regarding Wally's missing

plane, *Opportunity Knocks*?
2. How did people react to Wally missing in action?
3. What advice does Dr. Larch give Homer regarding romantic love, compromise and being of use?
4. Why did the sounds of restless children at Cape Kenneth Hospital soothe Homer?
5. What significance does Meany Hyde put on the birth of his new baby?
6. Why is Homer better at accepting Wally's undefined status?
7. What takes place at Cape Kenneth Hospital when Dr. Harlow refuses to perform an abortion? What does Nurse Caroline usually do?
8. How do Homer and Dr. Harlow differ with regards to keeping the rules?
9. What do they hear from the crew of *Opportunity Knocks*? Where was Wally?
10. When in August of 194_ Burma officially declares war against Great Britain and the United States, why does Candy want to find a new place to sit on the dock?
11. During the summer, what does Dr. Larch write to the Roosevelts?
12. What was Olive Worthington's dilemma regarding Homer, Candy and Wally?
13. What does Ray Kendall feel about the situation Candy, Wally and Homer were in?
14. When Homer and Candy finally have sex, what does Mrs. Worthington think Homer's sound of release is?
15. What was Dr. Larch's opinion on love being safe? Why does the text COMMON MISUSES OF THE PROPHYLACTIC come up with Dr. Larch's discussion on if love is safe?
16. What is meant by Homer and Candy sharing "both a love and a grief"?
17. What else would Homer and Candy have to wait and see?
18. Why weren't Dr. Larch and the remaining orphans glad to see David Copperfield adopted?
19. What takes place in Dr. Larch's ether dreams?
20. Why don't the people of Maine talk about Candy's pregnancy?
21. What does Ray Kendall feel about the love between Candy and Homer?
22. Why was Candy afraid of Olive Worthington?
23. What excuses do they give people for escaping to St. Cloud's to have the baby?
24. Who influenced Homer with regards to his telling lies? Why?
25. Why is Homer puzzled by Debbie Pettigrew's hostility towards his and Candy's friendship? 26. Why would the journey to St. Cloud's symbolize Home's freedom from St. Cloud's?
27. How do the reactions of the nurses and Dr. Larch to the birth of Candy's baby differ?
28. How do Mrs. Worthington and Ray react when Homer tells them that he and Candy are both going to St. Cloud's?
29. Why didn't Homer think he was really betraying Mrs. Worthington?
30. How do the superstitions of the female workers at Ocean View predict what Wally's fate will be?
31. How is Candy received at St. Cloud's?
32. Why was Homer forced to deliver a baby at St. Cloud's after the Thanksgiving party?
33. What does Dr. Larch mean when he says that Homer does not need to go to medical school to be a doctor here?
34. How does Homer feel about abortion at this stage?
35. Why was this Christmas considered the best ever at St. Cloud's?
36. What did Homer discover when he went down to the boys' division?
37. What does Lorna demand of Melony if they are to stay together? How would this influence Melony's rage?
38. What does Homer intend to plant at St. Cloud's?

39. Who delivers Candy's baby? What is the child called?
40. What was in the telegram Olive sent to Homer and Candy?
41. Why can we call Wally's escape an adventure story? What does Dr. Larch compare Wally's journey to?
42. What does Homer write in answer to Olive's telegram?
43. What do Homer and Dr. Larch argue about?
44. When they return to Ocean View, why is Homer filled with guilt?
45. Why was Ray building a torpedo?
46. Why can't Homer and Candy tell Wally the truth?
47. Why does Homer insist that one day they must tell Angel the truth about his parentage?

Chapter 10 Fifteen Years

1. How long had Lorna and Melony been a couple? Who was the handy one and who was the domestic one?
2. Why didn't Lorna fight back?
3. How had Melony changed at the age of forty-something?
4. Why did she break the college boy's nose?
5. What does Melony do when Lorna says she is pregnant? What does she hand Lorna to give to Mrs. Grogan at St. Cloud's?
6. What was in the newspaper article that Melony had put in the antique framed?
7. Sum up Homer's life for the past 15 years? How had he changed the cider house rules?
8. Why do Mr. Rose and his crew deface and refuse to obey the cider house rules? Why does Homer continue to put them up each year?
9. What were the rules regarding Angel that Candy and Homer agreed to 15 years ago?
10. What does family mean to Homer?
11. Why couldn't the board of trustees find a replacement for Dr. Larch?
12. How did Mrs. Goodhall and Dr. Gingrich plan to replace Dr. Larch? What label did they attach to him?
13. How do Mrs. Goodhall and Dr. Gingrich and Homer and Candy misinterpret each other at the hotel in Ogunquit?
14. Which new nurse comes to St. Cloud's in the nick of time? Why did she come? Who had sent her?
15. What was in the gift from Melony?
16. Why did Dr. Larch have trouble with the word, "angel"? What was his opinion of "honesty in relationships"?
17. What was Angel Wells like at the age of 15?
18 Why did Homer tell his son that he had no reason to feel adopted?
19. When Olive Worthington is dying of cancer, what are her last word to Candy? What is said in her drug-related confusion?
20. According to Dr. Larch, why doesn't Angel really need to know who his real father is?
21. What were some of the rules regarding Wally?
22. What is Homer's advice to Angel with regards to "rules"?
23. What was Homer's life like during this period? How does everyone take to his running Ocean View?
24. How do Candy and Wally react to Angel's interest in the medical literature that Homer reads?
25. How had Ray Kendall died? Why did Candy feel guilty?
26. What was Dr. Larch's opinion of religion?
27. Although Nurse Caroline and Dr. Larch agree that women should be able to have abortions, they disagree on it becoming legal. Explain?
28. Does Wally know that Homer is Angel's father? What event brings up the question?

29. What did Candy make Homer promise if she got pregnant again? What precautions had they taken over the years?
30. Why did Homer ask Dr. Larch to send him medical equipment? What did Dr. Larch think he wanted it for?
31. How did sex and love differ to Homer?
32. What was Wally's reaction to Homer's slip of the tongue when he refers to Candy as Angel's mother? What does this prove?
33. What does Mrs. Goodhall accuse Dr. Larch and Nurse Caroline of? How does Larch respond to this?
34. What unexpected question does Angel ask Homer during their conversation about masturbation?
35. Why is Melony surprised when she arrives at Ocean View and sees Angel? How does the situation at this point prove to be awkward for all of them? How does Melony behave?
36. What impact did Melony have on Angel?
37. Why does Melony demonstrate grief and disappointment instead of rage and anger towards Homer?
38. Why did Melony's theft of the questionnaire alarm Homer?
39. Why is telling the truth to Angel and Wally so important to Homer at this point?
40. At the ball game, what is it that Wally says he misses most? What does he thank Homer for?
41. What answer does Homer give when Angel asks him "What's the thing you love best and the best thing you ever did"?
42. What was in the package Dr. Larch sent Homer the same day Melony arrived?
43. What does Candy fear most about revealing the truth about Angel's parentage?
44. What becomes so clear to Homer at this point?
45. What is Dr. Larch's final plan for St. Cloud's? How does he accomplish his final vision with the help of the nurses? What does the entire plan revolve around?
46. What final arguments regarding abortion does Dr. Larch use to bring Homer back to St. Cloud's?

Chapter 11 Breaking the Rules

1. What is Melony's opinion of Homer when she returns to Bath? Why does she think he is no longer a hero? What are her thoughts concerning men?
2. What does Lorna's "sexual entanglement", Bob, do to Melony at the pizza bar?
3. Why do Melony and Lorna move back together? Why won't Melony press charges against Bob?
4. How old was Mr. Rose's daughter, Rose?
5. What evidence is there that Mr. Rose knows what Homer and Candy were doing in the cider house together?
6. Why are the number of times Homer and Candy made love since Wally came back from the war significant?
7. Why does Angel fall in love with Rose Rose? Why didn't he like the girls in Heart's Rock and Heart's Haven?
8. Why does Angel start taking such an interest in Rose Rose's baby, her teething and naming her? What does reciting baby names really mean for Angel and Rose Rose?
9. Why does Mr. Rose throw a pebble at Angel?
10. What different problem was Dr. Larch facing?
11. What does Dr. Larch's ether dream consist of?
12. What does Nurse Caroline write to Homer in her letter?

13. Why are Candy and Wally concerned about Angel's infatuation with Rose Rose?
14. What was one of Mr. Rose's rules concerning the crew hurting each other?
15. Why did Rose Rose warn Angel not to get involved with her? Who was the baby's father? 16. When Rose Rose receives a black eye, why won't Mr. Rose admit it to Angel?
17. What does Angel discover on Rose Rose's back when he takes her swimming? What does Muddy warn Angel about?
18. Why won't Candy,Wally and Homer report what is happening to Rose Rose to the police? What examples of racism do we find in this chapter?
19. What had Melony written to Homer? Why hadn't she filled out the questionnaire?
20. What does Homer specify in his answer to Dr. Larch and Nurse Caroline? What is Dr. Larch's rebuttal to Homer's letter?
21. What type of ether dream does Dr. Larch experience after delivering the letter to the stationmaster? What causes Dr. Larch's death? How do the nurses at St. Cloud's interpret his death?
22. When Homer tries to discuss rules with Mr. Rose in order to approach the question of Rose Rose's mutilation, what does Mr. Rose pull out of his pocket?
23. Why is Irving's description of the bike riding lesson important to this chapter?
24. Why is Angel's description of the future to Rose Rose so unrealistic?
25. What is Homer's advice to Angel when he tells Homer that Rose Rose wants an abortion? 26. Who tells Homer the news that Dr. Larch is dead when Homer calls St. Cloud's? How does this seal Homer's fate?
27. According to Homer, how would he "be a hero"?
28. What story does Homer tell Angel about helping Dr. Larch?
29. Why were the picking crew men on top of the cider house roof? Why had they refused to speak to Candy? What was the sound she had heard?
30. What does Mr. Rose say to Rose Rose when Candy takes her out of the cider house bunk room?
31. What had Mr. Rose done to the father of her baby girl? Why?
32. Why does Homer finally make up his mind to give Rose Rose an abortion? What does he realize during the operation?
33. What old story regarding love does Wally tell Angel?
34. Why does Homer like babies so much?
35. Why does Homer ask for Nurse Angela to stall the meeting with the board of trustees? 36. How had Melony taken her revenge on Bob for breaking her arm and nose?
37. Why did Mr. Rose go on strike? What does he want?
38. How is Homer breaking Mr. Rose's rules? Whose rules is Homer following
39. Why does Muddy ask Angel to give Rose Rose his knife? Why did she leave?
40. What does Muddy point out to Angel when Angel says he loves Rose Rose?
41. Why did Mr. Rose die of? How did he make it look like suicide?
42. What "whole story" does Homer finally tell Angel? Where are Candy and Wally at the time?
43. How does Homer, as Dr. Stone, fool the board of trustees?
44. Describe his new persona.
45. Why had Melony sent her cadaver to Homer/Dr. Stone? How had she died?
46. Who were the real Princes of Maine, Kings of England?

Literary Analysis
Literary Analysis to The Cider House Rules by John Irving

Setting

Settings and descriptions of various milieus play an important role in this novel.

1. During what periods in time does the story take place?
2. How do the settings and seasonal changes affect the overall atmosphere of the story?
3. How do the seasonal changes affect the characters? Give examples.
4. Describe St. Cloud's, Heart's Haven, Heart's Rock, Ocean View Apple Orchard and York Farm.

Characterization

1. Make a character table of the following major characters using the character traits below: *Dr. Wilbur Larch, Nurse Edna, Nurse Angela, Mrs. Grogan, Homer Wells, Melony, Candy Kendall, Wally Worthington, Olive Worthington*.

• Age and physical appearance
• Personality traits
• Strengths and weaknesses
• Stereotype
• Static character/developing character

2. What do they symbolize?
3. What is it that you like or dislike about them?
4. What picture do they give of human nature?
5. Who are the villains in the story?
6. Who are the heroes/heroines

• What side of human nature do they represent?

7. Which minor characters did you like or dislike the most. Why or why not?

Plot and Structure

1. Sum up the plot of the story

• Explain any symmetry in the plot of the story

2. How is the novel structured?

• Include the various periods of Homer's life

3. Turning points

• Where do they take place?
• Where does the climax take place? Why?

Conflict or tension

What is/are the main conflict/s in the story?

Tragedy

1. Which scenes or episodes can be said to be most tragic?
2. Which scenes are the most violent?

Humor

Which scenes or episodes can be said to be humorous?

Suspense

1. What elements does Irving use to build up suspense in the novel?
2. Which scenes are the most exciting?

Narrators and Point of View

1. Who are the narrators of the story?
2. How do they differ in point of view?
3. Does the author speak through them?

Theme

Choose one of the following themes and write an essay where you discuss and exemplify

• defining and breaking rules
• abortion vs. abandoned children
• the right to choose
• good and evil
• violence and injustice against women
• child abuse
• love triangles
• homosexuality
• incest

how the theme is developed in the novel.

Style

1. Language
• Dialogue and slang.

Are there any special characteristics to the way the different characters speak? Can you find any stock phrases or expressions that are individual to our characters which show their social status, working conditions or level of education?

2. Tone
• Describe the tone of the story
• Are there any shifts in tone during the novel?

3. Symbols
What do the following symbols or images represent?
• Ramses Paper Company
• the snake and hawk in Chapter 3
• the cider house rules
• the wind in Chapter 5
• the sea gull in Chapter 5
• the Bedouin in Chapter 6
• the Ferris wheel

Discussion

Discuss the following topics with a partner:

1. Are Dr. Larch's methods of bringing up orphans always wise? What would you do differently; if you were an administrator of an orphanage
2. Discuss the statements: delivering babies is considered "the Lord's Work" while performing abortions is considered "the Devil's Work".
3. Based on the quote from David Copperfield, *"Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show"*, discuss whether the orphans were actually heroes of their own lives? .
4. Discuss the significance of the book's title. What are the cider house rules? What message does Irving wish to present with regards to breaking or keeping them?
5. Discuss the impact Melony had on Homer and his future?

Writing

Essay

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay:
Diary Entry

Choose one of the characters and write an entry for his or her diary for one day.

Book Review

Write a book review as it would be presented in a literary magazine.

1. How are arguments for and against abortion presented through the characters of Dr. Larch, Homer Wells and Nurse Caroline in *The Cider House Rules*? Who do you agree or disagree with? Why/why not?
2. The rights of women to have abortions are questioned in *The Cider House Rules*. In what ways were various female characters able or unable to influence their situation?
3. Dr. Larch rewrites the history of St. Cloud's, gives Homer a false heart condition and changes school transcripts to create Dr. Fuzzy Stone. Discuss John Irving's treatment of lying in this novel?
4. Explain Irving's message of how race and class may affect a person's chances at happiness in life.
5. When Homer leaves St. Cloud's, a great portion of the novel is given to Dr. Larch's attempts at bringing him back to become his replacement. What event finally brings him back to St. Cloud's? Why do you think he finally accepts his calling?
6. John Irving mixes tragedy with black humor throughout his novels. Give examples where this takes place in The Cider House Rules. Why do you think he does this?
7. Searching for one's family is a theme that is quite prevalent in The Cider House Rules. Discuss how Irving defines" family" in this novel?
8. Irving quotes many passages from *Jane Eyre* to describe Melony's shifting moods. Find examples and discuss how she develops throughout the novel.

Write an Interview

Choose your favorite character and write an interview for TV or radio. Together with a partner, you may record the interview using a sound editor (e.g.audacity).

Project Work

Choose ONE of the following topics:

1. *Prepare a debate*. Today the debate in many countries is not whether a woman should have the right or not to have an abortion, but whether it is ethical to abort a fetus if it proves to have genetic disorders such as Downs Syndrome. Go online or search news media for authentic articles and information. Make up a manuscript for broadcasted interview or debate for a talk show for radio or TV where you take up the different sides to the problem. Record the actual debate

More About the Author

John W. Irving - the Author

John Winslow Irving, novelist, screenplay writer and lecturer, was born in 1942 in Exeter, New Hampshire. His biological father, John Wallace Blunt, whom he was first named after, was shot down over Burma during World War II. He survived but divorced John's mother. His mother, Frances Winslow Irving was remarried to a Russian history teacher at Phillip's Exeter Academy, Colin F.N. Irving. After his step-father adopted him when he was six, John's name was legally changed to John Winslow Irving. As a young student, he attended the same boys' prep school where his step-father taught. Having been diagnosed fairly late for his dyslexia, John W. Irving's academic accomplishments can only be described as mediocre. Nevertheless, he excelled in two subjects, writing and wrestling. John Irving has stated in several interviews that some of his greatest influences came from the loss of his biological father, his writing teacher and wrestling coach. The fact that he was brought up during his formative years by a single parent also influenced his writing. We recognize New

England's academic life, prep-schools and wrestling milieus as settings for many of his novels, i.e. *The World According to Garp* (1978), *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (1989) and *In One Person* (2012). He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of New Hampshire, and took his Masters of Fine Arts at the University of Iowa. It was here during the late 1960's at the University of Iowa Writers' that he studied with another famous author, Kurt Vonnegut. During the 1960's and 1970's, Irving both studied and worked at various universities as assistant professor, writer and teacher. While studying in Vienna, Austria he met his first wife, Shyla Leary, with whom he had two sons, but later divorced. His second marriage in 1987 was to Janet Turnball, a literary agent. His third son was born in 1998. Although his teaching ebbed over the years, his love of wrestling and coaching did not. In 1992 he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

John Irving's Novels
His first novels, *Setting Free the Bears* (1968), *The Water-Method Man* (1972) and *The 158-pund Marriage* (1974) did not receive much public acclaim. However, a great admirer of Charles Dickens even as a teenager, (his favorite book was *Great Expectations*), Irving focused on developing extremely complex plots and characters. In his breakthrough novel, *The World According to Garp* (1978), Irving pays great attention to the physical descriptions of his characters, their births, background, development, movements, dress, habits, education and death. The novel became an international bestseller and even achieved cult status. Irving kept to the Dickensian method of storytelling in his next novel, *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1981). An eccentric family saga comes to light as Irving mixes humor with themes of sexuality, incest, rape, cruelty and injustice. *The Cider House Rules* (1985) won critical acclaim and demonstrates the most obvious of Dickensian influences. As with many of his novels to come, addresses modern social issues through eccentric characters, unusual milieus and parallel storylines. *The Cider House Rules* is a sprawling epic centered on St. Cloud's Orphanage in New Hampshire, Maine. In this novel Irving writes about the controversial issues of abortion vs. abandoned children. Another novel set in New England, *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (1989), unfolds through the characters of John Wheelwright and his lifelong friend, dwarfish Owen Meany. Irving discusses faith in God and religious hypocrisy. Many of his novels have been often slaughtered by literary critics, only to become popular best sellers and made into film.

In the 90's John Irving published *A Son of the Circus* (1994) and *A Widow for One Year* (1998). In Irving's novel, Until I find You (2005), the main protagonist, Jack Burns, searches for his father in tattoo parlors around the world. Here Irving revealed biographical elements of his own life such as the fact that he had been sexually abused at the age of 11 and his search for his biological. Another novel, *Last Night in Twisted River* (2009), is about a boy and his father who escape the logging community of Twisted River, New Hampshire after a tragic accident. While on the run from a sadistic sheriff, the boy becomes a famous writer and novelist. His progress and development as a writer is said to mirror Irving's own. His most recent novel, *In One Person* (2012) focuses on the themes of bisexuality, transgender and AIDS. As readers we recognize recurring settings and elements used in other novels; nevertheless, John W. Irving's comments on modern social issues will always remain fresh in our minds.

Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman"

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" (97686)

Death of a Salesman is one of the world's most performed plays. It was first staged in New York in 1949, and has since then been performed continuously on stages world-wide. In all his writing, Arthur Miller speaks up for the underprivileged and the ordinary individual who is up against a harsh environment. His concern for people who are victimised by a capitalist society resulted in a suspicion of possible communist sympathies, which was a serious accusation in the USA in the 40s and 50s. He was cleared after having been investigated by the Un-American Activities Committee.

Introduction

Death of a Salesman is a genuine tragedy; the title clearly indicates where it is going to end. In a tragedy the protagonist is drawn into an escalating and fatal process inflicted either by a flaw in his own personality or by forces beyond his control.
Willy Loman is a traveling salesman working in the New England area. He is married to Linda, and they have two sons, Biff and Happy. Other characters include Charley, his down-to-earth neighbour and his son Bernard, his employer Howard Wagner and his late brother Ben who appears only in Willy's illusions.

Death of a Salesman
Fotograf: Bettmann

The structure of the play is somewhat complex as the action takes place on two time levels, in 1928 and 1942. This poses a challenge both for the setting of the stage and for the audience. But there are ways of giving the setting a suggestive form that will indicate what goes on and when. But there is another problem – Willy Loman is unable to distinguish between illusion and reality, which is apparent in his conversations with his dead brother. Hence the setting and the use of lighting are important to give the audience the correct idea of time and illusion versus reality.

Motifs

Technically the play offers a number of motifs. (A motif is a recurring element which will work as a unifying device and enhance the idea of the work.) The most significant motifs are:

1. Being well liked / personal attractiveness. Throughout the play Willy Loman refers to the importance of being well liked.
2. The stealing motif. Biff's stealing and how Willy deals with it cause the climax of the play.
3. Vital to New England. This is one of the illusions Willy has built up for himself, and when he gets fired the irony is striking.
4. The time motif. "The woods are burning" – time is running out for Willy.
5. The debt motif. This is the tragic driving force – Willy has all the time been borrowing money from Charley pretending it to be his wages, and when he dies he is almost clear of debt.
6. All used up. Willy complains of how things go broke once they are paid for. Ironically, the day the house is paid for, Willy's life is also used up.
7. Boxed in. This symbolically expresses how Willy is gradually crushed by the forces around him.

The character Ben is also a recurring element who is introduced as Willy's idolised and successful counterpart.

Follow the links for a brief scene by scene plot summary and comment, and some suggested topics for essay writing on the play.

Death of a Salesman - Act 1

Death of a Salesman - Act 2

Death of a Salesman - Topics for Essay Writing

Alice Munro

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Alice Munro (128415)

Canadian author, Alice Munro, is a master of the short story. She won the Nobel Prize in Literature 2013 as the first Canadian.

Alice Munro is a Canadian short story writer born in Wingham, Ontario, Canada in 1931. She has won Canada's Governor General's Award for fiction several times, the Man Booker International Prize in 2009 and the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013 – the first Canadian and only the 13th woman to do so. She has been hailed as a master of the short story.

The setting of her stories is Huron County in Ontario, a rural, agricultural area on the banks of Lake Huron. She writes about everyday human hardships and dilemmas with which her readers easily identify.

She has had 14 collections of short stories published. Her first collection "Dance of the Happy Shades" was published in 1968 and the latest one "Dear Life" in 2012. "The View from Castle Rock" from 2006 is inspired by her family's Scottish ancestry.

Read one of her short stories: Red Dress (dramatization)

You can read 17 of her short stories free online (some require free sign up): Alice Munro - Short Stories

Further Information

Alice Munro - Wikipedia

Alice Munro - Guardian Article, October 2013

About Alice Munro - from The Star, October 23, 2013

Alice Munro - Where She Found Her Stories

Doris Lessing

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen
Doris Lessing (129384)

Doris Lessing

Doris Lessing comes fifth in The Times list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

The British author, Doris Lessing, was born in Iran to British parents on 22 October 1919 and died 17 November 2013. Her family moved to the former colony of Southern Rhodesia, today's Zimbabwe, when Doris was six years old, and she grew up in Africa. After two failed marriages, she moved to London, England in 1949.

Her novels and short stories cover a wide range of themes, such as communism, social issues, feminism and psychology: "They ranged from the problems of post-colonial Africa to the politics of nuclear power, the emergence of a new woman's voice and the spiritual dimensions of 20th century civilization." (*The Guardian*, Sunday 17 November 2013) She won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007.

You can read more about Doris Lessing and listen to some interviews she gave to *The Guardian* at the following links:
The Guardian Books - Doris Lessing
Doris Lessing, Five Best Novels

Here are links to two of her short stories:

"No Witchcraft for Sale" by Doris Lessing

"Through the Tunnel" by Doris Lessing

Modernism

Modernism - An Introduction

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Modernism - An Introduction (90032)

The first decade of the 20th century was like a calm before the storm in a century that was overshadowed by conflict and war all over the world. The dramatic events of the decades to come would hold a massive potential for inspiration and material for novelists, poets, and painters. But the fact is, most of the artists of modernism turned their backs to the chaos and turmoil around them, and sought inward for a new understanding of life and a new approach to art. “The lost generation” as they were called, had a dejected and pessimist attitude to the ways of the world, and their quest was to create something new.

Art for Art’s Sake

Terminology may be a good starting point for an understanding of Modernism. What is *contemporary* is what is going on at the moment. *Current* and *present* mean just about the same. But the word modern needs a counterpart to be meaningful; if something is *modern*, it is new compared to something which accordingly is not modern. And there is also a slight difference between the adjectives modern and modernist, because *modern* might simply mean what is new (as opposed to old fashioned), but *modernist* means an artistic expression belonging to what we call the modernist period. Hence, something modern is not necessarily modernist. The slogan of the modernists of the first half of the 21st century was “Break the rules and make it new!” They wanted to reinvent art, for the sake of art itself. Of course this was a demanding venture, for both artists and not least for their audience. The many forms of modernist art were enigmatic and obscure and would to some seem quite meaningless. Art became abstract and subjective and hard to grasp, but artists, both painters and writers did not seem to care if an audience would “understand” their work. The artistic process and its result was what counted, not being acclaimed and appreciated. Moreover, much of the art was provocative in its attempt to confront established and traditional ways and values.

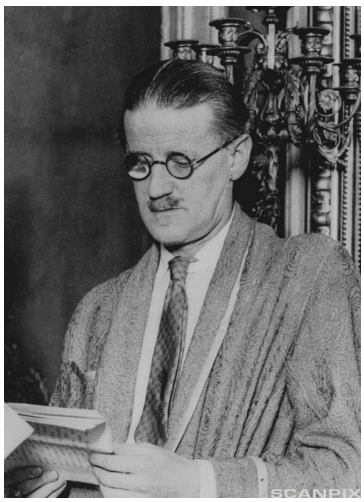
Female Image by Pablo Picasso

Images and Literature

Look up some paintings by Pablo Picasso, Henry Matisse or Salvador Dali. They will give you a fair idea of what was going on in both painting and literature during this epoch. Like the painters, the writers followed the experimental trend in their work. Literature became fragmented and introvert, presenting a plot more like a subjective experience rather than a comprehensible line of incidents. For example, the chronology of a narrative could be fragmented and reset in a new order, which would be rather confusing for the readers, but that was irrelevant. There was a new literary technique developed, called “stream of consciousness”, meaning that the reader follows the detailed and elusive thoughts and ideas running through the mind of a protagonist. Experimenting with punctuation was another way for the writers to challenge the established rules of writing. For example, how would you respond to a book with page upon page without punctuation and capitalization? The narrative would often be heavy with symbols and imagery making it even more difficult for the reader to comprehend. Also the poets broke with the rules. A poetic expression has usually demanded more of the reader than prose, in terms of language, but it has as a rule been recognised by certain criteria, like rhythm, rhyme, line structure and meter. But in modernist poetry it seems the slogan was “anything goes”. A modernist poem was more a subjective impression in lines, rather than a metaphoric reflection of an emotional experience or process. The modernist poets would for example make a poem out of simple everyday occasions and observations, things that readers normally would not see as poetic potential, or associate with poetry at all.

The Modernists

The modernist artists flocked to the cities where they grouped in communities, found mutual inspiration and presented their works for each other. Particularly Paris became the bohemian and artistic capital in Europe, but groups also gathered in London and New York. Many of the modernists were experimenting with other stuff than literature, taking substances of different sorts which were supposed to enhance their perception of life; it is a fact that many great works of art, particularly during modernism, have been conceived under some sort influence.



Irish writer James Joyce

Fotograf: AP

American poets were some of the most typical exponents of the modernist period; Ezra Pound, e.e. cummings, (note the omission of capital letters), Robert Frost and T.S. Eliot are the most famous. Both Pound and Eliot left the USA and joined artist communities in Europe. T.S Eliot's "The Waste Land" is probably the most extensive and famous poem in literary history. In modernist prose Ernest Hemingway stands out along with a line of prominent writers in America as well as in Britain. Hemingway's vast production includes novels, essays and short-stories. His famous "iceberg-technique" was his way of presenting a narrative where what is not told would often be more important than what is told. It is a subtle narrative technique that challenges the reader to see the underlying elements of his stories. William Faulkner is another American writer whose works exhibit the experimental and suggestive way of communicating a plot. His most famous volume and perhaps his most typical of the period is "The Sound and the Fury" where the plot is partly told through a mentally retarded protagonist with no sense of time. The Irish novelist, James Joyce, is arguably the most prominent exponent of the innovative literary quest of modernism. His massive "Ulysses" is a prime example of the stream of consciousness technique. In "Finnegan's Wake" he took his modernist project to the limit, violating the language into a narrative more or less unintelligible to the average reader. British D.H. Lawrence comes as a writer who wants to confront the old Victorian moralism. "Lady Chatterley's Lover" is his most famous novel, which was banned for a period because of its explicit sexuality. Lawrence's writing is an example of how the modernists wanted to provoke and to challenge the obsolete and prudish attitudes of the establishment. Other names are British Virginia Woolf, another of the "stream of consciousness" writers, Somerset Maugham, a brilliant short story writer, and George Orwell, whose disturbing "1984" and the allegoric "Animal Farm" have become world classics. On the brink of what we could call contemporary literature comes the genius of William Golding and American writers like James T. Farrell and John Updike. Golding is the author behind the disturbing and universal novel "The Lord of the Flies", about children stranded on an island trying to build a civilized community, with a very foreboding outcome.

Modernist Poetry

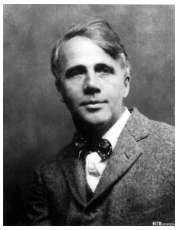
American Poetry - From Traditionalism to Modernism

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
American Poetry - From Traditionalism to Modernism (117411)

The European trend of modernist writing did not catch on in America until some decades into the 20th century, at least not in poetry. Until then American poetry seemed to lean on a more traditional concept of verse.

The Traditionalists

Three of the most prominent American poets of the late 19th century were Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935), Carl Sandburg (1869-1967) and Robert Frost (1874-1963). Their poetry was realistic and locally coloured, and their poetic language was colloquial and comprehensible, which is probably why they are three of America's most read and cherished poets.


Robert Frost

The European trend of modernist writing did not catch on in America until some decades into the 20th century, at least not in poetry. Until then American poetry seemed to lean on a more traditional concept of verse. Three of the most prominent American poets of the late 19th century were **Edwin Arlington Robinson** (1869-1935), **Carl Sandburg** (1869-1967) and **Robert Frost** (1874-1963). Their poetry was realistic and locally coloured, and their poetic language was colloquial and comprehensible, which is probably why they are three of America's most read and cherished poets. Follow the links below for more information about Robinson, Frost and Sandburg, and examples of their poetry.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Carl Sandburg

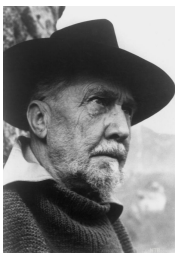
Robert Frost

A Different Approach

Reading modernist literature – and poetry in particular, may seem both confusing and difficult. The structure, language and enigmatic allusions become obstacles that will often make the reader give up and put the book down. However, a modernist text or poem may need a somewhat different approach than conventional literature. With a modernist text the reader is left without the usual aids of a logical plot and comprehensible composition. For example, what happens when parts of a narrative are told through a character with no sense of time? (William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, 1931) Modernist literature may take more effort from the reader, but on the other hand, the reading experience is more personal and there is no key answer as to how the text should be understood and appreciated. The point is what the text gives you of associations and emotions, and not primarily how the writer has meant it to be understood. It is, for example, perfectly alright to read "The Waste Land" without knowing the precise explanation of all T S Elliot's strange allusions, as it is quite possible to enjoy a modernist text without "understanding" it. Follow the link and read part one and two of "The Waste Land" by T S Elliot. (Read it first without checking the notes, and see if you enjoy it without the explanations.)

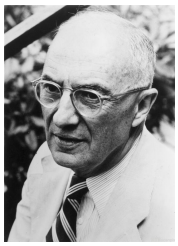
"The Waste Land" (Part One and Two)

Three American Modernists



American Poet Ezra Pound
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

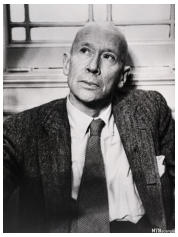
The interwar period was an extraordinarily rich period for American poetry. Various magazines and periodicals appeared as a scene for new poets whose poetry radically broke with the poetic style of the late 19th century. The new American poetry was experimental and original both in language, theme and composition. One of the most remarkable poets in this new wave of poetry was **Ezra Pound** (1885-1972), who became one of the leaders of the anti-romantic movement called Imagism. His innovative poetry presented visual everyday images in a concentrated and precise poetic context. Pound's oral, speaking-voice language also broke with every convention and traditional criteria of what poetic language should be like. His poetry brimmed with allusions and references to classic mythlogy and literature. Pound worked with and inspired T S Elliot, and Elliot's famous poem "The Waste Land" is dedicated to Ezra Pound - ("For Ezra Pound - il miglior fabbro / the better craftsman").



William Carlos Williams

William Carlos Williams' (1883-1963) poetic project was to see the extraordinary in ordinary and everyday observation. Like Pound he wrote in a spare and boiled down style, and rejected all traditional features of a poem, such as meter, stanza form and rhyme. In the beginning he was influenced by Ezra Pound and his Imagism, but gradually distanced himself from Pound's (and Elliot's) extensive use of classical allusions and what he saw as unneccesary use of German and Italian in their poetry. Williams' method was to express the poetic potential of "no ideas, but in things". See for example "This is Just to Say" on the link below.

Another of the new American poets was **e e cummings** (note the lack of capitalization), who took the concept of modernist poetry a step further. His poetry holds a clear visual element as the typographical arrangement of the poem and the unpredictable punctuation were often more important than the actual meaning of the poem itself. Cummings was also a painter, a fact that may explain the strong visual aspect of many of his poems. The poems "Ta", "One!", and "I Will Be" are good examples. Find them on the link below.



e.e. cummings

Fotograf: Bettmann

These links will give you access to the poetry of the three American modernist poets mentioned in the article.

Ezra Pound

William Carlos Williams

e e cummings

Four Selected Poems by William Butler Yeats

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Four Selected Poems by William Butler Yeats (99387)

"The Song of the Wandering Aengus" is perhaps Yeats's most famous and cherished poem. It belongs in his early production and is a clear resonance of the Celtic elements that dominated literature in the so-called Irish Renaissance. Aengus is the Celtic god for youth, beauty and poetry.

The Song of the Wandering Aengus (1899)

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the ground
I went to blow the fire a-flame,
But something made a rustling sound
and some one called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
who called med by my name and ran
And faded trough the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappeled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon
the golden apples of the sun.

"The Hosting of the Sidhe" is another poem with clear Celtic references. Knocknarea is a hill overlooking County Sligo, Yeats's home county. The other names are legendary figures from Celtic mythology.

The Hosting of the Sidhe (1899)

The host is riding from Knocknarea
And over the grave of Clooth-na-bare
Caoilte tossing his burning hair,
Niamh calling Away, come away
Away, come away
Away…

The winds awake, leaves whirl around,
Our cheeks are pale our hair unbound,
Our brests a-heave, our eyes a-gleam

Empty your heart of its mortal dream!

Our arms a-wave, our lips apart,
And if any should gaze upon our band
We come between him and the hope of his heart,
We come between him and the deed of his hand!
The host is riding 'twixt night and day
And where is there hope and deed as fair?

Caoilte tossing his burning hair;
Niamh calling Away, come away
Away, come away
Away…

Compare

Compare the imagery of the two first poems with the two next ones, which are from Yeats' later production.

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death (1919)

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above:
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor;
No likely end could bring them loss
or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balance all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

Politics (1939)

How can I, that girl standing there,
My attention fix
On Roman or on Russian or on Spanish politics?
Yet here's a travelled man who knows
What he talks about,
And there's a politician
that has read and thought.

And maybe what they say is true
Of war and war alarms,
But O that I were young again
And held her in my arms.

The Waste Land by Thomas Stearns Eliot

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Waste Land by Thomas Stearns Eliot (108340)

It seems to be generally accepted that modernist poetry is difficult to understand; in many cases that may very well be so. However, “understanding” poetry is not always the point. A poem will speak not only to your intellect, but also to your emotions and imagination. So a poem may still be beautiful and evocative even if you don’t “understand” it. Many modernist poems fall into that category; and for many readers "The Waste Land" by T S Eliot is most likely one of them.

Thomas Stearns Eliot

Eliot was born in the USA in 1888. He was an extraordinarily bright boy, and received his first education at Harvard. He later studied and taught at universities in Paris and Oxford. His main interests were philosophy, religion, metaphysics and Renaissance literature. During his stay in England, he married an English woman in 1915 and some years later he got a British citizenship. His first collection of poems was published in 1917. Eliot’s writing is in general clearly influenced by the modernist tradition, and much of his poetry is hard to come to grips with. Critics have claimed that Eliot’s imagery and poetic technique is “unnecessarily obscure”, but even so most critics and theorists agree that T. S. Eliot is one of the most remarkable and influential writers of the 20th century. Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948; he died in 1965.

Thomas Stearns Eliot
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

The Waste Land

Possibly equaled by James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, "The Waste Land" is said to be one of the most important works of modern English literature. It is not always fair to compare different genres or works of art and thereby set the standards by which such rankings are done. But the rich imagery and the many allusions and references to classic mythology and writing certainly put the poem in a league of its own. The poem was published in 1922, and as the title indicates, it is a pessimistic observation of Western civilization – a land laid waste after World War I, and inhabited by depraved people with no sense of good and evil; half dead or half living. T. S. Eliot’s writing, and this poem in particular, became a standard for other modernist poets, among them Bob Dylan, who in his early career was influenced by Eliot’s imagery and poetic style. T. S. Eliot has dedicated his poem to his friend and colleague, the American poet Ezra Pound.
"The Waste Land" is a long poem consisting of five parts, out of which the two first ones are presented here. Even if you don’t “understand” it all – try and focus on the big picture as you let the mood, the images, and the poetic language rise into an entity. After each stanza, you will find some notes that may be helpful for a better understanding of the poem.

"The Waste Land" (Part One and Two)

"The Waste Land" - Looking for a Meaning

Langston Hughes

Forfatter: Barbara og Åge Rendalen, NRK
Langston Hughes – The African American Poet (16612)

Pre-reading activity: Which coloured American writers and actors do you know? What have they achieved through their career?

Langston Hughes – The African American Poet / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/19023

By Barbara and Åge Rendalen

Langston Hughes was the first black American to make a living as a professional writer and one of the first black authors to receive serious critical attention from the white literary world.

Langston Hughes Lincoln University 1928

From the mid 1920s to his death in 1967, he wrote more than sixty books. His literary production covers a wide field: journalism, novels, short stories and plays, but today he is above all remembered for his poetry and in this program, that is what we'll focus on.

Langston Hughes began writing poetry in his teens and eighteen years old, he penned his first masterpiece, The Negro Speaks of Rivers, as he crossed the Mississippi by train on his way to see his father in Mexico.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Langston Hughes' father lived in Mexico. He was part white and was full of hatred for black people. He constantly urged his son to move south of the border to get a way from racism and American "niggers", as he so delicately put it. Langston turned from his father in disgust. "I hated my father" he would write many years later in his autobiography. This may help explain why such a light-skinned man as Langston Hughes would devote his poetic talents to the celebration of black culture at a time when other African-American artists would try to tone down their heritage.

In 1922, his father reluctantly paid for him to go to Columbia University, but Langston quit after one year and took a job as a seaman. On board the *West Hesseltine*, he spent the summer of 1923 trading up and down the west coast of Africa. Hughes was fascinated by Africa, but much to his chagrin, he discovered that Africans refused to believe that he was black. They insisted that he was a white man. The year after, again working as a seaman, he

jumped ship in Europe and headed for Paris, where he worked in a hotel for about a year before returning home.

Back in the States in 1925, his poems began to attract a great deal of attention, and in 1926 his first book, 'The Weary Blues', was published. In it, he introduced a number of poems that took their rhythm from black blues and jazz music rather than classical meter. This unique blend of black rhythms and poetry came to be a trademark of his. Here is an excerpt from the title poem, 'The Weary Blues', which he wrote as a 21 year old, after a visit to a Harlem cabaret:

From The Weary Blues

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
I heard a Negro play.

Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway .. .
He did a lazy sway .. .
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.

With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!

Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
O Blues!

Hand in hand with Langston Hughes' celebration of black culture went a lifelong commitment to the fight for equal rights. To Langston Hughes, America had been hijacked by its white population. Privilege had been hoarded by its pale majority and those of darker taint were banished to a twilight zone beyond the reach of the American Dream. "Being colored", he once wrote, "is like being born in the basement of life, with the door to the light locked and barred - and the white folks live upstairs".

The scandalous Scottsboro case in 1931 radicalized Hughes, and his racial poems became more aggressive in tone. For a few years, he threw caution to the wind and served his poetic summons on American racists with abandon. Even today we can feel the raw and the provocative power of his Scottsboro poem, 'Christ in Alabama', from 1931:

Langston Hughes never tired of the paradox that the United States, a country marinated in democratic ideals, should find it so easy to deny its political faith in racial matters. In the midst of the Depression, in 1935, Hughes summed up his feelings about his country in the poem, 'Let America Be America Again'. Here is a verse:

Christ is a nigger,
Beaten and black:
Oh, bare your back!

Mary is His mother:
Mammy of the South,
Silence your mouth.

God is His father:
White Master above
Grant Him your love.

Black Jesus

Most holy bastard
Of the bleeding mouth,
Nigger Christ
On the cross
Of the South.

0, let America be America again -
The land that never has been yet -
And yet must be -
The land where every man is free.
The land that's mine -
The poor man's, Indians' Negro's, ME -
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

During the war, he penned this little protest ditty:

You tell me that Hitler
Is a mighty bad man.
I guess he took his lessons
From the Ku Klux Klan.

Langston Hughes made frequent use of black American dialect in his poems. Many resented this because they felt it built up under the age-old stereotypes of blacks as illiterate and ignorant people.

But Hughes was determined to let the black voice sound true to life. Here is such a poem, which he wrote when he was twenty. A poor black mother who has worked hard all her life to make ends meet, admonishes her son not to give up.

Mother to Son

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor -
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinda hard.
Don't you fall now -
For I'se still goin', honey
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes himself was not ready to listen to good advice from his own parents. His father was a racist who had not wanted him to become a writer, and his mother was too wrapped up in her own failed career as an actress to care for her son. She only began to take an interest in him when his writing started paying off and she made life miserable for him by her incessant pleas for money.

Not everything Langston Hughes wrote was great art. His interest in radical politics and the civil rights campaign tended to turn many of his poems into political pamphlets. Other poems are mere rhymes and ditties intended to bring a laugh. Like this one:

Little Lyric (of great importance)

I wish the rent
Was heaven sent.

Or this one:

Bad Morning

Here I sit
With my shoes mismated.
Lawdy-mercy
I's frustrated.

Hughes was not embarrassed by color. In his poem, 'Harlem Sweeties', for instance, he revels in all the colors of the black rainbow as he describes the local beauties.

Harlem Sweeties

The African-American community had hoped that World War II would be the decicisive event that would put an end to segregation and discrimination. Americans would be bound to realize, they thought, that you can't fight for democracy overseas without extending its privileges to your own population. You can't go to war against tyranny abroad and yet tolerate it at home. And yet the nation did so. The war ended without major changes in the legal standing of American blacks. They were still banned from most occupations and in the South, they still couldn't vote. Once more their dream of a just society had to be deferred. In 1951 Hughes delved into this theme in his poem 'Harlem'.

black beauty

Harlem

Brown sugar lassie,
Caramel treat,
Honey-gold baby
Sweet enough to eat.
Peach-skinned girlie,
Coffee and cream,
Chocolate darling
Out of a dream.
Walnut tinted
Or cocoa brown,
Pomegranate lipped
Pride of the town.
Rich cream colored
To plum-tinted black,
Feminine sweetness
In Harlem's no lack.
Glow of the quince
To blush of the rose.
Persimmon bronze
To cinnamon toes.
Blackberry cordial,
Virgina Dare wine -
All those sweet colors
Flavor Harlem of mine!

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore -
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over -
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

It did indeed explode. Four years later, in Birmingham, Alabama, Martin Luther King lit the fuse of a civil rights bomb that was to rock the South and the nation as a whole, when it went off in the 1960s.

Langston Hughes died in 1967, a couple of years after the Congress had passed the landmark civil rights legislation that was to be the crowning achievement of the African-American Civil Rights Movement. To Hughes, it must have been an immensely satisfying experience to see the white day drawing to an end.

Vocabulary 16612 / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/123612

Modernist Prose

"A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
"A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner. A Short Story (108274)

Introduction to the Text

“A Rose for Emily” (1930) is set in the Southern town of Jefferson in Yoknapatawpha County. Faulkner borrows many elements from the Southern Gothic tradition. It is a story of the macabre and horrifying. The atmosphere is moody and foreboding. There is a feeling of decay as described in the crumbling old mansion. The character of Emily Grierson, the Southern belle of the OLD South is much in distress. She is victimized by the restriction society has placed on her. A symbol of post-Civil-War South, her appearance changes over time. She becomes grotesque in appearance, thought and deed. Tyrannized by her Grandfather and Father, Emily’s fight against conformity and the changes taking place in the new South lead her to commit murder. We gain insight into Emily’s character through the eyes of the townspeople, the aldermen and different members of the new South. Unyielding to the physical changes in Jefferson, she refuses to accept death and her insanity and sexual deviation are revealed at the end of the story.

"A Rose for Emily"

William Faulkner - The Author

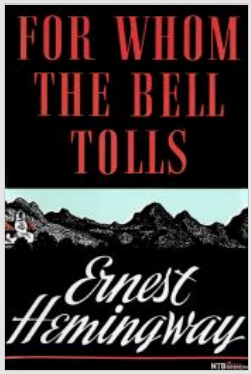
Tasks to "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner

Indian Camp by Ernest Hemingway

Forfatter: Morten Serkland
Indian Camp by Ernest Hemingway (132493)

"Indian Camp" is a short story by Ernest Hemingway. It was released in 1925 in Hemingway's very first collection of stories. This is one of the first stories where the protagonist and narrator Nick appears. In this story young Nick acquires new knowledge about where babies come from.

Hemingway



For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

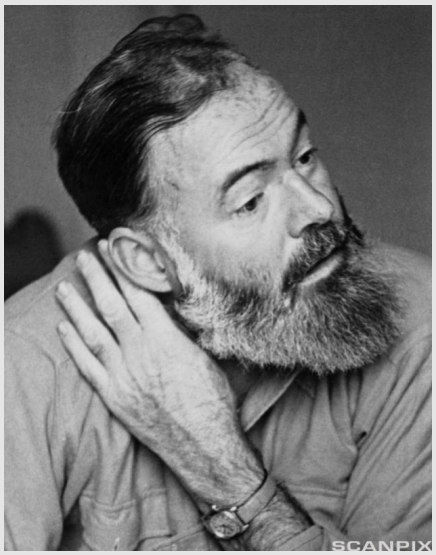
Meet Nick in one more Hemingway short story (dramatized)

The Killers

Resources

Ernest Hemingway

Analysis of Indian Camp



Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1899 - 1961) started his writing career as a seventeen-year-old reporter in a Kansas City newspaper. During the First World War he volunteered as an ambulance driver in Italy. He was severely injured and spent a long period stuck in a hospital bed. This incident provided the setting for one of his most famous novels *A Farewell to Arms.* The wounded, courageous hero disillusioned by the war and the brutality of modern society soon became Hemingway's trademark. His preoccupation with bullfighting and deep sea fishing is also evident in his stories. As a war correspondent during the Spanish Civil War and a reporter, he developed a particular style of writing characterized by spare dialogues and understatements.

The protagonist, Nick, is with his young and vulnerable appearance, one of Hemingway's favorite characters. He appears in many stories in which he is often exposed to cruelty that he has to find a grown-up way to cope with. In this short story he is on his way to an Indian camp where one of the women is going to give birth. If Nick ever thought babies were delivered by storks, his experience this night crushes the illusion. This is also the night where he learns how fragile life is.

Indian Camp by Ernest Hemingway / fagstoff

http://ndla.no/en/node/132493

Tasks

About Genre

1. The story opens like this:
   "At the lake shore there was another rowboat drawn up. The two Indians stood waiting."
   What effect does this opening have? What do we call this kind of opening? Why do short stories often open in this way?
2. Typical for Ernest Hemingway's writing is his ability to express essential matters in very few words. Read the text closely, and give

some examples. What effect does this technique have on the reader?
3. If you read about his personal background, do you think there is anything in his life that inspired this minimalistic style?
4. Poets are often obliged to use a concise writing style. How does this text differ from a poem?
5. The story has many common features with a blog. What is similar and what is different?

About Point of View

- What is Hemingway's point of view in "Indian Camp"? How do you think a different point of view would have changed the story?
- How would the story differ if the story was narrated by Nick's father or Uncle George?
- Choose one paragraph and rewrite it by replacing the point of view. Does it make the story more interesting?

About Theme

1. Here are some words that may describe possible themes in "Indian Camp". Have a look at them and rank them according to how important you find them:
   - new life
   - relationships
   - safety
   - growing up
   - suffering
   - death
   - gender roles
   - cultural differences
2. Give reasons for your ranking. Compare your list with the ranking of some of your fellow students. Discuss the differences.
3. How do the grown-ups in the story look upon the Native Americans? Do Nick's father and Uncle George act differently? Find examples in the text to illustrate your points.

Role Play

Sit in groups of three. One of you is Nick, the others are friends who ask Nick questions about what happened that night. When answering the questions, Nick should include actual events, his emotions and reactions.
After you have talked together in the role play, go out of your roles and analyze the following:

- Was there anything that was difficult to talk about?
- Is Nick's experience a good way to learn about life and death?
- What did you learn about cultural differences in this story?
- Explain Nick's feelings at the end of the story.
- Give a characterization of Nick's father
- From whom and how do children and young people learn attitudes and values?

Writing

1. Make a blog entry where you post your thoughts about a defining moment where you as a child realized what the adult world was about. Suggested title: No Child Any More
2. Find other Hemingway stories where Nick appears as a protagonist and narrator. What do the stories have in common? How would you characterize Nick? Why do you think Hemingway uses Nick to convey his message? Is Nick any different from teenagers today? Write an essay.

The Killers

Forfatter: NRK, Eli M. Huseby
The Killers (19017)

What kind of stories and films do you find exciting? Do you think action and horror are important to make a good story?

This is a story by Ernest Hemingway where his favorite protagonist, young Nick, has to deal with two guys that are more than ready to kill.

Ernest Hemingway (1899 - 1961) started his writing career as a seventeen-year-old reporter in a Kansas City newspaper. During the First World War he volunteered as an ambulance driver in Italy. He was severely injured and spent a long period stuck in a hospital bed. This incident provided the setting for one of his most famous novels *A Farewell to Arms*. The wounded, courageous hero disillusioned by the war and the brutality of modern society soon became Hemingway's trademark. His preoccupation with bullfighting and deep sea fishing is also evident in his stories. As a war correspondent in the Spanish Civil War and a reporter, he developed a particular style of writing characterised by spare dialogues and understatements.
The short story "The Killers" was written in 1926, at a time when the American Prohibition policy against the production, distribution and consumption of alcohol was at its height. This gave rise to the American mafia and criminal activity which flourished in particular in Chicago, where gangster leaders such as Al Capone ruled. "The Killers" is set against this backdrop. The protagonist, Nick, is with his young and vulnerable appearance, one of Hemingway's favorite characters. He appears in many stories in which he is often exposed to cruelty that he has to find a grown-up way to cope with.

Hemingway

The Killers / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/19016

The Killers / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125074

Modernist Writers

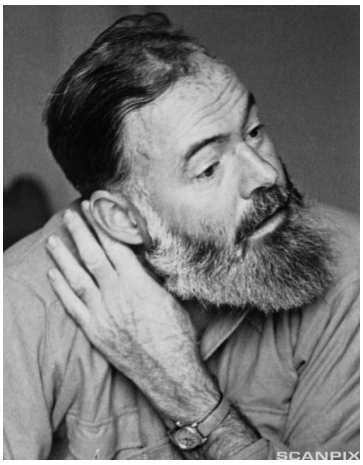
Ernest Hemingway

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Ernest Hemingway (96549)

A conflict has its own dynamics – it generates and releases energy. The friction between two clashing interests has a massive potential for fiction, as it provides dramatic power and may ultimately reflect man's fight for survival. This antagonism is both symbolically and directly the dominating thematic drive in most of Ernest Hemingway's writing. In his literature we meet people who in some way are faced with the option – do or die. The bull fighter, the boxer, the hunter, and the soldier are all confronted by the same ultimate trial – to overpower the opponent or to be violently crushed. The defeatism even pervades human nature, man stands alone, and if love is found, it is just as easily lost.

antagonism, defeatism, to pervade, conformity, venue, to evolve, recurring, ordeal, sublime, synthesis, consistent, fatalist, blunt, subtle, to invoke

Life and Times



Ernest Hemingway

Young Hemingway took more interest in hunting and fishing than his studies, and he was a keen boxer and footballer. After graduation he worked as a journalist for some time, and in 1917 he volunteered for war service in Europe. He was an ambulance driver in France for some time and joined combat in Italy where he was seriously wounded. After the war he settled in Paris where he met up with other artists and intellectuals of the modernist tradition. Paris had since the early 1920s become a refuge for disillusioned artists who sought an escape from the provincial and narrow-minded conformity of their home country. This vibrant scene was the venue for famous artists like Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and writers like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and Gertrud Stein, who referred to this group as "the lost generation". Hemingway continued his war correspondence during the Spanish Civil War and also during WWII. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1954.

Death and Art

Hemingway's writing includes acclaimed war novels like *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Other famous titles are *The Sun also Rises* (1926), *To Have and Have Not* (1937), and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). His war stories are based on his own experiences as a soldier and war correspondent. He belongs in both a naturalist and modernist literary tradition and his thematic approach evolves round death, often violent and often for an already lost cause. This tragic irony runs through most of his literary production – life is a fight man is destined to lose. Symbolically, this defeatism is expressed in a ritual-like encounter between man and his enemy, for example in a bull fight or a lion hunt. The bull fight and hunting scenes are recurring topics in Hemingway's literature, so are settings like Spain and Africa.

Spanish bull fighting

Fotograf: DESMOND BOYLAN

He said that the bull fight gave him "the feeling of life and death and mortality". Death was for Hemingway the ultimate limit of experience; the ordeal we all have to face and must stand up to like men. He said that he could only write "what he truly felt" – which leaves us with speculations about his own death, since he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Whether it was an accident or a suicide it was a dramatic end to a dramatic life. It may be relevant to claim that Hemingway lived and died like one of his own protagonists. But this may be his tribute to his own art. For many modernist artists life and art were inseparable; the optimal aim for a consistent artist was to create a sublime synthesis of life and art.

Style and Technique

In correspondence with his rather fatalist themes Hemingway's style is blunt and direct, and his narrative is displayed in a minimalist language. An anecdote has it that he once won a bet that he could write a novel of six words: *For Sale. Baby Shoes. Never Worn*. In a good narrative what is left unsaid is often more important than what is said. In his short stories he developed his so-called "ice-berg technique" which means that a minimum of information is given, and it is up to the reader to figure out what is beneath the surface. Hemingway said about his writing, "I always try to write on the principle of an ice-berg. There are seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows". His method can be demanding for an inexperienced reader, but it is a subtle and artful kind of literature that invokes reflection and opens for interpretations.

Hemingway has been criticised for his somewhat macho approach and for giving his male protagonists a non-feminist attitude. The critics may have a point, but as an author Ernest Hemingway is ranked among the great names of 20th century literature, and his writing inspired and influenced many contemporary writers.

Tasks and Activities

Comprehension

1. Why do you think the modernist artists in 1920s Paris were called "the lost generation"?
2. Explain the expression "tragic irony".

Further Study

1. Search the net for more information about Hemingway's life and its parallel to his literature.
2. Read one or two of Hemingway's short-stories (*The Killers*, *Hills Like White Elephants*, *The Sea Change,* for example, and see what you make of his ice-berg technique.

Virginia Woolf

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
How Should One Read a Book (115451)

The ultimate reading experience comes as a result of the collaboration between the writer and the reader; they both will have to contribute for the reading experience to be a success. So, once the writer has completed his task, the reader must do his bit for the literary universe to unfold. What happens in this process has occupied writers and scholars over the years. Many authors, including Virginia Woolf, have written extensive essays on the nature of literature, and how a literary text should be read. It is of course hard to define which basic elements are essential for the "correct" perception of a text, firstly because reading is a very private and individual experience. Secondly, writers are different and have their individual literary approach and style. But here lies the essence of a complete understanding of a literary text - the symbiotic unity of writing and reading.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Virginia Woolf
Fotograf: George Charles Beresford

Until she was 13, Adeline Virginia Stephen led a happy and carefree life in a harmonious Victorian family. Then a series of events threw her life into an accelerating downward spiral. Her mother died, which for her was "the greatest tragedy that could ever happen". But there was more to come... After this her father despaired and was unable to take care of his three children, so Virginia and her sister had to be looked after by their half-sister Stella. In this new family setting the Stephen sisters were exposed to sexual advances by both Stella's husband and their half-brother, George Duckworth. Virginia withdrew into a state of "frozen and defensive panic", and became a shy individual, feeling that the next shock would drive her mad. This came when her father soon after died of cancer, and Virginia had her first of a series of nervous breakdowns. She was on the brink of madness, wandering in and out of hallucinations and fighting with self-destructive thoughts.

Literature became her refuge. She and her sister Vanessa became the leading figures of the so-called Bloomsbury Group, an avant-garde circle based at their home in Bloomsbury, London. It was a group of intellectuals discussing social, cultural and political issues of the time – anti-imperialism, modernist literature and art, and feminism. She later married another member of the group, Leonard Woolf.
Her first writing was fairly conventional and straightforward, but gradually she developed a more experimental style influenced by modernist writers, such as James Joyce. She wanted to challenge the conventional concept of a novel and traditional narrative style. Some of her most famous works include *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928) and *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Virginia Woolf is today cherished as one of the finest English writers of the modernist tradition, and her essays on literature, like this one, are still read and respected by contemporary literary scholars.

Virginia Woolf published two volumes of literary essays, *The Common Reader* (1925) and *The Second Common Reader* (1932), which are, as the titles indicate, written to encourage reading among common people as opposed to critics and literary scholars. She reflects on the style and approach of different writers, the criteria of literary quality, and most importantly, as in this excerpt from *The Second Common Reader* – the role of the reader.

fetter, sanctury, blurred, flattering, imperceptible, steep (v), impalpable

How Should One Read a Book?

An Essay by Virginia Woolf

In the first place, I want to emphasise the note of interrogation at the end of my title. Even if I could answer the question for myself, the answer would apply only to me and not to you. The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions. If this is agreed between us, then I feel at liberty to put forward a few ideas and suggestions because you will not allow them to fetter that independence which is the most important quality that a reader can possess. After all, what laws can be laid down about books? The battle of Waterloo was certainly fought on a certain day; but is Hamlet a better play than Lear? Nobody can say. To admit authorities, however heavily furred and gowned, into our libraries and let them tell us how to read, what value to place upon what we read, is to destroy the spirit of freedom which is the breath of these sanctuaries. Everywhere else we may be bound by laws and conventions, there we have none.

(…)

Yet few people ask from books what books can give us. Most commonly we come to books with blurred and divided minds, asking of fiction that it shall be true, of poetry that it shall be false, of biography that it shall be flattering, of history that it shall enforce our own prejudices. If we could banish all such preconceptions when we read, that would be an admirable beginning. Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice. If you hang back, and reserve and criticise at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value from what you read. But if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this, and soon you will find that your author is giving you, attempting to give you something far more definite. The thirty-two chapters of a novel – if we consider how to read a novel first – are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: But words are more impalpable than bricks; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing. Perhaps the quickest way to understand the elements of what a novelist is doing is not to read, but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words. Recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you – how at the corner of a street, you passed two people talking. A tree shook; an electric light danced; the tone of the talk was comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception contained in that moment.

But when you attempt to reconstruct it in words, you will find that it breaks into a thousand conflicting impressions. Some must be subdued; others emphasised; in the process you will lose, probably, all grasp upon the emotion itself. Then turn from your blurred and littered pages to the opening pages of some great novelist

– Defoe, Jane Austen, Hardy. Now you will be better able to appreciate their mastery. It is not merely that we are in the presence of a different person – Defoe, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy – but we are living a different world. Here in Robinson Crusoe, we are trudging a plain highroad; one thing happens after another; the fact and the order of the fact is enough. But if the open air and adventure mean everything to Defoe they mean nothing to Jane Austen. Here is the drawing-room, and people talking, and by the many mirrors of their talk revealing their characters. And if, when we have accustomed ourselves to the drawing-room and its reflections, we turn to Hardy, we are once more spun round. The moors are round us and the stars are above out heads. The other side of the mind is now exposed – the dark side that comes uppermost in solitude, not the light side that shows in company. Our relations are not towards people, but towards Nature and Destiny. Yet different as these worlds are, each is consistent with itself. The maker of each is careful to observe the laws of his own perspective, and however great a strain they may put upon you they will never confuse us, as lesser writers so frequently do, by introducing two different kinds of reality into the same book.

A Closer Look at the Essay

- What does Virginia Woolf say about the relation between reader and writer?
- What is her advice about what to read?
- What does she say about defining "good" literature?
- What does she mean by saying that “few people ask from books what books can give us”.
- How is “reading a more complicated process than seeing”?
- In addition to an open mind, what does she suggest as a good starting point if we want to appreciate good literature?
- She mentions three famous English novelists; how does she describe their different styles?
- Explain the last sentence of the essay.

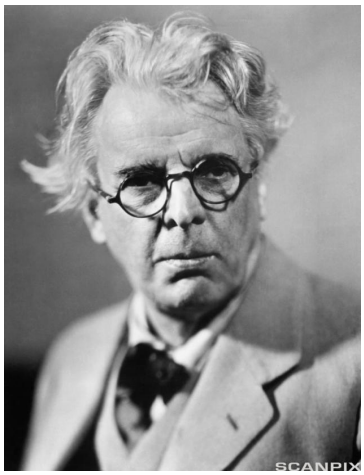
The Irish Renaissance

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Irish Renaissance (99383)

Ireland has a history of trouble and conflict. The country was colonized by the British as early as the 12th century, and was over the years and centuries exploited and oppressed by harsh rule from London, especially during the reigns of King Henry VIII in the 16th century and Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell a century later. Irish Catholics were literally hunted down because they refused to convert to the Protestant faith. Irish culture was for centuries limited to Celtic tales and folklore, but as the opposition against British rule grew and became more organised (Sinn Fein and the IRA were established in the 1880s) the country also saw a revival of art and literature.

The so-called Celtic Revival involved a number of young poets and playwrights who worked to create a national literature which would express what they saw as the unique spirit of Ireland. This article presents two of the most prominent representatives of the Irish Renaissance.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)



Irish Poet and Statesman William Butler Yeats
Fotograf: Corbis

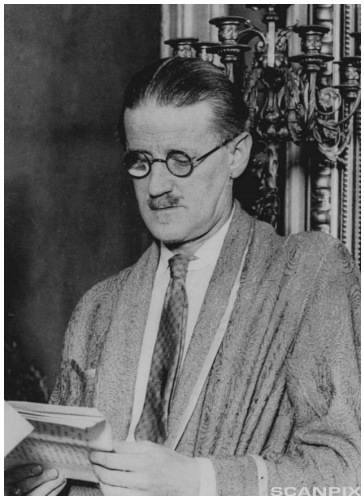
Yeats was born into a family of gifted artists, and he spent much of his youth wandering in the wilds of County Sligo listening to the old folk tales and heroic legends of Irish freedom fighters. He travelled abroad but his roots were in Ireland; he dreamed of a free Ireland and a national poetry that would be modern but true to Irish and Celtic traditions. His life coincided with a period of turbulent times for Ireland – the Easter Uprising in 1916, the First World War, establishment of The Irish Free State in 1922 and the following civil war. Yeats was active politically and was for a period a senator representing the Free-Staters (1922-28), in the new Irish parliament. He wrote poetry and plays which were acclaimed by an increasingly large audience, and in 1924 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His writing belongs in the modernist tradition and he embraced the new and experimental poetry by American modernists, such as Ezra Pound. His early poems are lyric annotations influenced by Irish folklore, often musical in their expression, but later he developed a sharper style with a more modernist imagery. Follow the links below and read some of W.B. Yeats's most famous poems. In 2011, the Irish/British rock group, The Waterboys, recorded an album of Yeats's poetry adapted for music. Check the link for more information.

Four Selected Poems by William Butler Yeats

Poetry Meets Rock

James Joyce (1882-1941)

Unlike Yeats, James Joyce turned his back on the so-called revival of Irish culture, even though he was a part of it. From his self-imposed exile in Paris he criticised the Celtic movement, which he claimed "was exploiting the Irish Renaissance". The fact that his first collection of short stories, *Dubliners*, was published in England, and not in Ireland clearly confirms his antipathy towards his home country. James Joyce is one of the most typical representatives of the modernist literary project. His three major works are *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). His technique and style was obscure and experimental; like a genuine modernist writer Joyce violated all rules of language, both grammar and punctuation; and his long sentences, which would often go over several pages, make his texts a rather demanding task for the reader. His technique is called "stream of consciousness" and presents the thoughts and associations going through the mind of the protagonist. The "plot" of *Ulysses* has a timespan of a day, yet it is a novel of more than seven hundred pages. The text has many references to ancient Greek literature and it is packed with details of nearly every aspect of life. The book was initially banned in the USA for a decade due to explicit erotic language. But despite its complexity and experimental approach *Ulysses* is counted as one of the most influential works of prose in the 20th century. When Joyce was confronted on his unintelligible style, he replied that his writing "was for those readers who would dedicate their lives to his books" – no less… But if *Ulysses* is cryptic and complex it is an easy-reader compared to his next book; in *Finnegan's Wake* he took his literary experiment to the limit. In 2010, a panel consisting of literary critics, writers and publishes sat down to pass a final verdict on *Finnegan's Wake* – and they concluded that the book is simply unreadable. Read the following quote from the book and see if you agree:



Irish writer James Joyce

Fotograf: AP

> "*Arrah, it's herself that's fine, too, don't be talking! Shirksends? You storyan Harry chap longa me Harry chap storyan grass woman plelthy good trout. Shakeshands. Dibble a hayfork's wrong with her only her lex's salig. Boald Tib does be yawning and smirking cat's hours on the Pollockses' woolly round tabouretcushion watching her sewing and dream together, the tailor's daughter, stitch to her last.*"

Politics and Literature

It is an interesting feature that a country's liberty and independence go hand in hand with its literary awakening. It is hard to say which of the two spurred the other, but Ireland's birth as an independent nation would perhaps not have come so soon were it not for the growing cultural identity brought about by writers and poets. Examples of this symbiosis are W.B. Yeats's political career and the fact that a poet (Douglas Hyde) became President of Ireland in 1938. So the conclusion may be that poetry and literature are far from limited to an isolated cultural sphere, but are in some way inseparable from life itself and the reality that surrounds us.

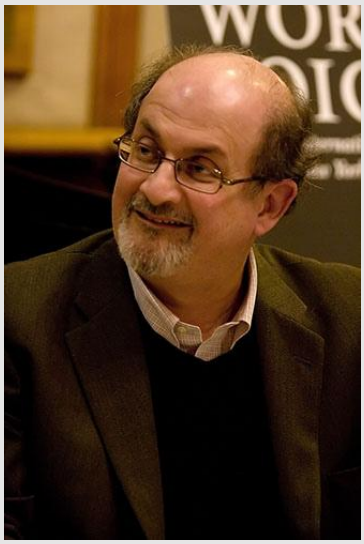
The Irish Renaissance - Tasks and Activities

A Wider Horizon

Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies

Forfatter: NRK, Åse Elin Langeland
Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies (7006)

Salman Rushdie aroused the fury of the Moslem world when his novel *The Satanic Verses* was published about twenty years ago. The book was considered blasphemous and banned by Moslem governments and several people were killed in riots and demonstrations in Pakistan and India. The Iranian Government pronounced a death sentence on the author and all those involved in the publication of the book throughout the world.

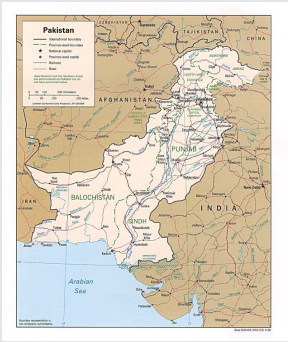


Salman Rushdie

*blasphemous/blasphemy: *if someone offends or insults something that is considered sacred and holy.*

In October 1993 William Nygaard, Rushdie's Norwegian publisher, was shot and seriously injured outside his own home in Oslo, an incident which was linked to the fatwa, the death sentence. For the western world freedom of speech, the very essence of democracy, was at stake. Salman Rushdie, who was born in India but lives in Britain and is a British subject, had to go into hiding with the British Government's security services. Then, in the autumn of 1998, after the fatwa had lasted for almost 9 years, a pronouncement by the Iranian Government indicated that the fatwa was officially withdrawn and Salman Rushdie could once more resume the life of an ordinary British citizen.

In the following short story Muhammad Ali, an elderly civil servant, considers himself an expert on advising young Indian women who want to immigrate. One day he meets Miss Rehana, whose fiancé has instructed her to join him in England. Dazzled by her beauty and her innocence, he offers his help and protection. But he soon discovers that she is the teacher and he is the pupil.



Pakistan - Map

Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies / audio
http://ndla.no/en/node/7114

Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/125090

9 Literary Skills

Genres

Literary Genres

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Literary Genres (90724)

The word genre is originally French and means kind or type. In this connection genre is used to classify literary forms. There are a number of genres and subgenres that will identify a literary work by certain criteria. In literary science and criticism this is a handy tool for defining a literary work. This brief introduction will present the most common genres used in literary theory.

Epic Literature

In epic literature there is a narrative that unfolds a plot of some kind. Simply put one can say that it is a story which is told. There are many kinds of stories with different characteristics – a tale, a legend, a saga, a short-story and a novel, to mention some. For tools for analysis check related link, this will only list some of the most common criteria of some subgenres of epic literature.

The Novel

In literary history the novel is a fairly new form; scholars count *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes (1605) as the first narrative that fits modern criteria of a novel. Usually a novel is defined by its length, or more precisely – the extension of its plot, which can span over longer time than e.g. a short-story. But that is not always the case; there are many famous (and long) novels where the narrative evolves over a very short span of time, for example a couple of hours or a day. In addition, a novel often has an extensive cast of characters, and the plot may take place in many different settings. There are a number of subcategories that will identify a novel more specifically.

Novel / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57642

The Short-Story

Like the novel, the length of the narrative is a common characteristic; however, some short-stories can be quite long – even longer than a short novel. Hence there are other characteristics that are more adequate to define a short-story. Firstly, the plot usually stretches over a relatively short time span, and will involve fewer characters than a novel. Secondly, a short story will have a certain structure with a turning point or climax which brings the plot in an unexpected direction. In most short stories there will also be a twist in the ending, which is supposed to sum up the theme and make the reader reflect.

Epic Poetry

Short Story / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/97842

In ancient Greece and Rome it was common to write a narrative as a long poem. This was seen as a particularly artful way to tell a story; The Odyssey (Homer) is an example, the long narrative is divided into 24 songs. During the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance heroic poems, often of a considerable length, were the dominating literary form. Not surprisingly the Enlightenment writers turned to other genres, but during the Romanticism the long epic poem was again seen as an adequate literary form. This genre is not so common in modern literature.

Drama

Drama is the literary form designed for theatre. The setting is created on a stage and a curtain separates the stage and the audience. Actors take the roles of the characters and act out the plot and lines in direct speech. A drama is structured in acts and scenes. In classic drama there were certain rules to be observed of how a drama should be composed, and many of these classic plays were written in verse or blank verse. There are many subgenres of dramatic literature – tragedy, comedy, melodrama, historical etc. A drama will be analysed using the same basic tools as epic literature (plot, setting, characters, and theme). It stands to reason that a drama is theatrical; the character often will think loudly to himself (soliloquy) or even address the audience directly.

Lyric Literature

A lyric text will often be in the form of a poem, but not necessarily. Line structure, meter and rhythm are after all just technical devices. So whether it is poetry or prose – it is the language and the mood of the text that classifies it as a lyric text. The text must have a certain poetic element that will evoke feelings in the reader. It is like a pastoral and idyllic painting that touches you emotionally. The language of a lyric text will usually have some of the characteristics of a poem – like symbols and a metaphors, but the form of the text does not define it as lyric.

How to analyse

How to Analyze Poetry

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski, Catharine Ruud, Celia Suzanna Sandor
How to Analyze Poetry (14814)

Poetry is a form of expression. The poet uses his/her own personal and private language which leaves poetry open to different interpretations. Although the poet may have had one specific idea or purpose in mind, the reader's response may be completely different. Nevertheless, this does not mean that you may interpret poetry any way you wish. All interpretations must be supported by direct reference to the text. As with any type of literary analysis, you need a basic knowledge of the elements of poetry. The following guide and questions will help you.

Poetry

- Read the poem in its entirety to get a general impression.
- What is the poem about?
- What is the title of the poem?
- Who is speaker or narrative voice of the poem
- To whom is the speaker speaking?
- What is the purpose of the poem: to describe, amuse, entertain, narrate, inform, express grief, celebrate or commemorate?
- What is the tone of the poem? Sad, happy, melancholy, bitter?

For a more detailed study of poetry click here

- Language
- Rhythm (advanced)
- Sound
- Themes

How to Analyze a Short Story

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski
How to Analyze a Short Story (9075)

What is a Short Story?

A short story is a work of short, narrative prose that is usually centered around one single event. It is limited in scope and has an introduction, body and conclusion. Although a short story has much in common with a novel (See How to Analyze a Novel), it is written with much greater precision. You will often be asked to write a literary analysis. An analysis of a short story requires basic knowledge of literary elements. The following guide and questions may help you:

Old Fence

A short story has a structure and a message. Can you analyze this picture in much the same way as a short story?

Setting

Read more

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place. In a short story there are fewer settings compared to a novel. The time is more limited.

- How is the setting created? Consider geography, weather, time of day, social conditions, etc.
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?

Study the time period which is also part of the setting.

- When was the story written?
- Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the short story?

Characterization

Read more

Characterization deals with how the characters in the story are described. In short stories there are usually fewer characters compared to a novel. They usually focus on one central character or protagonist.

- Who is the main character?
- Are the main character and other characters described through dialogue – by the way they speak (dialect or slang for instance)?
- Has the author described the characters by physical appearance, thoughts and feelings, and interaction (the way they act towards others)?
- Are they static/flat characters who do not change?
- Are they dynamic/round characters who DO change?
- What type of characters are they? What qualities stand out? Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

Plot and structure

Read more

The plot is the main sequence of events that make up the story. In short stories the plot is usually centered around one experience or significant moment

- What is the most important event?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move around?
- Is the plot believable?

Narrator and Point of view

Read more

The narrator is the person telling the story.
Is the narrator and the main character the same?

By point of view we mean from whose eyes the story is being told. Short stories tend to be told through one character's point of view

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Does the author speak through the main character?
- Is the story written in the first person "I" point of view?
- Is the story written in a detached third person "he/she" point of view?
- Is there an "all-knowing" 3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Conflict

Read more

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the short story and is related to the main character. In a short story there is usually one main struggle.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
- Is it an internal conflict within the character?
- Is it an external conflict caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Climax

Read more

The climax is the point of greatest tension or intensity in the short story. It can also be the turning point where events take a major turn as the story races towards its conclusion.

- Is there a turning point in the story?
- When does the climax take place?

Theme

Read more

The theme is the main idea, lesson or message in the short story. It is usually an abstract idea about the human condition, society or life.

- How is the theme expressed?
- Are any elements repeated that may suggest a theme?
- Is there more than one theme?

Style

Read more

The author's style has to do with the author's vocabulary, use of imagery, tone or feeling of the story. It has to do with his attitude towards the subject. In some short stories the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

- Is his language full of figurative language?
- What images does he use?
- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors (comparisons which do not use "as" or "like", similes (comparisons which use "as" or "like") ?

Your literary analysis of a short story will often be in the form of an essay where you may be asked to give your opinions of the short story at the end. Choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which character/characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments.

How to Analyze a Novel

Forfatter: Carol Dwankowski, Celia Suzanna Sandor, Catharine Ruud
How to Analyze a Novel (13288)

Setting

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place.

street

Point of View

- What aspects make up the setting?
  - Geography, weather, time of day, social conditions?
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?
- Study the time period which is also part of the setting
- When was the story written?
  - Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
  - How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the novel?

Characterization

Characterization deals with how the characters are described.

- through dialogue?
- by the way they speak?
- physical appearance? thoughts and feelings?
- interaction - the way they act towards other characters?
- Are they static characters who do not change?
- Do they develop by the end of the story?
- What type of characters are they?
- What qualities stand out?
- Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

Plot and structure

The *plot* is the main sequence of events that make up the story.

- What are the most important events?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move back and forth?
- Are there turning points, a climax and/or an anticlimax?
- Is the plot believable?

Narrator and Point of view

The *narrator* is the person telling the story.
Point of view: whose eyes the story is being told through.

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Is the narrator the main character?
- Does the author speak through one of the characters?
- Is the story written in the first person “I” point of view?
- Is the story written in a detached third person “he/she” point of view?
- Is the story written in an “all-knowing” 3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Conflict

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the novel and is related to the main character.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
  - Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?
  - is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Theme

The *theme* is the main idea, lesson or message in the novel. It is usually an abstract, universal idea about the human condition, society or life, to name a few.

- How does the theme shine through in the story?
- Are any elements repeated that may suggest a theme?
- What other themes are there?

Style

The author’s style has to do with the author’s vocabulary, use of imagery, tone or feeling of the story. It has to do with his attitude towards the subject. In some novels the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

- Is the text full of figurative language?
- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors, similes?
  An example of a metaphor is when someone says, "My love, you *are* a rose". An example of a simile is "My darling, you are *like* a rose."
- What images are used?

Your literary analysis of a novel will often be in the form of an essay or book report where you will be asked to give your opinions of the novel at the end. To conclude, choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments. Try to view the novel as a whole and try to give a balanced analysis.

Looking for Literary Devices

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Looking for Literary Devices (113526)

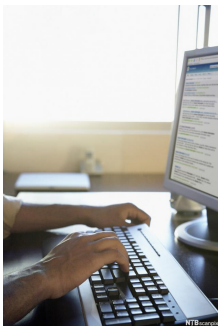
Telling a story is not as straightforward as one might think. The narrator, or writer, will use all kinds of effects and devices that are supposed to enrich the reading experience. Accordingly, reading a story may also be a bit intricate since the reader has to know what to look for and where to find it.

It takes both experience and practice for a reader to fully appreciate a literary text. Read the short-story, "Supply and Demand", and reflect a bit on the issues listed below. Then check the “find out” link and compare with your observations.

Supply and Demand

by W B Jenkins

It was not a nasty business. He never thought abou t it like that. Perhaps there were some shady proceedings from time to time, but no – he wouldn’t call it nasty at all. In fact, quite the contrary.



Checking for Information

He turned to his monitor. There was something fishy about this. He was not at ease with this new Belarus contact. He had been in the business long enough to be alert if he sniffed something rotten. The network was big, in fact – too big to keep the full overview of what was going on. Still, he was safe as long as he could stick to his old connections. New ones had to be approached with caution. And in this case he had this indefinable feeling of uncertainty. He had been doing business with Belarus before, but the connection then was somebody he knew, and had even met. Now there seemed to be some new guy managing things over there, and he just had this uneasy feeling about it. He checked his watch; it was getting late.

He was running a Manchester based export / import business doing all sorts of international trade, from bicycles to underwear, or second-hand spare parts. Usually some cheap goods from a surplus store somewhere that would make a little profit. The books and inventory were in perfect order; the men from the ministry had nothing to complain about. The company was even in line for a quote on the stock exchange. He was doing all right. It was a safe business – but not very lucrative.
Then some years back he had had an invitation to a sales seminar, which turned out to be just as boring as he had expected. These fresh academy yappies in their impeccable grey suits with matching ties, presenting the same graphs and figures were simply tiresome. What did they know? It was a two-day seminar, but he had decided to leave after the first day. Still he ended up in the bar in the afternoon, and had over a pint joined in a conversation with two blokes he knew slightly from a similar event. After another pint or two they had gone to a hotel room to continue their chat which was getting very interesting. There he was introduced to a third guy who seemed to be waiting for them. In short, this had been the turning point. He suddenly found himself in big business with fat money, and the market was insatiable. The business was perhaps not that safe – but it was very, very lucrative.

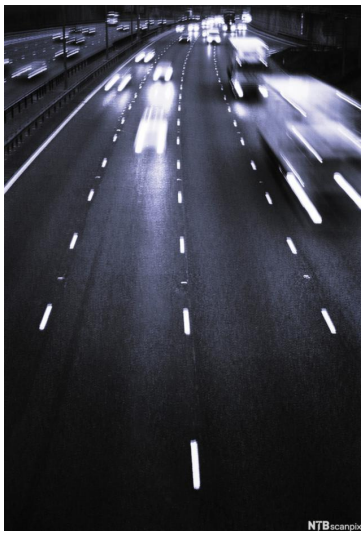
Since then it had all been a stroll down yellow brick road. Big, bad and beautiful. Not that bad, really – just a bit on the side of what most people would call clean business. When he thought about the poor fellows involved in really dirty business, like drugs and trafficking – that was bad. They were using people and ruining lives. He would never go down that road. There were, in fact, many positive aspects of what he was doing, he kept telling himself.
And his company was the perfect cover. He had developed a network of safe connections mainly in Eastern Europe, but also in some Arab countries and even in the Far East. The demand by far exceeded the supply, and he was amazed by what some people were able to come up with when it came to cash. And that was another advantage of having an established business – no whitewashing was needed. It all went into the books, neat and tidy. Ask no questions, tell no lies.
But this new Belarus contact was unsettling for some reason. He was fully aware of the risk involved. One wrong step and it was goodbye yellow brick road. He knew that. With eyes on the monitor and hand on the mouse he hunted for information to justify his suspicion, but came up with nothing.

His mobile buzzed. He checked the display before answering. After a “Yeah” and a short silence he just said “OK”. Shit! He never did that. He never did any delivery himself, he had never had to. In his regular business he often had to step in to hand over some merchandise, or drive one of his trucks to the airport. But in this connection he totally relied on his couriers. So far that had been no problem. They did what they were paid for, and that was it. No questions. But now he had to get on his bike and do it himself – and like always, it was urgent.

Urgency was the mantra of this business. Special delivery, high priority. It was a matter of life and death, literally. He had a list full of wanted items, so whenever something popped up he had to push the button. And so far it had never failed. He didn't always know where the stuff came from, but he didn't really care as long as he could deliver and keep his customer satisfied. But somehow, this was the shady part of it. Somebody was doing the dirty work out there, and he took the profit. Most of it, anyway. But the other direction was even shadier. When there was some item coming his way, he had no way of knowing how the merchandise had turned up. He didn't particularly like to think about that, but no matter, he was only a small pawn in a gigantic network and if he didn't do it, somebody else would.
Now for the first time he had to get out there and personally get the stuff underway like any shipping clerk. He had a bad feeling about this.

It was dark and the roads were wet, but he knew where he was going. His black Honda was purring like a playful kitten between his legs. Not much traffic and no police in sight. It took him a quarter of an hour or so, and when he got there they were waiting for him. As he slid the little canister into the bag he thought he heard the word liver mentioned. But he didn't really care what it was. As long as it brought home some bacon, he didn't mind.

Then through the dark streets on the outskirts of Manchester again. Though he hadn't done the actual transport before, the business from here was quite straightforward. The goods would go as a disguised express cargo shipped to the destination he had been given. The routine was simple.



Speeding through the Darkness
Fotograf: Corbis

His bike was like an extension of himself, like an extra part of his body that came to life when it was called for. Shooting through the dark streets. He was well above the speed limit, but the thrill of it made him smile behind the tinted visor of his helmet. And as he calculated the profit of the deal that was going down, it made him smile even more.

Road-block ahead: Diversion. He slowed down and carefully passed the flashing lights and followed the signs. Probably a road accident. Whenever he came across situations like that, or read about them in the paper he couldn't help but think of the potential there. He lifted a hand to the men in fluorescent vests as he passed. The diversion had caused some congestion and would probably slow him down a little. Traffic was directed closer to the city centre which would mean more lights and more delays. He was getting impatient.
Then there was a crossing where he had to slow down, he overtook some cars in front of him and accelerated into the next street. His helmet slightly blocked his side vision, so he had to turn his head a fraction of a second to get a clear view up the street. And that was enough. The crash was unavoidable. He went full speed into a van that was backing into the street right in front of him.

After some long and silent minutes the ambulance and police came flashing through the night. The paramedics went about their business and the officers talked to the driver of the van.

"Not much blood here; if he survives he can thank his helmet," one of the paramedics remarked. The other one was silent. Then the black bundle of a biker was loaded onto a stretcher and off they went, the sirens singing their wailing song through the dark and empty streets of Manchester.

At the casualty ward they were ready for him, and he was on the operating table less than thirty minutes after the crash. It didn't take the doctors long to find out that his liver was smashed and he would die if they didn't get a new one pretty soon. But there was no liver to get hold of.

In the street the police were cleaning up after the accident.

Consider these issues before you check "Find Out"

1. In what way do the setting and the plot complement each other?

In a short story the plot and the setting are usually carefully connected. Here, the protagonist is alone with his computer in his office late in the evening. He is driving through the dark and wet streets of suburban Manchester with "no police in sight". It is dangerous, and he is running a shady business that belongs in the darkness.

2. Sum up the plot as briefly as possible.

This can be a bit tricky since in a plot summary one tends to include too many unnecessary details. A brief summing up of the plot here might be: A man is into dealing with human organs illegally, and when he is transporting a liver he crashes on his motorbike and dies because his liver is smashed.

3. How would you characterize the protagonist?

Characterization is an important element of a narrative; we base our impression of the characters on what they say, think or do. In this story the protagonist is continually convincing himself that what he is doing is not a nasty business, which indicates that he knows that is exactly what it is. He also makes excuses for himself by thinking that "if he didn't do it, somebody else would". Consequently, at the end we think that he got what he deserved.

4. Which symbolic elements do you see in the text?

He is into illegal dealing with human organs. The motorbike is described as an extra part of his body, and it is black. He also has a tinted visor, which emphasizes his anonymous and dodgy personality. He also has to go closer to the city centre which brings his dark and dirty dealings into the light, and to a messy end.

5. What do you suggest as a theme of the story?

The obvious theme is illegal organ trafficking. Another suggestion may be karma, since he has to pay for his ill-doings.

6. Where do you see irony in the story?

An ironic element is that the protagonist ends up needing the liver that is in the saddle-bag of his motorbike. It is also ironic that the accident is caused by his helmet blocking his side vision, whereas the paramedic says that "if he survives he can thank his helmet". Another point is that he carries a liver that "will bring home some bacon".

7. Do you see examples of foreshadowing?

Foreshadowing is when we get hidden suggestions of how things will turn out. In the story the protagonist is well above the speed limit, and he passes a road accident. He also has an uneasy and bad feeling at the beginning which clearly indicates that things most likely will go wrong. He is also dealing in "second-hand spare parts" which here has a double meaning.

8. Where are the turning point and the climax of the story?

Don't mix turning point and climax. The turning point of a story is when the plot takes an unexpected turn. Here it is when he gets the phone call and has to do the delivery himself. The climax is when something dramatic happens that turns the tables completely, in this case the crash.

9. What is the twist at the end of the story?

The twist is that his nasty business and what could have saved his life are actually "cleaned up" by the police.

10. What is the narrative angle?

The narrative angle here is a limited 3rd person view. We only have information about what goes on and what the protagonist thinks and does.

11. Comment on the composition of the story.

After a brief exposition, we get background information in a short flashback, the rest is told chronologically. Note that we don't get information about what actually goes on until mid-way through the story, still we have a growing feeling that something fishy is going on. This works well to build up suspense in the plot.

12. Do you see examples of other literary devices, e.g. alliteration or repetition?

Alliteration means words that begin with the same letter or sound, like "the black bundle of a biker" and "the sirens singing their wailing song". Repetition is used to emphasize certain elements, for example "safe" and "lucrative" at the end of paragraph three and four. "Yellow brick road" is another example.

13. Comment on the title of the story. (Can you think of an alternative title?)

The title of a story will usually not make any sense until after you have read it. In this case the title indicates that it is something about buying and selling, which it is – but in a rather different sense than what one might expect.
Other suggested titles:
Instant Karma
What Goes Down
Spare Parts

Literary Terminology

A Collection of Literary Animations

Forfatter: Knut Inge Skifjeld
A Collection of Literary Animations (87954)

Alliteration / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57637

Character and Characterization / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57639

Climax and Turning Point / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57640

Conflict / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57641

Metaphor and Simile / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57717

Novel / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57642

Plot / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57716

Poetry / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57643

Point of View / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57718

Protagonist / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57644

Setting / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57645

Symbols / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57646

Theme / flashnode
http://ndla.no/en/node/57647

Check your Literary Vocabulary

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Check Your Literary Vocabulary (114175)

In the following sentences some words and expressions are left out. Copy the page and paste it into your word processor and test your literary vocabulary. You should be able to fill in some without help, but “Hints” will give you the words in a random order.

1. The ... of a narrative will tell us where and when the plot takes place.
2. If a story as a whole works as a symbol, it is called an ...
3. A myth is usually a story about gods and humans, whereas a ... may also be about animals.
4. At the end of a short story there will often be a ... , that usually gives the title an ironic meaning.
5. The main character of a narrative is also called the ... .
6. An ... angle was usual in fairy tales and folk legends, where the narrator knows everything that goes on, also in the minds of all the characters.
7. The ... of a story is the underlying message that the author wants to focus on.
8. When there is a recurring element in a narrative, a certain phrase or an object, it is called a ...
9. The ... is a literary technique where a narrative relates the thoughts and reflections going through the mind of the protagonist.
10. When a writer uses ... he wants to give hints about how things will turn out later in the story.
11. In a short story there will usually be a point where the plot takes an unexpected turn, which is called the ... .
12. When a writer has finished an article or a story, it has to go through the process of ... before it is published.
13. An actor in a play will have to learn his ... by heart.
14. The ... of a poem will describe its rhythm pattern.
15. Traditionally a poem is divided into ... .
16. Meter and ... are not usual in modernist poetry.
17. A poetic technique is to use words and expressions that usually appear in other contexts but with a different meaning; this is called a ... .
18. Both in poetry and prose the writer will often use words beginning with the same letter or sound, this literary device is called ... .
19. Shakespeare was a famous ... , which means an author writing for the stage.
20. The ... will give us an impression of the characters based on what they do, think and say.

meter, omniscient, characterization, setting, lines, protagonist, fable, playwright, foreshadowing, twist, proof reading, stream of consciousness, theme, alliteration, motif, turning point, connotation, stanzas, rhyme, allegory

1. Setting
2. Allegory
3. Fable
4. Twist
5. Protagonist
6. Omniscient
7. Theme
8. Motif
9. Stream of consciousness
10. Foreshadowing
11. Turning point
12. Proof reading
13. Lines
14. Meter
15. Stanzas
16. Rhyme
17. Connotation
18. Alliteration
19. Playwright
20. Characterization

Literary Terms

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Literary Terms (91060)

To discuss and analyse literature it is important to know some of the basic terms and expressions used within the subject area. The following glossary covers the most widely used terms. Open five or six, study them and then close and test yourself. (More examples to illustrate the terms will be added later.)

Simply put, an allegory is a narrative that has a symbolic meaning. That is, the whole story, its plot, characters and often setting, are all elements that signify a second correlated narrative.

Alliteration is when a text (most often poetry, but also prose) has three or more succeeding words that start with the same sound. It is usually applied to consonants, either at the beginning of the word or on a stressed syllable within the word.

In a literary work there will often be a brief reference to a person, place, event or to another literary work. This is called an allusion, and was very common in classic and romantic poetry which had many references to ancient mythology.

Ambiguity means double meaning. It is a common literary technique in both poetry and prose to use words and expressions with multiple meanings.

The word covers the mood or ambience that the writer creates in his narrative. The intention is to give the reader a feeling (often dark and foreboding) of what is going to happen.

A biography is, simply put, the story of a person's life. It is a popular genre; people love to read about the lives of famous persons. An autobiography is a biography written by the person himself.

Blank verse is when a poem (of a certain metric pattern) has no end rhymes. Many of Shakespeare's texts, both his plays and poems are in blank verse. It will then have a certain melodic rhythm that comes alive when it is recited.

Character refers to the person(s) in a narrative or a play. They can be described directly (through the narrator) or indirectly (through the eyes of other characters. We also use the terms flat or round characters to indicate their complexity.

A verbal clichè is a fixed and often used expression. A structural clichè is a common and predictable element of a narrative. It can be either a character or a turn of the plot. In film and literature clichès are negative elements, since they indicate lack of creativity, both in terms of language and plot arrangements.

A comedy is a play or a film that puts the audience in a good and safe mood. Certain techniques are used to create a good comedy, e.g. mistaken identity and misunderstandings. The audience will be amused and confident that things will turn out happily for the characters (at least the ones who deserve it).

Connotation is the same as denotation, and means that a word (mostly in poetry) has a different meaning than it has in everyday use. E.g. "cold" will in colloquial settings mean low temperature, but as a connotation it may also mean e.g. heartless or unfeeling.

When certain opposites are juxtaposed, or put up against each other, e.g. two scenes in a film, this will highlight the contrast between them. The effect is that the two elements will mutually amplify each other.

This is one of the main literary genes (epic, lyric, dramatic) and will denote a narrative which is told like a story or a plot. There are many sub-genres of epic literature. (See related node "Literary Genres".)

Originally this means some sort of inscription. It is a short, pointed poem that is often witty and well composed with a striking punch line.

Epiphany in Greek means "manifestation of God". In literature it means a sudden and often spiritual awakening, like when a character suddenly sees with clarity the way out of a predicament or a dilemma.

An essay is a composition about a topic, often arguing a certain thesis or stating a point of view.

Fiction, or a fictive narrative is invented, as opposed to a factual presentation of events that are historically true.

To foreshadow is to place hints or bits of information that will lead the reader to an anticipation of the outcome of the narrative. The opening parts of a novel or a short-story will often hold elements of foreshadowing.

Genre is French and means type or form; it is used to categorize literature in groups according to certain criteria. (See related node "Literary Genres".)

In architecture, Gothic means the pointed style that broke with the traditional Roman rounded form of arches and ceilings in cathedrals. In literature the word is used about the type of novels of the late 18th century, containing eerie ingredients like ghosts in derelict castles with dark hallways and hidden doors. Other elements would include violent action, occultism and sorcery.

This is an alternative denotation of the Renaissance (1550-1650), and it signifies the human as a master of his universe; man is able to seek within himself for answers, but must also appreciate his own shortcomings and inner contradictions.

Hyperbole comes from Greek and means to exaggerate, as opposed to an understatement, which is a blunt way of making a statement by giving it less significance than it really has; e.g to say "bad luck" when a disaster has struck.

Imagery is a common term in modern literary theory; it describes poetry that is rich with suggestive images and associations.

In colloquial speech irony means to say the opposite of what one really means (verbal irony). In literature one also has this verbal irony, but also what is called structural irony, where the writer gives his plot a turn that can be read with a double meaning. In a short-story there may be an ironic twist at the ending to sum up the theme.

Originally a melodrama was a drama with song. In literature the term will denote a plot which is a bit over the top when it comes to effects. The plot will often be sentimental and not strictly credible, and the characters are more exaggerated "types" than believable persons.

A metaphor is a figure of speech where two or more elements of a different nature are compared with each other, but without "like" or "as". If the comparison includes "like" or "as" it is called a simile.

Meter is a collective term for the rhythmic pattern of a poem. There are a number of metric systems. A text written in meter is called a verse. (See related node "How to Analyze Poetry".)

Note the spelling. A motif is a recurring element in a literary text. It may be an incident or a phrase that occurs in different situations and settings through the text.

Originally a myth is a story derived from mythology, e.g. the ancient religions of Greece and Rome, or Norse mythology. At the time the myth was believed to be true. The story of gods and supernatural beings is a myth, but if the protagonist is a man it is called a legend. Today a myth will usually mean something which is a popular claim, but it is not true.

The narrator is the one that relates the story, and whose information unfolds the plot. The narrative is the story itself.

A novel can be defined as a substantial narrative with many characters and a plot that stretches over a long time span (not always) and may have many settings. There are many sub-categories. (See related node "Literary Genres".)

To be omniscient means "to know it all", and is used about a narrator who is everywhere in the story and can reveal the thoughts of all the characters.

A paradox is a phrase or statement which seems self-contradictory, but turns out to have a valid meaning after all. "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (Shakespeare, *Macbeth*) is an example of a literary paradox.

Pathos is Greek and means deep feeling or passion. Today we associate pathos with a slightly overexposed sentimentality designed to evoke pity or compassion of the reader or a theatre audience.

The plot is the structure and order of actions in a narrative text or a play. (See related link to "Plot" for a more elaborate and precise definition.)

The point of view is also called "angle" and signifies the way a narrative is told, and from where. The point of view will be the eyes through which we see the narrative. (See related link "Point of View" for a more exemplified and detailed definition.)

A satire is a narrative which will expose a questionable practice or element in a subtle and "concealed" way. A satire can be funny, but has a serious intent.

The setting of a narrative or a play will define where and when the plot takes place. The setting will always be strongly related to the plot, and will include description of weather and light / dark. (See "Setting".)

A short-story is exactly that - a short story. It has a condensed plot that evolves over a short time span, and has few characters. (See related links)

This term is used in dramatic literature and means that the actor is speaking to himself, or "aside" as it also is called. It is widely used in many of Shakespeare's plays.

The protagonist is the main character of a narrative. There will also be sub-characters that the protagonist relates to.

"Stream of consciousness" was a term which was introduced during modernism, and means that the narrative is based on what goes on in the mind of a protagonist. It is also called interior monologue.

The style is the way the writer arranges his narrative and his choice of words. The style will be closely connected to the mood and atmosphere.

A symbol is an object, expression or event that represents an idea beyond itself. The weather and light/darkness will often have a symbolic meaning.

In a tragedy an innocent protagonist will be involved in escalating circumstances with a fatal result. The tragic development is either caused by a flaw in the character's personality or by events that evolve beyond his control.

The theme of a narrative or a play is the general idea or underlying message that the writer wants to expose. (See "Theme" for more information)

Poetry Vocabulary List

Forfatter: Eli M. Huseby
Poetry Vocabulary List (15277)

What is Poetry?

Poetry is a compressed form of literature containing words with different layers of meaning. In order to stir emotions various literary devices are used. It may be traditional (with fixed rhyme and rhythm schemes and grammar and syntax) or modern (experimenting with new devices). A poem usually consists of a stanza that is composed of at least one line (verse).

Look at this example from Seamus Heaney's poem "Digging" from 1966:

"Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun." (one stanza, two lines)

Sound

Assonance: a repetition of one particular vowel/sound or group of vowels/sounds.
Here is an example from a rap song called "Hold Ya Head" by Tupac Shakur:
"Expose foes, with my hocus pocus flows/They froze/Now suckas idealize my chosen blows" **Alliteration:** a repetition of one particular consonant/sound.
Let's look at a line from Robert Burn's old love poem from 1794: "O, my Luve's like a red, red rose.." **Onomatopoeia:** when sounds are imitated.
Take a look at these lines from Alfred Tennyson's poem "Come down, O Maid": "The moan of doves in immemorial elms,/And murmuring of innumerable bees." **Rhyme:** when similar sounds are repeated in different words. There are many types of rhymes.
Look at these examples of the most common rhyme schemes:
From a nursery rhyme (*end rhyme*)

> Rain rain go away,
> Come again another day.
> Little Johnny wants to play…

Study the three opening lines from Robert Frost's poem The Road Not Taken from 1915 (*cross rhyme*)

> "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
> And sorry I could not travel both
> And be one traveler, long I stood"

Rhythm: Rhythm is found in all speech. If you clap your name, you'll discover how many syllables it contains. The name "Eminem" contains 3 claps. The American poet Ron Padgett compares rhythm in writing to the beat in music.

Figures of Speech

1. **Similes**: comparisons often containing the explicit words "like" or "as". A further look on Robert Burn's poem (above) reveals an extensive use of similes:

   > "O, my Luve's like a red, red rose,
   > That's newly sprung in June.
   > O, my Luve's like a melodie
   > That's sweetly play'd in tune."

2. **Metaphors:** do NOT contain explicit comparison words, but are still comparisons. In poetry pictures are painted with word art. In his poem "Democracy" from 1949 Langston Hughes compares freedom with a seed.

> “Freedom
> Is a strong seed
> Planted
> In a great need.”

3. **Symbols:** Whereas metaphors and similes are used to make comparisons, symbols are used to represent qualities and values, or they are something in themselves. Objects that are loaded with meanings are crosses, rings and hearts. What do you associate with a tiger? Take a look at this stanza from “The Tyger” by William Blake (1794):

> “Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night,
> What immortal hand or eye
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?”

4. **Allusions:** a literary device that makes a reference to or represents an event, a myth, a place, a famous person or literary or religious texts or art. The artist leaves it to the reader to make the connection. In the lyrics of his song “I Can” Nasir Jones makes an allusion to a famous person/event:
“You can host the TV like Oprah Winfrey”
5. **Repetition**: is used to emphasise something essential. You may study the “I Can” lyrics further: “I know I can, (I know I can), Be what I wanna be (be what I wanna be), if I work hard at it (if I work hard at it), I’ll be where I wanna be (I’ll be where I wanna be)”
6. **Personification** – is a kind of metaphor (look above) that attributes human abilities and qualities to inanimate objects or abstractions. This is an example from Emily Dickinson’s poem “The Train”:

> "I like to see it lap the miles,
> And lick the valleys up,
> And stop to feed itself at tanks;"

Diction

The choice of words according to the tone and mood of the poem. The poet has to consider the word’s denotation (the literal meaning of the word) and its connotation (the feeling, thoughts and ideas aroused by the word).

Theme

What a poem basically is about or the statement the poem or the poet makes about a certain subject.

Writing

Write Your Own Short-Story

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Write Your Own Short-Story (92368)

Creative writing can be fun, but writing a good short story takes talent, skill, and work. To become a successful story writer it is essential to read stories by masters of the art, such as Ernest Hemingway, Anton Tsjekhov, Somerset Maugham or Roald Dahl, and study their techniques and approaches. Furthermore, some feedback from an experienced reader may come in handy during the process, along with an open mind to comments. A successful product will need many rewrites and edits and an idea will also need a certain amount of time to mature. If you want to try your hand at the craft of short story writing the following points will give you some basic guidelines.

Idea and Plot

Old Typewriter

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel

Step one is to come up with an idea that can be developed into a plot. The idea should be original and have some sort of irony or twist to it; for example a protagonist involved in some shady business, who ends up a victim of his own scheme, or it could just be that in the line of events something unforeseen happens that turns the tables completely. Once you have an idea you can start planning the plot. Writers use different techniques for this; some need to have it all worked out in detail before they start writing, whereas others have a fair idea of where the story should go and how it will end, and the plot develops underway. What is most important is to keep in mind the original idea, the turning point or climax, and the twist or irony at the end, then the rest will normally sort itself out during the writing, editing and rewriting.

Composition

The way you organise your plot is crucial to make the reader want to go on reading. Structure or composition means the order of events in a narrative. There are many ways to compose a story; the sequence of events can be told chronologically, or it can be told in flashbacks or in retrospect. Here are some examples of different ways to compose your story.

Start near the ending: A common technique to create suspense is to start the narrative somewhere near the ending and gradually reveal how the line of events developed into this dramatic situation. This will encourage the reader to go on reading, which basically is the point of telling the story in the first place.

Chronological sturcture: The chronological structure is not as boring as it may sound, as long as you manage to keep the attention of the reader it is perfectly all right to start with the beginning and end with the ending.

A story within a story: Still another, somewhat more advanced approach, is to create a story within the frame of another story, where the frame story is the actual narrative, but will be complemented by the “inside” story so the theme will come out on several levels.

Start in the middle of the action: Many writers want to start the narrative in the middle of some action (in medias res), then take a step back and explain the circumstances that led to the situation. This opening may be an effective way to capture the interest of the reader from the start.

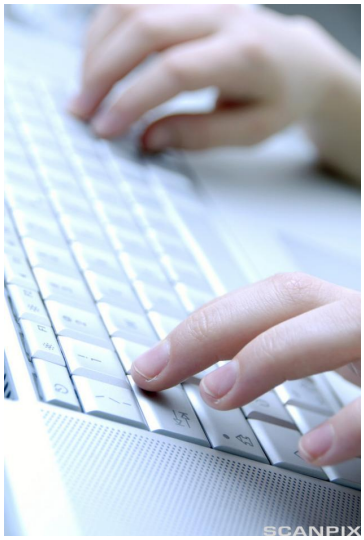
Foreshadowing: Yet another narrative technique is to insert a small element in the beginning that will foreshadow the turning point or the irony that comes later in the story. It will work as a sort of warning and awaken the reader's apprehension for what is to come. This is a way of building a well planned narrative where all the different elements come together as a unit.

Characters and Setting

Usually a short story casts a limited line of characters, mainly because the story is not long enough to display more than one or two personalities. In a short story there should not be more information about the characters than what is strictly relevant for the plot. Based on the information given about the characters the reader must see their actions and behaviour as credible and logical. The setting should be carefully described and go hand in hand with the development of the plot. Weather, day or night, and the environment in general should also have a clear relevance to the action. In a successful short story these elements form a unit that intensifies the narrative as a whole.

Language and Information

This is to some extent a question of talent. Firstly, it is essential for a good story to avoid clichés, verbal as well as structural. (Check Literary Terms in link collection for a definition of verbal and structural clichés.) The language is what carries the entire story, so it is crucial to put some effort into creating an original non-clichéd language. Secondly, it is important not to be too eager and feed the reader with too much information. The trick is to trust the reader's own capability to draw conclusions and understand. For example, an effective ending is to stop the narrative when the reader can imagine the outcome, without being told. Roald Dahl had a way with this. In general, one could say that the ultimate writing process will be mindful of what not to tell, which in a good narrative may be more important than what is told. The underlying information presented in hints and insinuations is what gives depth to a story. Study Hemingway's brilliant technique on this. Keep the description and information strictly to what is necessary for the idea, the atmosphere and the plot. Remember that often "less is more" – and don't underestimate the reader.



Write, edit, rewrite

Fotograf: Science Photo Library

Narrative Angle

This can be tricky. Many amateur writers just go ahead without giving much consideration to the point of view of the story, and they end up with a confusing and illogical narrative. In brief, the angle means who sees, who knows, and who informs.

1st person form: One common point of view is to see the action through the eyes of the protagonist who then relates the story in a 1st person form. This has some advantages and some drawbacks. The benefit is that it will give the narrative a more dramatic and "self-experienced" style which will be easier for the reader to identify with. However, this angle is very limited and will only tell the story as seen and experienced by the protagonist.

3rd person view: A limited 3rd person view will leave the writer more freedom and possibilities as he can describe the action and the protagonist from the outside, and also tell what goes on in his mind. This gives the reader the role of an observer like a fly on the wall, who at the same time can follow the protagonist's reflections.

Omniscient view: The omniscient view is the same as a narrator who is everywhere – in the minds of all the characters and at the same time can describe the action from the outside. This angle is not so common in modern writing; it was more used in traditional folk tales and legends.

Other Elements

Symbols and metaphors: Experienced writers will know how to add symbols and metaphors to their narrative to enhance its thematic significance and give the story a poetic touch. This is a subtle technique and will take some skill and practice to apply. But if it is done with finesse these elements will certainly supplement the story.
Title: The title must sum up the theme or the irony in a brief slogan-like expression. It may look enigmatic and even meaningless to a new reader, but after having read the story, a good title will make sense.
Choice of words: Your choice of words should be careful and conscious. This is more than avoiding clichés, because the vocabulary you apply will also provide the mood and atmosphere of a narrative. It is like painting a picture in colours compared to a black and white image. There are, for example, a number of different words that will cover "dark", and you may choose the one that gives that specific tone which will set the mood just the way you want it. For this purpose it is helpful to work with a good thesaurus at hand; it will present synonyms and different alternatives for the word you want to use
Language freedom: Creative writing is to some extent like freestyle sport. The writer can take liberties with the language that would not be accepted in formal contexts. Incomplete sentences will for example be all right to describe a hectic or dramatic scene, even though your word processor will probably not approve.

Writing a story may seem difficult if one must take all these elements into consideration, and to be honest, it is. Writing is a form of art that will take both learned skills as well as talent. However, with some creativity and practice you may discover your talent as you go along. Go to Mind the Gap (Short Story Writing) for an example of a short story and the techniques used in its construction.

You will find more information about Literary terminology at A Collection of Literary Animations and Literary Terms.

Mind the Gap (Short Story Writing)

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Mind the Gap (Short Story Writing) (92392)

This is a short-story written by a non-professional, and works as an example to demonstrate the different elements and techniques of the writing process. First read "Write your own Short-Story", then read "Mind the Gap" in its entirety, after which you click on (-) for information and comments.

Mind the Gap

The idea is the generation gap, and how a prejudiced elderly man sees the younger generation. The twist or irony is that one of the annoying youngsters actually tries to save his life.

The title brings associations to the London underground, which also is the setting. Whenever the train stops at a station, a voice will call out a warning to "mind the gap" between the train and the platform. But "gap" will here also indicate the generation gap, which is the theme of the story.

Jolting its way southbound on the Piccadilly line, the train was squirming along like a mechanical serpent through the underground darkness of North London. Stations turned up and disappeared into the black again like planets passed by a spaceship on its way to eternity.

This is called the exposition, and will present the basic setting. Note the language and the simile, which gives a poetic touch. There is also a foreshadowing in "on its way to eternity" since the protagonist will have a heart attack later in the story.

Surprisingly few passengers on this late afternoon service. He was alone in his carriage, and it suited him fine. God, he was tired. He closed his eyes, and in spite of the tilting and noise he nearly dozed off. His mind wandered and ran a review of the events of the day. Endless meetings, telephones, tough decisions, and loads of work piling up on his desk. The main office was giving them a hard time. The figures had been disturbingly bad lately, they kept reminding him, so he had to swing the axe. Letting go of good and loyal employees was like cutting his own flesh. But there was no other way.

London Underground
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel

The angle is a limited 3rd person view, since the protagonist is described from the outside as a "he", but the reader can also follow what goes on in his mind. The information comes as a flashback and is relevant for the plot, since it describes his troubled mind. Note also the incomplete sentence in the first line.

And then there was all this other business— his old mum clinging to her flat in Hammersmith, refusing to move to a home, even though she was going on ninety-one. She needed daily attention, but the community carers only had the capacity for three brief visits a week, so the rest was up to him, her only son. Since his dad passed away some years ago, things had become quite demanding. He was on his way there now to do some shopping for her and see that she was all right, after which he would return to his semi-detached in Chiswick, to Jennifer and his private life, such as it was. Their slowly withering relationship was another headache. He could see it, but felt unable to do anything about it, he was simply too tired. And it seemed that old Jen – caring as she was— had also gone into some sort of effortless limbo, doing one day at a time; no past, no future. As a result of what seemed like a wordless agreement between them, they were childless. It simply had never been an issue. And they never had missed it – at least he had not. He had never seen himself as father material.

More relevant background information about the protagonist. This information gives credibility to the character and what happens to him. He has a lot on his mind, and is likely to have a heart attack when he is faced with this situation he can't handle. It adds up to the theme that he and his wife are childless and he doesn't see himself as "father material". Note the expression "his private life, such at it was", which indicates that his private life and marriage are in a poor condition.

The train slowed down and the lights flickered, he opened his eyes– King's Cross. Not many people on the platform, a few commuters heading for some other connection, and 4 or 5 youngsters who were obviously waiting for his train. He prayed silently – please let them pick another carriage and not this one. That's just one thing he wasn't up to now – noisy and self-indulgent youngsters invading his intimacy. He hated that. In fact, he loathed the generation of I-want-it-all-and-I-want-it-now, these self-centred brats who acted like the world belonged to them. God, they were simply so nauseating.

He sighed when the doors opened and he saw that his prayer was going to be unanswered.

This is the turning point of the story, where the action takes a more disturbing direction. He calls them "nauseating", which is a reaction that comes back more strongly later in the story.

The youngsters entered. And what an entrance – one of them stumbled in the gap between the platform and the train and pelted head on into the carriage. It nearly killed the others. They laughed till they cried. The kid who had fallen put on a sheepish grin like he was giving some great performance. Perhaps they were drunk, he could not tell, but that would have made no difference; they were loud intruders and he felt the whole situation closing in on him like a net making it hard to breathe. He kept watching them.

It has an obvious symbolic significance to let one of the youngsters stumble in the gap. Note also the protagonist's reaction, "closing in on him" and "hard to breathe", warnings of what is going to happen to him. His hostility and uneasiness are expressed in "He kept watching them."

They didn't take a seat, though the whole carriage was empty. They just fooled around in the aisle, picking at each other, laughing and screaming at the top of their voices. One of them wore a black tee shirt saying, "Can but won't" in bold letters across his chest. Yes, he thought – that's it. They're just there for the big dessert – the X-generation, skimming the cream of what his generation had built up, not giving a single thought of thankfulness or appreciation. They can– but they won't, that's exactly it. He felt a sudden nausea build up.

Mind The Gap
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel

The tee shirt in a way justifies the protagonist's opinion about young people in general, and works as an emphasis of the theme. The irony is that even though it says, "Can but won't", the kid wearing it later turns out to be the one who both can and will. Here the nausea comes back, which is a symptom of his upcoming heart attack.

Should he be worried? They didn't seem to have noticed him at all, absorbed in their own lurid contentment. But he was alert – such a crowd was known to have caused harm to people. And these kids would no doubt be up to anything once they took notice of him there on his seat. He was feeling a little uneasy and had located the emergency brake, just in case. Pulling it could be what might save his life, he thought. But the kids still had enough with themselves.

He now feels intimidated by the youngsters, and senses a growing fear of being terrorized by them. This increases the suspense of the plot. Here is another foreshadowing: Once he felt the fear, he located the emergency brake that "might save his life", which is exactly what it does later in the story, though not in the way he thought.

Covent Garden, Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus – nobody off, nobody on. He knew the route, having used the same service a thousand times. He knew exactly how many stops there were until his destination at Hammersmith; it would still take him at least another fifteen minutes. He was feeling more and more uncomfortable.
Then one of the youngsters seemed to have noticed him. He pointed and turned to one of his friends, saying something unintelligible in his mate's ear, and they screamed with laughter. He thought – oh, these young monsters, this cruel, indifferent generation of parasites~~,~~ – if only he could tell them. Grow up, for God's sake! When will reality kick in for these ignorant louts? Didn't they have homes? Didn't they have parents to teach them? But they soon lost interest. He was nothing. They were totally engrossed in their own company and kept on fooling around in the aisle.

Now the plot thickens as the youngsters notice him, and the theme becomes more exposed. You may also note the language here, different negative labels used about the youngsters - brats, louts, monsters, parasites. The research work may seem extensive, but it is just a map of the London underground.

Next stop: Green Park. He could get off here and get a taxi, or he could get out and get into another carriage, but he didn't~~–~~ that would be overreacting, he told himself. These kids are harmless, they are noisy and repulsive, but they probably wouldn't hurt a fly. Still, he glanced at the emergency brake again; sort of making sure it was still there.

Now one of them was standing on a seat making obscene gestures while the others were laughing their heads off. He sighed and had to look away. He turned his head to the window only to see the reflection of his own face in the dark mirror. This must come to a stop, he thought. The nausea kept coming back, stronger this time.

Now the climax is coming up, "This must come to a stop", and it most certainly does a few seconds later. The black mirror works as a symbol foreshadowing what happens next, so does the recurring nausea.

Then suddenly a flaming pain exploded in his chest, a burning ache that seemed to tear his upper torso apart. He couldn't breathe, and then it all went black.

The youngster standing on the seat noticed the old man collapse, and stopped his performance for a second. A bit bewildered he stepped down and walked down the aisle to see what had happened. The others stopped their joking and looked at their mate, still with the last grin on their faces. Then they slowly joined their friend who had reached the now empty seat. He saw the man lying partly on the floor with eyes wide open, and saliva running from the corner of his mouth; his face greyish white. He had clearly passed out; he might even be dead – or dying… The boy called to the others, "Emergency brake – now!" Then he bent over and loosened the man's tie, pulled him out into the aisle and started heart compression. He seemed to know what he was doing.

It is a point that this happens when the man has passed out. At that point he does not know that all his prejudices are being crushed. Perhaps he will learn later. Note that the angle does not change, the readers only get to know what the boy does, not what he thinks. And a touch of poetic language - "the now empty seat".

The train didn't stop immediately, but slowed down into Knightsbridge station. The boy kept pounding the man's chest and pulled back his head giving him two kisses of life every thirty thumps. Sweat appeared on his brow and his black tee shirt was getting wet down his back.

When the train stopped two attendants came running, ready for what they thought had been a prank by kids out for some Friday night excitement. It would not have been the first time. They soon got a picture of the situation and they knew the drill.

After some minutes the ambulance arrived after having fought its way through the traffic on Sloane Street, and the paramedics came rushing down the steps with a stretcher. Before they left with the man, one of the ambulance men said to the boy, “Good work– you may have saved his life here, son – you probably have.”
In the streets above the ambulance was flashing its way through the late afternoon traffic toward Hammersmith Hospital, and the train continued its voyage into the dark and amazing underworld of London.

Knightsbridge Station
Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel

An important detail is that his black tee shirt is mentioned again. The irony is quite obvious. But note that it is not explicitly told, it is left to the readers to reflect on. It is also not mentioned whether the man survived, which is not so relevant for the plot. But according to the paramedics he probably did, and hopefully he later found out how. But that's another story. Note also the language - "voyage" instead of journey - which makes it sound more like a life journey. "The amazing underworld" also gives the end a poetic touch, indicating that surprising things may happen when you least expect them to, and "underworld" gives a different and more mystic association than "underground" which was used at the beginning.
The composition of the story is fairly chronological with a few flashbacks to give information about the protagonist's background.

Inspiration

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Inspiration (98136)

Do you feel the urge to write but lack the idea and inspiration? Don't worry – all writers have been there. The creative process will need some sort of a kick-off to get moving. It may be a picture, a sudden idea or it may come as a reaction to a personal experience or an emotional sensation. This page may provide you with some inspiration for a writing process. Study the images and the small poems attached, and let your mind wander…

Footprints

Lovers on the beach leave their footprints in the sand
And they don't sense the change in the wind
There is a lesson to be learned
When the tide has turned
And the waves start rolling in

Footprint in the sand

Fotograf: Jan-Louis Nagel

Horizon

Out there is the line between heaven and earth
The horizon is as far as I can see
Something is calling me to go and find
What lies beyond there for me
I will venture the voyage across the sea
In spite of the waves and the wind
I will pursue my dream indefatigably
Till the day my ship comes in

Horizon

Fotograf: Jan-Louis Nagel

Your Keeper

When life is giving you a tumble
And the bargaining is hard
You would like to think that somewhere
There is somebody on guard
But if you're going down
And you feel it's getting deeper
That someone may be thinking
I'm not my brother's keeper

Lifeguard off Duty

Fotograf: Jan-Louis Nagel

Rules

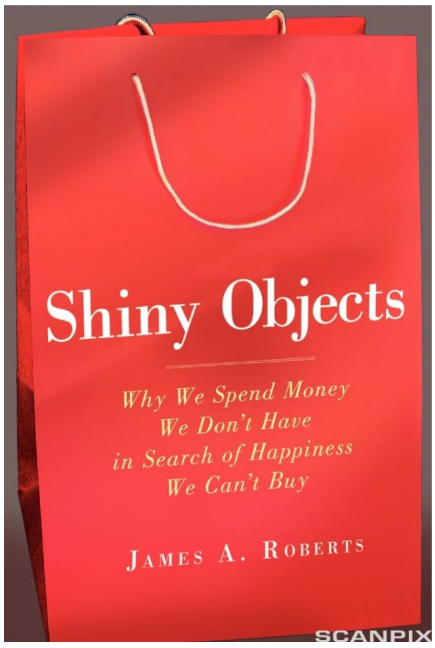
Take heed of traffic signals
Be always prepared to give way
In traffic and in life
There are rules we must obey
And if a rule is broken
somewhere underway
In traffic and in life -
There is a price to pay

Traffic Sign

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel

Happiness

How can happiness be measured?
How can we define its bliss?
Some say money, some say gold
Some say in a kiss
But when you count your assets
And ask what more it's about
Don't forget all those things
You should be glad to be without



Shiny Objects

Writing a Literary Essay

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Writing a Literary Essay (94515)

An important competence aim for this course is to write essays or articles on literary or cultural issues, and the evaluation of this competence will be a dominating element of your final assessment. Your text can be a hand-in, a part of a full-day test or the written exam. In all cases, it is important that you show that you are able to present a good text both with regard to composition and language. This takes practice and skill, but not as much talent as you may think. These are some basic guide-lines to improve your essay-writing.

Plan and Idea

It is imperative that you have a good **plan** for what you want to present. Spend some time to put down all the elements you want to include in **key words**. It is NOT a good idea to start writing right away with a vague idea of where the article is going to lead, hoping that the text will sort itself out as you go along. Your **disposition** may be a list of pros and cons of some issue, or the different elements you want to include in your presentation of a topic.
Once you have sorted and ordered the elements, you should stick to your plan, but you must keep an open mind for changing the disposition, for example the order of points, when you see how your text is coming along. Your word processor is a perfect tool for this; it gives you the opportunity to **cut and paste** and to edit during and after the process, so your text comes out as a coherent, logical and readable product.

Writing an essay
Fotograf: Science Photo Library

Composition

This means the **order of the points** you are going to focus on. For example, if you are going to present an author and / or a literary work, there is a traditional and safe way of going about it. You may want to start out with a brief presentation of the author before you follow the usual points of text analysis (brief plot summary, setting, characters, theme, title, mood, and so on). A comparison between e.g. two novels, stories, films or film versus book is another usual assignment. A word of advice is to separate the two elements in a **well-balanced composition**; after which you sum up with a conclusion. Remember also that your presentation should be well structured with **paragraphs** and a clear **coherence** between the different parts.

Language

This is usually what separates a good essay from a bad one. Step one is to remember that this is a formal context and you that you definitely should **avoid colloquial language**, for example snappy phrases that are meant to communicate with the reader (*"Now, what do you think of that?" or "Guess what happened next, - you're in for a surprise, my friend."*) Next, you should **abandon abbreviations**, (that's, they're, it's and so on) these belong in informal contexts like dialogues and informal letters.
But what is more important are your **vocabulary** and your choice of words and expressions. Some writing practice and feedback from your teacher will soon improve your written language and vocabulary. A simple starting point here is to get control of your **sentence structure**. Some students seem to think that the more words they put into a sentence and the longer the sentence is, the better. That is rubbish! It may look impressive to you, but remember that your sentence must be comprehensible and logical to the reader, not only to the writer. Keep it **brief and to the point**.
Many students depend on a dictionary. A **dictionary** may be a good tool but there are pitfalls. Be careful when you look up a Norwegian word, because the dictionary does not know what you want to express, and will just present a selection of possible translations of that word, so beware and don't trust your dictionary in all cases. A **thesaurus** is a better tool; this will give alternatives for the English word that first pops up in your head. For example, there are plenty of words that will cover "dark"; a good thesaurus will help you find the exact alternative you want.
A good variety of **linking words** *(in addition, moreover, on the other hand, furthermore* are examples of linking words.) is also what may give your essay the final touch language-wise. A linking word will connect your points and make your account come out as a logical and coherent text. Check the related link for information and tasks on linking words and text cohesion.

Text Cohesion

Editing

Once you think you have finished a product it is essential to go back, because this is really what may **improve your essay**. Be critical and be hard on yourself! *(Is this clear? Is this sentence ok, or should I rewrite it? Do I use the same expression too often? Can I put this more simply? Do I repeat myself?*) If this is done properly it may well take more time than the actual writing, but it is crucial that you do it. For a home project or hand-in this should not be a problem (a long as you start in time…) But for a school assignment it could be a challenge, because there is a limited amount of time on your hands. Be effective, plan your work according to the time you have, and save at least the last hour for editing. Use your word processor for all it is worth. However, don't always trust your correction programme, because it does not know what you are trying to say. For example, it will not separate between *were* and *where*, since they both are normal English words – and you will not get a signal if you go for the wrong alternative.

Sources

Today there is so much information easily accessible on the net that it is easy to get lost, and in fact difficult to choose which background material you should use. It is usual to list your sources at the end of a text, but what is more important is to **be critical** of what you use and how you include it. It is perfectly all right to quote some source, but what is NOT all right is to steal some text and present it as your own. The cut-and-paste method is not the way to go, and will easily be revealed, usually with unwanted consequences…

Conclusion

Formal writing skills can be learned. It is not as much a question of talent as for example creative writing. There are some basic rules to be observed, and it takes practice, feed-back and more practice. A summing-up in key words:

- A good plan and strategy
- Disposition in key words
- Composition, coherence, and balance
- Avoid abbreviations and informal language
- Brief and to the point
- Use a thesaurus
- Linking words
- Edit and rewrite
- Self-criticism (see yourself as the reader)
- Be careful with sources

Note: Don't mix the English word "essay" with the similar Norwegian term. A Norwegian "essay" is a "personal essay" in English. The English "essay" is simply an article or a factual text.

Suggested Topics for Essay Wrting

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Suggested Topics for Essay Writing (121049)

1. In what way can Prince Hamlet be called a typical Renaissance man?
2. Compare the cultural and scientific ideals of the Renaissance and / or the Enlightenment to our modern day ideals. Discuss contrasts and similarities.
3. *Hamlet* is brimming with gory details and supernatural elements. What role do such elements have in today's film and literature?
4. Compare *Gulliver's Travels* to *Robinson Crusoe* and discuss their different approach to adventure and discovery.
5. Robinson Crusoe – a typical Enlightenment man.
6. Why are travel accounts and diaries such a popular genre?
7. One of the most important ideals of the Romantic era was to stand up for one's freedom, personal as well as political freedom. Do we have literature and / or films today that inspire to "fight for your right"?
8. Discuss some of the morally debatable issues raised in Mary Shelley's*Frankenstein*. Does this have relevance today?
9. What is implied in the full title: *Frankenstein or A Modern Prometevs*?
10. Can we say that the romantic ideals are still alive today?
11. How can we say that Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* is a complex and disturbed character, but still with simple and recognisable human traits?
12. Write your own Gothic horror story.
13. Write an analysis of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*where you focus on different thematic interpretations.
14. Read the short story "Lispeth" by Rudyard Kipling, and discuss its relevance to the British Empire.
15. One of Dickens' usual literary devices was humour. Find examples in*Oliver Twist* and / or *Hard Times* and discuss the effect of such a device.
16. Dickens often used child protagonists in his books; discuss the effect of that.
17. Write a text where you present how the English class system took form during the Victorian Age.
18. Read the poem "Richard Cory" by E A Robinson and discuss its relevance to American ideals such as the American Dream.
19. Compare the two Kate Chopin stories "Desiree's Baby" and "The Story of an Hour."
20. Discuss the two slogans "At Heaven's Command" and "Manifest Destiny".
21. Read the short story "The Drover's Wife" and discuss why that story has become a national iconic story of Australia.
22. Read the short story "How the Garden Grows" by W B Jenkins and write an article where you discuss the pros and cons of surrogacy.
23. Discuss the statement: Modernism is really not modern at all.
24. Read "Eveline" by James Joyce. Give a characterisation of the main character and explain why she chooses as she does.
25. Discuss how "Popular Mechanics" by Raymond Carver deals with divorce as a theme.
26. Why do you think the modernists were so disillusioned and pessimistic?
27. Why does a film adaption of a good novel often come out as lacking and disappointing compared to the book?

Use, Evaluate and Cite Sources of Information

Forfatter: Anne Scott Hagen, Hanne Nesset
Use, Evaluate and Cite Sources of Information (130829)

Using information sources correctly is a necessary skill when asked to prepare a report, write an essay or make a presentation. Books, newspapers, the Internet are all examples of information sources and it is important to be aware of the use and limitations of them. Below you will find a description of how to use, evaluate and cite sources of information, followed by an example of a reference list.

How to Use, Evaluate and Cite Sources of Information / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/130853

Referencing Styles

There are several styles of referencing. At upper secondary school, there are no rules as to which style should be used. What is important is that you stick to ONE style. Below is an example of a reference list.

Example of Reference List

Books

Include:

Author/s, (Publication year) *Title: Subtitle,* Place published: Publisher

For example:

James, P.D. (2011) Death Comes to Pemberley, London: Faber and Faber Ltd. In text: (James, 2011)
Munro, A. (2012) *Dear Life,* London: Chatto & Windus

In text: (Munro, 2012)

Skifjeld, K., Rodgers, D., Sandor, C., Huseby E., and Løken, K.D. (2007) *Global Paths,* N.W. Damm & Son AS.

In text: (Skifjeld et al. 2007, p. 48)

Website

Include:

Author/s / Organisation, (Year) *Title of article,* Date accessed at: full internet address

For example:

Sparknotes, Literature and Study Guides, (2013) *Pride and Prejudice,* Accessed January 8, 2014 at: http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pride/

In text: (Sparknotes, Literature and Study Guides, 2013)

Journal / Magazine Article

Include:

Author/s of article, (Year) Article title, *Journal title,* volume(issue number), date, page number

For example:

Knowles, L. (2013) New beginnings: Stonehenge, *English Heritage,* October 2013, p. 18.

In text: (Knowles, 2013)

No author:

The Economist, (2013) The East is Grey, volume 408, (8848), August 10th - 16th, p. 17

Newspaper Article

Include**:**

Author/s of article, (Year) Title of article. *Newspaper title*, date, page number.

For example:

Ackerman, S. and Roberts, D. (2014) NSA phone surveillance deemed illegal, *The Guardian Weekly*, 31 January - 6 February, p. 9.

In text: (Ackerman and Roberts, 2014)

News / Newspaper Article from the Internet

Include**:**

Author/s of article, (Year) Title of article, *Newspaper title,* Date, Date accessed at: full internet address

For example:

Hurley, D. (2014) Can Reading Make You Smarter?, The Guardian (Culture), 23 January, Accessed 28 January 2014 at: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/jan/23/can-reading-make-you-smarter In text: (Hurley, 2014)
Osborne, M. (2013) Death Comes to Pemberley: Darcy takes on murder mystery, *BBC: News Entertainment and Arts,* 20 December, Accessed January 8, 2014 at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-25262352

In text: (Osborne, 2013)

Oral Source

DO NOT CITE IN REFERENCE LIST, ONLY IN TEXT.

For example:

In text: C. Gardiner, English Teacher, said in class on 15 January 2014 that English is a Germanic language.

Blog

Include:

Author. (Year) Article title, Blog title, web log post, date, accessed date at: full internet address

For example:

Michaelson, A. (2014) BBC News; Social media transforms the textbook classroom, *Teaching using web tools: Education, Lesson Plans, Technology blog*, web log post, 31 January, Accessed 6 February 2014 at: http://annmic.wordpress.com/ In text: (Michaelson 2014)

In text: (Michaelson, 2014)

Digital Photograph

Include:

Photographer/Institution, (Year) *Title,* Accessed at: internet address

For example:

Dawson, L. (2008) *RMIT University students show their collections at Melbourne Spring Fashion Week*, Accessed 28 January at: http://www.flickr.com/photos/rmit/2965084995/

11 Plans, Extras, and Revision

Advanced

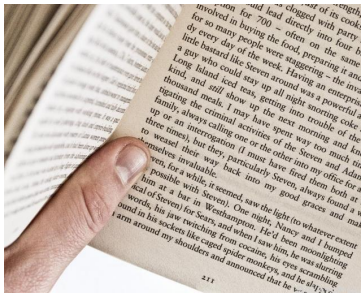
Literature in Theory

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Literature in Theory (98155)

Since ancient times, scholars have tried to understand literature as a form of art. Philosophers have launched theories from different angles and perspectives, wanting to frame the essence of good literature. It is interesting that much of the theoretic groundwork has not changed much since ancient times; Aristotle is still a standard reference in literary theory. Traditionally, literary theorists have followed two main directions: those who want to see the text in its socio-cultural context, and those who want to understand a text by an isolated and in-depth study. Both directions have their devoted followers among scholars and literary critics. It is, however, not possible to discard one theory in favour of the other; they may both be adequate approaches to studying and understanding literature.

The Socio-Cultural Perspective

A literary text does not emerge on its own accord. Even though the text is an independent work of art, the writer is there somewhere in or behind his text. Hence, to comprehend the universe of a novel or a play, one has to take in the full picture – the writer's personal frame of mind and his contemporary cultural environment. The idea behind a text comes through the author's personal experience or emotional sensation. In a blunt way, it may be correct to claim that all literature is about the author himself. So if we want to understand his work, we must understand the writer. If we look at e.g. Dickens or Hemingway, this seems to be an applicable approach; these two authors are very much present in their works. Without his reporting practice and experiences from the court of law, Dickens probably would not have been able to create his literary universe of ordinary people victimised by political misrule and aristocratic foolishness. And Hemingway's affinity to hunting, weapons and death is clearly reflected in his literature. The same goes for Mark Twain, whose childhood experiences along the Mississippi river and his own career as a pilot on the river gave him material for his great books. Like everybody else, the writer is a child of his times. What separates him from other people is his talent for transforming the elements that formed him into literature; that is – to put his own identity on paper.



The text comes alive
Fotograf: Tarjei E. Krogh

The Text Perspective

Once the text has left the author, it is dead until its universe comes alive in the encounter with the reader. The full appreciation of a literary text is completely separated from its social context and its creative process. The only thing that matters is how the reader responds to the literary universe the text unfolds. The author has absolutely nothing to do with the way his work is perceived by the reader. The writer has done his bit; the rest is up to you. To fully understand and appreciate a literary work, one must study it carefully and read it over again to grasp all the details in technique, composition, atmosphere, and structure. It is essential to understand how the text works on you as a reader, and why it works like that. To achieve this, the reader must wear blinkers to block out possible disturbing elements that can come between him and the text, such as e.g. the author, his background, and the social circumstances around the writing process. The point is not to try and find the writer's intention with his work or his thematic focus. It is like observing an abstract painting – the point is not what the painter has meant it to look like; the point is what it looks like to you. This isolated or vertical study opens up for the personal experience that reading actually is: a private affair between text and reader.

Conclusion

To make the point, these two perspectives are presented in a somewhat extreme manner. It is, in fact, quite possible to support both aspects, because one of them does not rule out the other. To some extent, it is important to be aware of the cultural background of a literary work. For example, when one reads feminist literature from the last half of the 19th century (e.g. Kate Chopin or Amalie Skram), it is important to know a bit about the status of women in society at the time. And some information about the social conditions in Victorian England may enhance the understanding and appreciation of Charles Dickens. One may still read the text vertically and cherish all its literary qualities; because at the end of the day, what counts is how the text comes alive in the mind of the reader.

Activities

- Which of the two directions do you think works best for an understanding of a literary text?
- What does it mean that "the writer is a child of his times"?
- What is meant by "vertical" as opposed to "horizontal" reading?
- Follow the link and read what the old philosophers Plato and Aristotle said about the nature of good literatureOld Ideas Still Rule Compare with the information in this article. Are their theories relevant today?
- Can you think of other examples where knowledge of the writer's socio-cultural background is important for the understanding of his text?
- Follow the links and read more about the life and times ofErnest Hemingway Charles Dickens and Mark Twain

Old Ideas Still Rule

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Old Ideas Still Rule (98433)

It is an amazing fact that theories about literature that were launched nearly two and a half thousand years ago are still relevant and valid. The ancient Greek philosophers, Aristotle (384-322 BC) and Plato (427-347 BC), both wanted to frame the essence of adequate literature; and their theories are even today standard measures of the art of writing. At that time, the poets and writers were seen as the interpreters of the gods, and their creations were voices of a divine origin. Today's writers are seldom described quite like that, but the old ideas about talent and inspiration still preoccupy both writers and theorists.

Plato and Realism

Plato with his disciple Aristotle

Unlike Aristotle, his disciple, Plato, did not leave a specific work exclusively about literature. Plato's ideas about the art of writing are presented in some of the dialogues in his major work, "The State". In Plato's ideal universe, the writer possessed a divine gift that would bestow him with a creative "madness". The Greek word "enthousiasmos" and the Latin "inspiration" both mean the same – something which is spiritually imbued by a god, meaning that a god has suffused the human mind. Writers of all times have been seeking this "divine madness" to set them off.

Plato pointed out that a narrative is a copy or a representation of reality, and will therefore never be "true". He compared writers to painters or sculptors, who also presented replicas of the real world. This idea has been a recurring issue in literary history up until today. Literature as an imitation of reality became a central point during Realism. What is real, and how is reality related to "realistic" writing? According to Marxist ideology, the writer is a messenger who dutifully must present, or represent, reality as accurately as possible to incite the reader to see what changes must be made. Marx had definitely studied Plato. Another well-known example that puts art in a "Platonic" perspective is modernist painter René Magritte's famous painting of a pipe – with the title "This Is Not a Pipe".

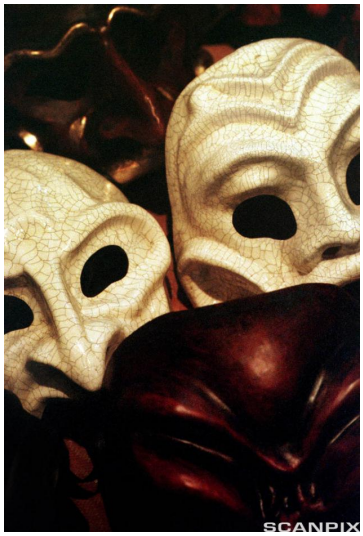
Plato also raised the issue of the writer's presence in his work. Though with a slightly different angle, this point goes straight into an on-going discussion in literary theory: is the author's socio-cultural setting important for an understanding of his work, or does the text stand alone as an independent work of art?

Aristotle and Literature

One of the standard studies of literary theory of all times is Aristotle's "Poetics", which is an extensive theoretic analysis of literature in general, and covers the definitions of the different genres, literary techniques, and other aspects of the writing process. His work has become the dogmatic framework for many writers and theorists, both classic and contemporary.

Like Plato, Aristotle claims that all arts are an imitation of reality, only with different means. Imitation is for man a natural instinct that gives pleasure and insight. As children, we have the instinctive ability to imitate, and this urge for imitation is the source of literature, according to Aristotle. Writers are people with a special talent for imitation.

Comedy and Tragedy



Theatre masks

Fotograf: Birgitte Aasen

Aristotle defines comedy as an imitation of people "of lesser human quality". The comical element lies in some sort of a flaw or imperfection which is presented in a distorted way without the intention to hurt. The comical effect springs from its human and identifiable properties. In ancient Greece, it was common for actors to wear masks, which was a way to illustrate the nature of the play and to prepare the audience. The two classic masks for comedy and tragedy have since become an iconic symbol of theatre and drama in general.

The tragedy is a presentation which, by imitating a sad and grave reality, will put the audience in a state of pity and fear. The plot (the fable or the Greek word "mythos") is, according to Aristotle, the soul of the tragedy. The composition of the “mythos” will be the imitation of a series of events that ends in a disaster for the protagonist(s). The character is unable to prevent the disaster from striking, either because of ignorance or due to a flaw in his personality. Ideally, the tragedy will bring about “catharsis”, which means a cleansing of the soul. The essence of a tragedy is, according to Aristotle, when painful acts are performed between characters that are not enemies, but related as friends or family. He gives examples from classic Greek tragedies, such as “Medea” by Euripides, where Medea kills her own children, and “Oedipus” by Sophocles, where the protagonist, out of ignorance, kills his father and marries his mother.

The Legacy

It is interesting to see how Aristotle’s theories of both comedy and tragedy are manifested in the works of William Shakespeare. “Hamlet” is a classic example of how the grave reality draws Prince Hamlet into an escalating series of tragic events beyond his control. Also, in his comedies it is clear that Shakespeare works by Aristotle’s principles of comedy. And in recent times, Charlie Chaplin seemed to be familiar with the same principles; his characters are human but with a certain imperfection that is displayed without a harmful intention. And we laugh at Mr Bean and Basil Fawlty for the exact same reason: they are, as Aristotle would have put it, “of lesser human quality”. Still, we can easily recognise, and even identify ourselves with, their human traits.

Through history, many theories have been launched about the art of writing. Theorists and writers have wanted to frame the process that lies behind the art of literature. And the fact that these ancient ideas and theories still hold water after such a long time may in some way indicate the timelessness of the basic elements of literature. After all, as humans, we probably have not changed that much since the time of Plato and Aristotle – we still want to be entertained and to be emotionally moved by watching a dramatic performance or by reading a good narrative.

Tasks and Activities

- Why do we sometimes have to remind ourselves that "it is only a story" or "it is only a film"?
- Explain why children have an instinctive talent for imitation.
- Give a definition of "inspiration". Then check with a dictionary or thesaurus and compare.
- Google Renè Magritte and find his famous painting of a pipe. Why can he say that "This is not a pipe"?
- Theories about literature have been launched both by professional literary scholars and by writers. Do you think a writer will be more qualified to define a writing process and the art of literature? Give reasons for your answer.
- A tragedy is more than a sentimental piece that makes you sad. Sum up the basic elements of a tragedy according to Aristotle.

- Like the tragedy, the comedy also has some mandatory and recognisable ingredients. Follow the link and read more about Humour in Literature and Film.
- Read more about Literature in Theory and see how the ideas of the old philosophers have manifested themselves in today's literary debate.

Communicating Literature

Literature in the Classroom

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Literature in the Classroom (98287)

Given the fact that reading is a very private experience, it may seem like a mission impossible to instruct other people what to read and how to understand a literary text. To some degree, there is a bit of truth in that; for one person (the teacher) to pick a certain literary work and impose it on other people (the students) may seem like violating some private sphere. Firstly, one should be careful to advise other people what to read at all, and secondly, the understanding of a text will most likely vary from person to person. Still, communicating and discussing literature is an important and enriching process that, without doubt, belongs in an educational context.

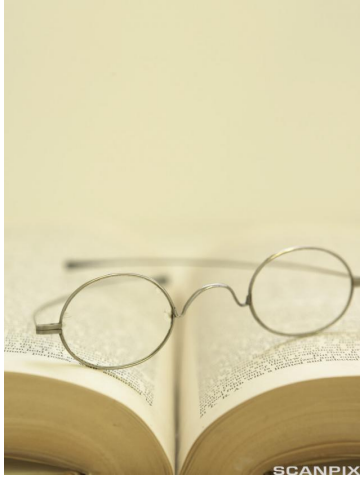
On the Surface

Student Sleeping on Stack of Books

Traditionally, literature teaching will be dominated by two major elements: text analysis and cultural history. They are both somewhat overestimated as a classroom activity, and often become dead boring after some lessons. The basic analysis (plot, characters, setting and so on) merely provides the tools for an instrumental understanding of a text. And if tools are not used carefully, they may, in fact, ruin the material. It is not hard to kill a text by analysing it to smithereens. Usually, the teaching of literature will also include some basic factual information about the cultural trends and major writers from different periods in literary history, which is quite legitimate and even important from a general educational viewpoint. But understanding the dialectics of cultural history is interesting only if one wants to get the full overview of what writers were preoccupied with in their time. The appreciation of a text, however, does not depend on information about when and why it was written or how it is put together – these elements just drift on the surface, so to speak. So the ambition must be to go beyond the technical work and look for a more profound, and perhaps even existential, comprehension of a literary text. The essential issues are: what makes this text work; how does it work; does it work differently on us; where does this leave me as the reader?

Learning for Life

All activity in school is (or should be) aimed at enhancing the students' competence. Students are supposed to learn and gain knowledge they hopefully will profit from later in life. Real competence is when we see that what we learn actually has a relevant meaning in our own lives. However, for most students the primary ambition in a hectic school day is simply to get by; it is all about testing and assessment, grades and a diploma that will open doors to moving on in the educational system so they may one day have a job with a decent income. For the students, this may be "learning for life" – but somehow that phrase usually has a slightly different connotation. It may sound ambitious, but literature in the classroom can introduce the students to how literature enhances our social understanding, and in that way really become learning for life. A literary text may open up for an understanding of human relations, interaction, instincts, ambitions, emotions – all these familiar elements of what it is to be human. Most any text will objectively be of use if one can see its universal reflection of reality. It can provide knowledge of people and their surroundings, challenges and responses – which in turn may work upon how we see our own lives in relation to the same issues.



Looking for Reality

Communicating literature is more than presenting factual knowledge about literature as such; it is to convey knowledge about people and human interaction. For example, a discussion about literature in relation to reality is something different from cramming a text book definition of "realism" as a socio-critical approach. This means that one must establish some sort of distance to the actual text, and ask the right questions. Then one may find an understanding of the textual universe which, in turn, may provide a new insight. The text is always some reflection of reality; it does not give the answers, but it may open for a chain of responses that will ultimately challenge your own moral standards and view of reality. In this respect, reading virtually can become learning for life.

Method and Practice

There are several ways to go about this. A usual approach is to use the text as a starting point and take it from there. However, it is quite possible to go the other way round and start with a general dialogue, in groups or in class, that will raise some of the issues that will be brought up in the text. Or one may even do both – a brief introductive thematic approach, e.g. a slightly provocative statement which the students may discuss and reflect upon - then do the text and end up with a more extensive analysis of the issue raised initially, only this time related to the text.

Some examples:

- Cloning and genetic manipulation in connection to *Frankenstein*. How far is it possible, or ethically right, to go in medical research?
- Connected to *Jekyll and Hyde*. What is schizophrenia, or how can certain drugs affect your personality? Is there such a thing as a duality of man? Do we all have a darker side that can be brought out under certain circumstances?
- Youth depression connected to *The Catcher in the Rye*. What is it like, and how common is the condition? Why do some young people just give up and even turn suicidal? (Here one is advised to go in with caution...)
- In connection to *Popular Mechanics* (Raymond Carver). What can a break-up or a divorce bring about in a person? Different custody arrangements. (Here many of the students most likely will have personal experiences; one should step lightly here as well…)
- Moral and ethics in connection to *Huckleberry Finn*. How far can you go to justify crime? Are our moral standards flexible? Is it OK to commit a crime because the overall intention is good? Will that depend on the gravity of the situation, or do we have a barrier of consistency somewhere?

- In connection to Dickens (e.g. *Oliver Twist*, *Little Dorrit*, or *Bleak House*), an idea is to focus on the development of the legal system over the last century or so. What changes do we find, and why have these changes come about? Is there abuse of power in the court-rooms today around the world? How does the legal system work in a democracy? Was Victorian England a democracy? What do we do to prevent the abuse of power in the political system?
- Love and jealousy are strong emotions. In connection to *Wuthering Heights*, a relevant starting point could be to focus on love as a destructive force. Is it possible to love and hate someone at the same time? How far would we be willing to go to pursue love? Is love an obsession that, if it is strong enough, eventually turns against itself?

Questions

There are, in fact, loads of real-life issues that can be brought up in connection to nearly any literary text, classic or contemporary. The ambition is to create a dialectic correlation between literature and life. How does the protagonist(s) reflect and act to get out of his predicament? Or – how did he end up in one in the first place? Could it have been prevented by a different turn of the plot? Would it turn out differently in real life? Why? Hypothetically – what would you have done in the same situation? Have you experienced how your human ideals are challenged once reality kicks in? These and similar questions may incite a fruitful dialogue, in class or in groups, that will challenge the students to see the relevance of a literary text and to reflect upon the human capacity to handle real-life situations.

Suggested Themes for Oral Presentation

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Suggested Themes for Oral Presentation (121048)

One of the competence aims of this course is to do an in-depth study of a chosen topic, and make a presentation for the class. Below are listed some suggested themes for an oral presentation. Before you start you are well advised to check out these guidelines for making a good presentation:

How to Make an Oral Presentation

How to Make a Mini Presentation

How to Make a Visual Presentation

Curricular Themes:

- The Rennaisance – a new beginning.
- Hamlet – a true Rennaisance Man.
- Shakespeare – comedy, tragedy – and fake?
- "Rule Britannia" – The British Empire.
- Queen Elizabeth I
- The Enlightenment and Religion
- Defoe and Swift – a comparison.
- Benjamin Franklin
- Romanticism – a political awakening
- The Gothic Novel
- Mary Shelley's Frankenstein – then and now.
- Poetry – the true expression of the Romantic age
- The Noble Savage – a Romantic ideal
- Destructive Love – a study of Wuthering Heights
- Edgar Allan Poe and the gothic mystery tale
- The Victorian Age – the birth of modern Britain
- Oliver Twist – a child of the Victorian Age
- The duality of man – Jekyll and Hyde in retrospective.
- Oscar Wilde – a serious dandy.
- Rudyard Kipling – an imperialist writer?
- "Manifest Destiny" – the USA in the 19th century
- The Transcendentalists
- Modernism – anything goes
- Modernist painters
- Ernest Hemingway and modernism
- James Joyce

Miscellaneous cultural issues:

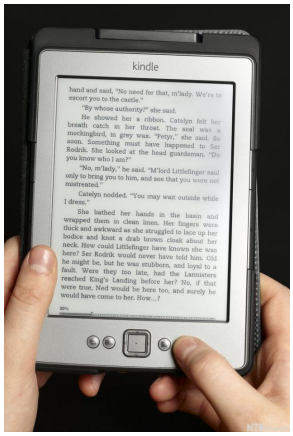
- Cartoons and animations – more than Disney
- Hollywood – a critical look at present-day American culture.
- Monty Python, MR Bean and British Humor.
- South Park and The Simpsons – satire or just fun?
- Gaming for learning.
- Blogging and social media
- TV series and escapism
- What makes a successful TV series?
- Fantasy and the supernatural. (Why is Harry Potter so popular?)
- The Lord of the Rings – the ultimate story of the fight between good and bad
- The female protagonist – feminist culture
- Youth culture – protest, punk, rap and hip-hop

Library and Links

Link Library

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Link Library (120037)

Below we present a selection of external links for further reading. There are a number of sites on the net that offer literature for either reading online or free download. The following links are ranked as some of the most comprehensive and user frendly on the net. Most of these links offer mainly fiction, both classical and contemporary, there is also a link to audiobooks. You you will also find some links covering writers, periods, literary genres and comments / anlysis of literary works. These resources may save you some research work when you prepare your oral presentation.



Kindle Amazon Electronic Reader
Fotograf: Kerstin Mertens

ManyBooks

The Online Books Page

The Online Literature Library

ReadAnyBook

Page By Page Books

The Open Library

Author Interviews (World Book Club, BBC)

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare

The Victorian Web

Short Stories

The Norton Anthology of English Literature

Audiobooks and Podcasts

American Short Story Library

The Online English Library

Poetry

Comments and Analysis

Plans

Planning the Year

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Planning the Year (121050)

This is a suggested year schedule that offers enough material to cover the competence aims in the Norwegian national curriculum. The selection is only a part of the material we provide, check out the menus for alternatives and extras.

One of the competence aims of this course is to do an in-depth study of a chosen topic and make a presentation for the class. It is advisable to get on with this project the sooner the better; here we offer some Guidelines and Suggested Themes for Oral Presentation.

The national curriculum also requires that the students read two full-length novels. You may check out One to Read for suggested alternatives or visit our Link Library which offers an amount of novels, both classic and contemporary.

Rather than a traditional week by week schedule, we present a suggested period plan in eleven phases. Since there are a lot of topics to cover, it is essential for the teacher to continually monitor the progress and the time spent on each phase. With five lessons a week the suggested plan gives you a good margin for expanding some of the phases, for example to watch a film or two, or work with some of the additional material on our menus.

Phase One: Enjoying Literature

Estimated time: Three-four weeks

Read some stories from our selection of short stories, suggested titles: The Story of an Hour Popular Mechanics, How the Garden Grows, The Drover's Wife, The Sun in My Eyes, Flush of Gold. Then go ahead with an introduction to Basic Short Story Analysis. For more short story analysis, check also Looking for Literary Devices. There is even a

Literary Terms Quiz / h5p_content
http://ndla.no/en/node/108888

and a task where you can Check Your Literary Vocabulary. Note that there is an extensive selection of short stories in Link Library.
This phase may be concluded with some creative writing. After having read and worked with short stories some of the students may be up for the challenge: Write Your Own Short-Story. There is a demonstration story, Mind the Gap, which presents the technique of short story writing, and also some suggested themes for Inspiration.

Phase Two: The Renaissance

Estimated time: Three-four weeks

It is advisable to do the cultural periods chronologically, and start with An Introduction to the Renaissance , and perhaps also to introduce The Language of the Elizabethan Age. William Shakespeare will have the main literary focus during this phase. The class should read excerpts from a Shakespeare play, e.g. Hamlet or Romeo and Juliet. We suggest that you watch the film version of one of them. Also recommended is the film "Shakespeare in Love" (John Madden, 1998) which gives good insight into the Elizabethan theatre culture.
For a sum-up of the period:

The Renaissance / video
http://ndla.no/en/node/104198

.

Phase Three: Genres and Writing

Estimated time: Two weeks

As an interlude it may be interesting to have a brief look at different Literary Genres and sub-genres such as Crime, Science Fiction, Historical Fiction , Children's Literature, Biographies or Trivial Literature. An idea is to let the students choose a particular genre and make a mini presentation for the class. This may be the time to start working with a Literary Essay , for practice and improvement, one should write at least two essays per semester. Check the Suggested Topics for Essay Writing .

Phase Four: The Enlightenment

Estimated time: Two-three weeks

Start up with An Introduction to The Enlightenment. During this phase the literary focus will be on Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe and Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift. In connection with Swift / Gulliver the class should be introduced to satire as literary form. In addition to Gulliver's Travels there are two more examples of Swift's satires – A Modest Proposal , and A Satirical Elegy. Perhaps the students might try and write their own satire: Satire - Definition and Approach .
The American contribution to Enlightenment literature is introduced with Benjamin Franklin.
Sum up with the animation:

The Enlightenment / video
http://ndla.no/en/node/104195

Phase Five: Poetry

Estimated time: One-two weeks

As the next phase will be The Romantic Age, this interlude may be an introduction to reading poetry in general. The menu Poetry in Touch with Life offers a selection of readable poems with tasks and activities; suggested titles: Dover Beach, Richard Cory, Circles, The Road Not Taken, Dulce et Decorum Est. Check the menu for more alternatives. The aim is to introduce the class to poetic language and form, and basic Poetry Analysis and Poetry Vocabulary. Note also that our Link Library offers an external link to poetry.

Phase Six: The Romantic Period

Estimated time: Three weeks

After an An Introduction to The Romantic Period, some of the major writers and poets of the era should be introduced e.g. William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Robert Burns. The menu Romantic Poetry provides a selection of poetry by these and other writers of the era, such as: The Solitary Reaper, The Tables Turned, The Raven and The Echoing Green. Check the menu for more samples of romantic poetry.
During this phase one should introduce Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, The Gothic Novel , and Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights. The film adaptions of both Wuthering Heights (Giedroyc, 2009) and Frankenstein (Kenneth Branagh, 1994) are highly recommended. This phase is not complete until you also have introduced Jane Austen and her Pride and Prejudice.
For a sum-up of the period:

The Romantic Period / video
http://ndla.no/en/node/104199

Phase Seven: Cultural Aspects

Estimated time: Two weeks

This interlude will turn the focus from literary history to more recent cultural trends, such as Literature vs. Film , Poetry and Rock , Reality Shows and Soap Operas . Study the material, work with the tasks and arrange a class discussion about some of the issues raised.

Phase Eight: The Victorian Age

Estimated time: Three-four weeks

Start up with An Introduction to The Victorian Period, and go on with material about Science and Literature during the Victorian Age, and the expansion of The British Empire. The main literary focus will be on Charles Dickens and Oliver Twist or Hard Times. It is recommended to watch the film version of Oliver Twist, (Roman Polanski, 2005). But Victorian literature is More than Dickens; check also Three Late Victorian Novelists. Read The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson, and Lispeth by Rudyard Kipling.
Now American writers enter the literary scene. Start up with Reality and Realism in Late 19th Century America. The menu American Literature of the 19th Century offers a selection of American writers and literature of the time, such as Mark Twain, Stephen Crane and Emily Dickinson. Suggested literature: Tom Sawyer (extract), Desiree's Baby, The Story of an Hour, The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky. One should also include a brief introduction to the New England Transcendentalists and read e.g. Walden by Henry David Thoreau.
Sum up the period:

The Victorian Period / video
http://ndla.no/en/node/104201

Phase Nine: Art and Architecture

Estimated time: One week

This interlude will introduce the students to some paintings and basic image analysis. Check out the theme Art and Architecture, study the pictures, form groups and discuss. And, if time allows, now may be the time to study some aspects of Literary Style to prepare for next phase. Check the menu for more material on literary style.

Phase Ten: Modernism and Contemporary Literature

Estimated time: Three weeks

As usual, start up with an Modernism - An Introduction, and go on with American Poetry - From Traditionalism to Modernism. From there it may be natural to continue with The Waste Land by T S Eliot , and perhaps Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen. For modernist prose and writers we recommend a brief introduction to Ernest Hemingway and e.g. his short story The Killers . We have selected some central contemporary works by John Steinbeck , Arthur Miller and more recent literature such as The Help by Kathryn Stockett and The Cider House Rules by John Irving. And there is an abundance of contemporary literature to find in our Link Library.
Sum-up:

Modernism / video
http://ndla.no/en/node/104196

Phase Eleven: Modern Popular Culture and Revision

Estimated Time: Two weeks

More Cultural Aspects. An interesting trend in modern culture is Talk Shows and Stand-Up Comedians, and also the moral aspects of TV-series introducing The Sympathetic Gangster Here is a huge potential for class discussion.
It could also be interesting to discuss the future of the conventional paper book vs. the E-Book. It may be suitable to close with a study of Youth Culture and The Culture of the Web Generation.

For revision, it may be an idea to go back to the animations for a brief sum-up of the key issues of each cultural period

Quiz

Literary Quiz

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Literary Quiz (113424)

MyTask - Click icon to open task!

Forfatter: Amendor

12 Language and Style

Literary Style

The Rough Guide to Literary Style

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
The Rough Guide to Literary Style, a Historical Overview (110262)

Literary style can be defined as how a writer decides to express whatever he wants to say; his choice of words, the sentence structure, syntax, language (figurative or metaphorical). Writing is more than telling a story or coming up with an interesting plot; for the writer it is an essential part of the writing process to select the words and language carefully and to develop his own personal style. In this article we will present some examples of different literary styles throughout history, and briefly discuss their effect on the reader, both at the time they were written and today. When you have studied the article and the examples, follow the link at the bottom for tasks and activities.

Looking for Style
Fotograf: Bo Zaunders

The Old Style

Reading old texts, for example from the Renaissance, can be a bit of a challenge for a modern reader. Scholars and writers at the time would often excel in rhetorical devices to show their verbal skills; sentences were long and intricate with many diversions and sub clauses. Many people were illiterate, and reading, let alone writing, was reserved for the cultural elite, and was seen as evidence of intellectual status. The following is a quote from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)*:*

"Then I saw in my dream, that when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is lighter than vanity; and also because all that is there sold, or what cometh thither, is vanity."

What we note here is that the paragraph is one long sentence, which is made up of clauses linked by connectors (comma, semicolon, and, because). This is called a “periodic sentence” because the conclusion of the sentence is suspended until the end. The style is oratorical and formal, and the immediate effect on the modern reader is most likely impatience, because there are so many subclauses and additional information. The reader may want to find the point of the information, but in renaissance literature the ornamental language was a point on its own.

The Pilgrim's Progress
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

During the 16th and 17th centuries writers skilfully expressed themselves in a poetic language mainly designed for recital. The theatre was a popular cultural venue, where people came to follow the great works of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlow, two of the great playwrights of the time. Many Shakespearian plots were often traditional or perhaps even stolen from some other source, but Shakespeare was the unchallenged master of language. The following extract is the opening lines of *Twelfth Night (1601)*:

“If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it; that, surfeiting
The appetite may sicken, and so die…
That strain again, it had a dying fall:
O, it came o’er my ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets;
Stealing and giving odour… (-) Enough,
No more!”

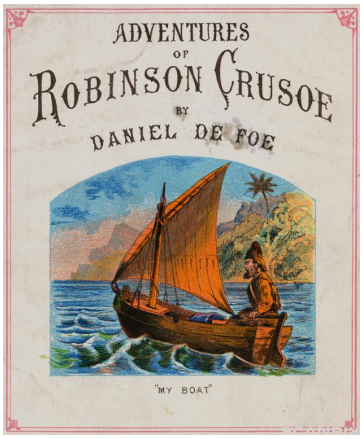
The style may seem both theatrical and pompous, but that was the literary ideal during the Renaissance, and the theatre audience loved it. Many modern readers also embrace this musical language; Shakespeare’s eloquent style is still recognised as supreme literary craftsmanship.

Science and Facts

The style of the Enlightenment writers was more informative and scientifically to the point. Their choice of words and narrative style were influenced by the predominant ideals of the time – science, facts and lexical information. The following example is from *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe. Robinson has just survived the shipwreck and is on a raft approaching the island that is to become his home for the next 28 years:

“At length I spy’d a little Cove on the right Shore of the Creek, to which with great Pain and Difficulty I guided my Raft, and at last got so near, as that, reaching Ground with my Oar, I could thrust her directly in, but here I had like to have dipt all my Cargo in the Sea again; for that Shore lying pretty steep, that is to say sloping, there was no Place to land, but where one End of my Float, if it run on Shore, it would endanger my Cargo again.”

This descriptive and rational style is typical of the era. We also see, as with John Bunyan, that the whole paragraph is one long sentence with many clauses. The informative style worked well for contemporary readers who were hungry for accounts about explorations and scientific experiments. The effect on a modern reader may of course be rather tedious as the detailed information is so meticulously laid out. An interesting detail is the capitalization of nouns, which was a common feature of enlightenment literature.



Cover for Adventures of Robinson Crusoe
Fotograf: Corbis

The Romantic Touch

Prose from the Romantic Era is also characterised by a somewhat elevated style, but as the two following examples will show, the style now becomes more accessible for modern readers, with shorter sentences and a more colloquial language. But the choice of words clearly reveals that this is the time of strong emotions and moral reflections. The first example is from *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë (1847):

“I had forgotten to draw my curtain, which I usually did, and also to let down my window-blind. The consequence was, that when the moon, which was full and bright (for the night was fine), came in her course to that space in the sky opposite my casement, and looked in at me through the unveiled panes, her glorious gaze roused me. Awakening in the dead of night, I opened my eyes on her disc – silver-white and crystal clear. It was beautiful, but not to solemn: I half rose and stretched my arm to draw the curtain.”

The poetic style exemplifies the romantic ideals brilliantly; it is like a lyrical prose text with elements usually associated with poetry. The next example is from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813):

“The discussion of Mr Collins’s offer was now nearly at an end, and Elizabeth had only to suffer from uncomfortable feelings necessarily attending it, and occasionally from some peevish allusion of her mother. As for the gentleman himself, his feelings were chiefly expressed, not by embarrassment, or dejection, or by trying to avoid her, but by stiffness of manner and resentful silence.”

The style here is also purely romantic; Austen’s choice of words reflects the morals and the conventions that were predominant with the upper classes at the time. To a modern reader the style may seem a bit formal, but Jane Austen portrayed her time and its virtues in an accurate manner. Austen’s popularity clearly shows that her style also goes down well with modern readers.

Realism

During the Victorian Age (or Realism as the era is referred to on the continent) literary style became more diverse as writers now more than before developed their own personal style. Victorian writers wanted to display reality in all its details, for better or worse. If we look at Charles Dickens, who is recognised as the most prominent Victorian novelist, his style is quite unique with its precise and visual descriptions. People and places are painted for the reader down to the smallest details. The following example is from *Oliver Twist* (1838):

"It was market morning. The ground was covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; and a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney-tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre of the large area, and as many temporary pens as could be crowded into the vacant space, were filled with sheep; tied up to post by the gutter side were long lines of beasts and oxen, three of four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade were mingled in a mass; the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs…"

This is the typical Dickensian style; he paints a picture so vivid and detailed that the reader is able to see, hear and smell the scene. Here, too, the paragraph consists of three long sentences (apart from the brief introduction). Dickens' hang to meticulous descriptions is also reflected in his narrative style; the main plot is intertwined with sub-plots and more or less related side stories that seem to lead in different directions. Reading Dickens is like slow speed skating - you go left and right as you also gradually move forward. To many modern readers Dickens' style may be a bit overwhelming, there is simply too much to take in. On the other hand, few other writers – if any – have been able to paint such an accurate picture of their contemporary society.
The next example of literary style from the mid-19th century is taken from Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (1874), where Twain writes about his training to become a pilot on the river:

"Now the engines were stopped altogether, and we drifted with the current. Not that I could see the boat drift, for I could not, the stars being all gone by this time. This drifting was the dismalest work; it held one's heart still. Presently I discovered a blacker gloom than that which surrounded us. It was the head of the island. We were closing right down upon it. We entered it deeper shadow, ad so imminent seemed the peril that I was likely to suffocate; and I had the strongest impulse to do something, anything, to save the vessel. But still Mr Bixby stood by his wheel, silent, intent as a cat, and all the pilots stood shoulder to shoulder at his back. "She'll not make it! Somebody whispered."

Note how the style here is totally different from Dickens' picturesque description of the market scene. Mark Twain's style is subtler and more subdued, nevertheless he communicates the scene brilliantly; we feel the intensity of the moments before the steamer hits land. This may also be a consequence of Mark Twain's narrative angle, as he relates this in an autobiographical way, from a 1st person angle.

Less is More

During the first half of the 20th century literary style became even more diverse. Many writers now wanted to experiment with their art, and literature became complex and abstract. Some writers took it to the limit and their texts were close to unintelligible for the ordinary reader. Here we will present two examples of a more moderate modernist literary style. James Joyce is probably the prime exponent of the experimental modernist style, but the following example from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), his debut, is quite straightforward – though it carries elements of the style he would develop in his later works:

"She had passed through the dusk. And therefore the air was silent save for one soft hiss that fell. And therefore the tongues about him had ceased their babble. Darkness was falling."

The style of these silent and poetic lines has an intriguing effect on the reader. Joyce's choice of words makes the reader reflect: Why was the air silent because "she had passed through the dusk"? Note also: "passed through the dusk" instead of "walked through the evening". And at the end is a sentence of just three words; it is a brilliant example of minimalist, poetic prose.
Another modernist writer who became famous for his minimalist style was Ernest Hemingway. His literary style was to economize information to the point that what is left unsaid is more important than what is said. A famous example is when Hemingway accepted the challenge of writing a novel in six words, and came up with: "For Sale. Baby Shoes. Never Worn." This example of Hemingway's short-cut style is from the novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926):

"It was dim and dark and the pillars went high up, and there were people praying, and it smelt of incense, and there were some wonderful big buildings"

In this very brief and to-the-point description, Hemingway gives the reader as little information as possible, but enough to set the mood or atmosphere of the scene. The sentence consists of five independent clauses connected with "and". In his short story *Indian Camp* (1924) Hemingway takes his minimalist style even further by omitting the connecting "ands":

"The sun was coming over the hills. A bass jumped, making a circle in the water. Nick trailed his hand in the water. It felt warm in the sharp chill of the morning."

If we compare this with, for example, Charles Dickens' market scene we see a totally different narrative style that demands more from the reader. We are not given all the details; the full effect of the text depends on what the reader is able to add to it. The Norwegian author Tarjei Vesaas is another prime example of this poetic minimalism; he would often omit all unnecessary connectors ("and","or","because"…), and present his narrative like a naked skeleton for the reader to dress up.

The Style is the Trial

Writers at all times have worked with words to develop their own personal style, influenced by their cultural and social environment, and driven by an unstoppable urge to express themselves. They struggle with words and literary devices to get their message across exactly the way they want it. Writing is a remarkable profession; it takes some talent and creativity, certainly some commitment – and a lot of work. The German writer Thomas Mann put it like this: “It is a struggle – spending hour after hour, even days fighting with just one sentence; a good day is when I have completed some lines”. Most writers are perfectionists; the bulk of what they write is simply tossed in the bin. American contemporary novelist Paul Auster even said: “Don’t do it if you don’t have to. It’s a curse!” Discouraging advice for aspiring writers!

Suggested Further Activity

The Rough Guide to Literary Style - Tasks and Activities

Literary Style - A Comparative Study

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Literary Style - A Comparative Study (111181)

The words and language of a narrative are the components of its literary style. The writer carefully selects his style so it will complement the other narrative elements (the setting, the mood / atmosphere, the characterization and the composition of the plot). It is a bit like painting a picture; the colours and light will define how we perceive its image. Briefly put, the writer is a painter with words; the colours, light and shades of a narrative are its words and syntax (the order of words).
Study this selection of excerpts from contemporary literature, compare their literary style and reflect on its effect on you as a reader; then answer the following questions.

1
"The words hung in the air a moment without meeting agreement or disagreement: it was as if they both knew secretly that there was no certainty as to what constituted the happiness or unhappiness of another."
(That They may Face the Rising Sun, John McGahern, 2002)

1. What is the effect of the line “the words hung in the air”? (When do words hang in the air?)
2. How does the writer make us feel a certain edginess in the situation?
3. What is the effect of using the words “happiness or unhappiness” in an assumedly trivial conversation?

2
"In the early evening, high-altitude clouds in the western sky formed a thin yellow wash which became richer over the hour, and then thickened until a filtered orange glow hung above the giant crests of parkland trees; the leaves became nutty brown, the branches glimpsed among the foliage oily black, and the desiccated grasses took on the colours of the sky."
(Atonement, Ian McEwan, 2001)

1. This is called a descriptive style. Which words / word class usually contribute to a richer and more descriptive language? Point out examples in this passage.
2. Point out some words and lines that can compare this style with painting a picture.
3. Compare with excerpt 6 – do you see any similarities?
4. What is the effect of using “desiccated” instead of the simpler “dried”?
5. How would you describe the mood created by this passage?

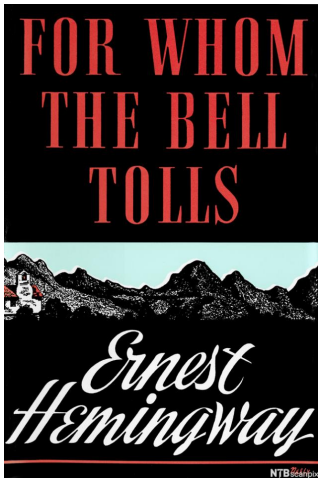
3
"Not going to tell not going to oh that that’s what you are talking about is it you understand that I don’t give a damn whether you tell or not understand that a thing like that unfortunate but no police crime I wasn’t the first or the last I was just unlucky you might have been luckier"
(The Sound and the Fury, William Faulkner, 1931)

1. What is your first reaction to this style?
2. Even though some words are omitted and there is no punctuation, how do we still get the idea of what it is about? (What are the key words?)
3. Which words are missing? Rewrite the passage into normal English. Does it change in any way?
4. In which literary tradition does such a style belong?

4

"He looked forward all the year to that moment when the bull would come out into the square on that day when you watched his eyes while he made his choice of whom in the square he would attack in that sudden head-lowering, horn-reaching, quick cat gallop that stopped your heart dead when it started."
(For Whom the Bell Tolls, Ernest Hemingway, 1940)

1. Do you see any similarities with excerpt 3?
2. Which words does Hemingway use to personify the bull?
3. In what way is this excerpt an example of Hemingway's alleged "macho" style? (What do you associate with a "macho" style?)
4. Follow this link and read more about Hemingway and his style and technique.
   Ernest Hemingway



For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway
Fotograf: The Granger Collection

5

"Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours that they meant to murder him. With his inky fingers and his bitten nails, his manner cynical and nervous, anybody could tell that he didn't belong – belong to the early summer sun, the cool Whitsun wind off the sea, the holiday crowd."
(Brighton Rock, Graham Greene, 1938)

1. This is a peculiar way to start a novel. What is the effect of the opening sentence? Does it increase the suspense or kill the thrill? Why do you think Greene has chosen to start his famous novel like this?
2. What is the effect of the syntax here: "...his manner cynical and nervous" (Why not "his cynical and nervous manner"?)
3. Which words does Greene use to present Hale as an outsider?
4. Comment on the expression "belong to the early summer sun".
5. What is the effect of the repetitive use of the word "belong"?

6

"The wind, flapping like a blanket, beat and thrashed and swung and slapped and buffeted, making each casement rattle, every door sway and creak. The wind sighed in the chimney, clanked in the pipes, and gibbered in the TV aerial. Rain slapped on to the slates, and dashed in cascades against the stuttering windows."
(Power-cut, Joan Aiken, 1977)

1. Compare with excerpt 2 – do you see any similarities?
2. How are the elements described?
3. Where do you find personification in the excerpt?
4. Comment on the line "against the stuttering windows". (Can windows stutter?)
5. What mood does this style create?

7

"Of course I knew she could read," the mother said. "She spends her life up there in her room buried in some silly book." "But does it not intrigue you," Miss Honey said, "that a little five-year-old child is reading long adult novels by Dickens and Hemingway? Doesn't that make you jump up and down with excitement?" " Not particularly," the mother said. "I'm not in favour of blue-stocking girls. A girl should think about making herself look attractive so she can get a good husband later on. Looks is more important than books, Miss Hunky…" "The name is Honey," Miss Honey said. "Now look at me," Mrs Wormwood said, "Then look at you, You chose books, I chose looks. (…) And who's finished up the better off? Me, of course. I'm sitting pretty in a nice house with a successful businessman, and you're left slaving away teaching a lot of nasty children the ABC."
(Matilda, Roald Dahl, 1988)

Roald Dahl Stamp with Matilda Image
Fotograf: ED/CS

1. How can you see that the style is primarily aimed at children?
2. Which words does Roald Dahl use to make the reader understand Mrs Wormwood's opinion of Miss Honey?
3. Comment on the names of the characters. (Mr Wormwood is a dodgy second-hand car dealer.)

8

"The summer was going by, and it was fun. There wasn't anything to worry about, and there were dreams. Edna Purcell, who had been in his class, seemed sweet on him, and she was a wonderful girl. (…) No matter what Morty thought about he thought about Edna at the same time. He thought about her every time he dreamed. When he walked on streets in the neighbourhood, he thought of her. When he went to Washington Park or swimming, he thought of Edna. Edna, just to think of her, Edna made everything in the world wonderfully wonderful."
(The Fastest Runner on Sixty-first Street, James T Farrell, 1950)

1. The narrative is quite straightforward, but the style / choice of words distinctively colour this passage. What is the mood here, and which words bring it out?
2. How does the writer make it shine through that Morty is fourteen years old?
3. What makes this a good description of the bliss of being in love?
4. At the end of the story Morty and his friends are chasing some black boys, Morty gets way ahead (the fastest runner...) and is rounded up and killed by the black mob. How does the style and information of this excerpt work in relation to such an ending?

9

"If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth."
(The Catcher in the Rye, J D Salinger, 1946)

1. How does this work as an opening of a novel?
2. In what way is this a somewhat surprising style?
3. What does the style tell you about the protagonist?
4. The writer lets the protagonist address the reader in a direct and personal manner. How does this dialogue style work?

10

"Watch your step. Keep your wits about you; you will need them. The city I'm bringing you to is vast and intricate, and you have not been here before. You may imagine, from other stories you've read, that you know it well, but those stories flattered you, welcoming you as a freiend, treating you as you belonged. The truth is that you are an alien from another time and place altogether.

When I first caught your eye and you decided to come with me, you were probably thinking you would simply arrive and make yourself at home. Now that you're actually here, the air is bitterly cold, and you find yourself being led along in complete darkness, stumbling on uneven ground, recognising nothing. Looking left and right, blinking against an icy wind, you realise you have entered an unknown street of unlit houses full of unknown people. (...) Sleet stings your cheeks, sharp little spits of it so cold they feel hot, like fiery cinders in the wind. Your ears begin to hurt. But you've allowed yourself to be led astray, and it's too late to turn back now."

(The Crimson Petal and the White, Michel Faber, 2003)

1. Compare with excerpt 9; do you see any similarities?
2. How does this rather ominous style work as an opening of a novel?
3. What is the mood here, and how does the writer create it?
4. Why do you think the writer has chosen this rather condescending style when he addresses the reader?

Further Reading

- If these brief excerpts have triggered your curiosity, find them on the net and read the full version. They are highly recommended.
- Follow this link and read more about literary style in a historical perspective.
  The Rough Guide to Literary Style

Style and Angle

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Style and Angle (111475)

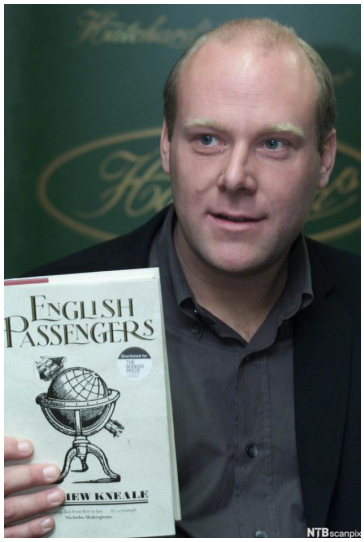
A Study of the Literary Style of *English Passengers* by Matthew Kneale.

The literary style of *English Passengers* by Matthew Kneale is a brilliant example of the connection between language and characterization.

The award-winning *English Passengers* by Matthew Kneale was published in 2000, and received exceptionally good reviews: *"A fascinating story, richly told – a major work by a major talent", "Fantastic, it's an absolute cracker", "Extraordinary – it has moral purpose and the power to change"*. It certainly is a book well worth reading, for its action-filled plot, its dramatic and tragic story, and its humour.
However, in this article we will look at the writer's original approach to the style of his narrative; the story is told in retrospect in a 1st person voice by all the characters, who relate many of the same events seen from their individual points of view. With a cast of more than twenty characters it is a bold literary quest that brilliantly demonstrates how the characterization of a narrative inseparably depends on its style and language.

A Brief Plot Summary

The Reverend Geoffrey Wilson has an interest in geology, and comes up with a theory that the true site of the Garden of Eden is to be found in Tasmania, and in 1857 he sets out on an expedition to verify his theory. His team is more or less haphazardly put together, and their voyage proves to be less than straightforward; dissent grows among the team members and between them and the Manx crew (from the Isle of Man). Unknowingly, Wilson has chartered a smuggling vessel fleeing British Customs with its double hull stacked with contraband.



English Author Matthew Kneale with his Book English Passengers
Fotograf: Alastair Grant

After a long and troublesome voyage Wilson's expedition arrives in Tasmania and continues on foot assisted by a native guide and mule drivers. The aboriginal population of Tasmania is close to being wiped out by the British colonists who use the island as a convict colony for the worst and most notorious criminals. The Garden of Eden is, of course, never found and the expedition ends in disruption and hostility in the Tasmanian wilderness. Incidentally, they catch the same vessel for their dramatic return voyage; there is a mutiny, and due to the mutineers' poor seamanship the vessel is shipwrecked off the English coast. But, ironically, the Reverend is saved because of the double hull of the ship.

Four of the main characters and examples of their individual voices are presented below. Note how the writer changes his style to demonstrate their individual characteristics. Read the excerpts and answer the questions which follow.

Captain Illiam Quilliam Kewley

The Captain is a down-to-earth, cynical schemer. His main ambition is to get rid of his contraband cargo at a good profit. He takes on the mission only to get away from the British Customs and his contempt for the English passengers is obvious from the start.

"Total charge: Three passengers. Worse, Englishmen all of them. I can't say I was happy about the arrangement. I dare say I'd expected the Sincerity to wee a few humiliations in her time – to be nibbled by barnacles, shat on by gulls, and poked and prodded by Customs men – but never, not once did I think she'd be reduced to the shame of passengers.
Strange articles of passengers they were, too. Truly, you never did see such a clever and pestful trio as these, all disagreeing with themselves, and taking their great clever brains for a little stroll on the deck. I dare say it was hardly a surprise they were odds, mind, seeing as their quest was to discover themselves the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden! As if it couldn't just been left in the Bible where it belonged. They weren't even looking to find it in any sensible spot, but on some rotten island at the very ends of the earth, called Van Diemen's Land, or Tasmania, as it couldn't make up its mind. This was a mad fool of a place, by the sounds of it, all gaols and bluemen and worse, being nowhere any sensible fellow would venture near. It was there, and all the way back, too, that we were supposed to be carrying the three snots. A whole year of Englishmen. What a thought that was. It was bad enough just taking them along the coast to Maldon."

1. Point out some words that identify the Captain's attitude to Englishmen.
2. How does the writer display the Captain's cynicism?
3. Where do you find irony in the Captain's presentation of his passengers?

The Reverend Geoffrey Wilson

The Reverend is a man of the church and firmly believes that the Garden of Eden will be found in Tasmania. His strong faith and determination make for conflicts both with the Captain and his scientist partner Dr Thomas Potter.

"A matter on which I was less inclined to show leniency was that of our devotions. Ours being a Christian expedition, it was essential that it should be conducted in a properly Christian spirit, and yet, to my distress, I found that the others showed a lamentable reluctance in this respect. As we proceeded I would often break into a rousing hymn, both to voice my faith and also to speed us upon our way, only to find myself answered with a most ragged and dismal reply from the others.

"My belief soon won through. After only a few moments of careful thought there occurred to me an explanation as simple as it was true. It is well known that our Lord God will sometimes impose little tests upon His children, so He may be sure of their devotion. Thus it was now: our worthiness was being sought. Why, I even considered that we had been given a kind of blessing. Was this not a wondrous opportunity to demonstrate my own unswerving reverence; to prove my faith was solid as a mighty rock?"

1. Apart from the Reverend's obvious Christian references, how does the style indicate that he is a man of the church?
2. Which expression reveals the Reverend's view of himself and his faith?
3. How does the writer also show the Reverend's attitude to the others in the expedition?

Dr Thomas Potter

The doctor has joined the expedition from purely scientific motives. In his diary he records his observations in a systematic and lexical manner. He has a way of categorizing people that clearly reveals his racist attitudes.

> *"Morning's progress slow + tiring. Day v. humid + mud = worst till now (last night's rain"). Mules slipping, selves likewise, till all = greatly begrimed, boots heavy with dirt. Only one little affected = half caste (no shoes) who = scampering though oblivious. This = further instance of his speedy reversion to aboriginal savagery. Other instances: return to near nakedness, sleeping outside, eating vilest raw food etc. etc. All = v. useful re. notions. Definitive proof that when two Types = naturally mixed characteristics of lowest Type shall always prevail. Intend to call this axiom Potter's Law."*

1. What makes this style so lexical?
2. What does the style tell us about the Doctor as a person?
3. How are the Doctor's racist attitudes revealed?
4. Comment on the abbreviations used by the Doctor.

Peevay

Peevay is an aboriginal half-caste who is the offspring of a rape. The white whaler Jack Harper had forced himself upon an aboriginal woman, and Peevay is born with aboriginal features, but fair hair. He has learned some English at a mission, and he relates his observations in retrospect in a broken but quite intelligible language.

> *"One day it was warm and there was rain but no wind, so drops fell straight like stones. We were in the bush, sitting quiet and watching meat cooking in the fire, and the smoke smelled good as this was the first game we caught for days and we were hungry after eating just roots. Then Gonar, who went off to the edge of that clearing to do shittings, came running back and shouted in a whispering way: Something's coming.*
> *Now if something's coming and you don't know what it is there's no prudence just waiting for it to walk on you. (…) Then twigs were breaking, telling us that this something coming was clumsy. In fact it was three somethings. No, I had never seen creatures so strange, I do recollect. They were the shape of men but only this. Their skin was not like skin at all but was the colour of stone, and loose, so it flapped. Even their feet were ugly, too big and with no toes. Worst, though, were their faces. These were coloured like raw meat, with no alive look in them."*

1. How does the style reveal Peevay's native origin?
2. How does the writer indicate Peevay's attitude to white men?
3. Point out style elements that are examples of Peevay's broken English.

Discussion and Further Reading

1. What makes this a challenging style for a writer?
2. How will this narrative style benefit the reader?
3. What is the basic condition for this style to work without confusing the reader?
4. If you google *English Passengers* you will find a lot of information, reviews and tasks. You will also find a free download of the book– so go ahead and read it yourself.

Language and Vocabulary

Compare and Explain (Usage)

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Compare and Explain (Usage) (115124)

These sentences look fairly similar, but if you take a closer look, there is a slight difference. Compare the sentences and explain the difference between them.

A. He didn't promise to attend the meeting.
B. He promised not to attend the meeting.

A. There was a chance that he might attend, but he didn't promise to.
B. He made it clear that he would not attend the meeting.

A. He even admitted that the tax was unfair.
B. He admitted that the tax was even unfair.

A. He went so far as to admit that the tax was unfair.
B. He admitted that the tax in addition to being heavy, was also unfair.

A. He was used to getting up early.
B. He used to get up early.

A. He didn't mind getting up early. It was routine.
B. When he was younger he had the habit of getting up early.

A. He must have had a new lock put on the door.
B. He must have a new lock put on the door.

A. Because I can't get the key to go in the lock. (done in the past)
B. Because his house was broken into by burglars with a false key. (must do now)

A. I'll pay you at the end of the month.
B. I'll pay you by the end of the month.

A. You'll get the money on January 31st.
B. You'll get the money some time before the end of January.

A. He's sure to be offered the job.
B. He's sure he'll be offered the job.

A. Most people think he will be offered the job.
B. He thinks so himself.

A. We will ship the

goods direct.
B. We will ship the goods directly.

A. The goods will go direct / straight from us to you.
B. The goods will be shipped immediately. A. I

don't particularly want to see him now.
B. I particularly don't want to see him now.

A. I don't feel like seeing him at the moment.
B. I don't feel like seeing him, especially now. A. In vain he tried to

prevent the work being done.
B. He tried to prevent the work from being done in vain.

A. He tried to prevent it, but did not succeed.
B. He tried to prevent it from being done to no purpose.

A. I remembered switching off the hotplate before I left.
B. I remembered to switch off the hotplate before I left.

A. I remember that I did it.
B. I remembered to do it.

Vocabulary 1

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Vocabulary 1 (115160)

1 Occupations

What do we call a person who -

1. obtains coal from the ground
2. sells newspapers and magazines
3. writes for a newspaper
4. operates on sick people
5. sells fish
6. cuts people's hair
7. carries luggage
8. sells tools and metal goods
9. works with concrete and bricklaying
10. sells flowers

1) a coal miner, 2) a newsagent, 3) a reporter or journalist, 4) a surgeon, 5) a fishmonger, 6) a hairdresser, 7) a porter, 8) an ironmonger, 9) a mason, 10) a florist

2 Locations

What do we call the location where -

1. surgical operations are performed
2. horses can go within a fence
3. you go to have your car repaired
4. you go to find a taxi
5. can marry if you don't do it in a church
6. can go to live as a monk or a nun
7. the river meets the sea
8. you can play golf
9. in a house you find a washing machine, freezer etc
10. you reach the top of the stairs

1) an operating theatre, 2) a paddock 3) a garage 4) a taxi rank, 5) a registry office, 6) a monastery or convent, 7) an esturary, 8) a golf course, 9) a utility room 10) the landing

3 Positions

What do we call a person who -

1. is a top leader of a big company
2. attacks and scores goals in a football match
3. follows the tennis players to see that they play by the rules
4. runs a big kitchen e.g. in a hotel
5. was a servant for upper class people in the past, and whose job was to serve food, open doors etc.
6. is leading a committee or a board
7. in the past accompanied a young woman in public to see that she behaved decently
8. see to it that the footballplayers play by the rules
9. was the most important male servant for upper class people in the old days
10. writes reviews on books or films in a magazine

1) a managing director, 2) a striker, 3) an umpire, 4) a chef, 5) a footman, 6) a chairman, 7) a chaperone, 8) a referee, 9) a butler, 10) a critic

Vocabulary 2

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Vocabulary 2 (115307)

Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb is a verb that will change its meaning when connected to different prepositions. Certain basic verbs combine easily with prepositions and the combinations give new and completely different meanings. Examples of basic verbs are: *get, make, set, take, do, come, put, go, look*. Combined with prepositions they change meaning, e.g. *look for, look after, look up,* and *get on, get by, get off*.
The term "phrasal" refers to the fact that these verb + preposition combinations make a phrase (i.e. a meaningful expression).
These expressions are widely used in spoken English. There usually is a more formal alternative expression in written English that will give the same meaning, e.g. to put in an application (to submit), to set up a new business (to establish).
Replace the expression in italics with a phrasal verb based on the verb in brackets. (You may have to change the word order or rearrange the sentence grammatically.)

1. I had to *postpone* my visit because of the weather. (put)
2. He *undertook* so much work that he simply couldn't finish it. (take)
3. She slowly *regained consciousness* after the accident. (come)
4. His request was *not approved*. (turn)
5. The work was *done* by a professional carpenter. (carry)
6. Please *come and see me* when you are in London. (look)
7. Do you *have a bed for me* tonight? (put)
8. She has a way with children; they seem to*like her* immediately. (take)
9. He *found* an old and valuable map in the attic. (come)
10. The police will *examine* the case thoroughly. (look)
11. His speech *was received* well by the audience. (go)
12. It seems that they are *becoming friends*. (get)
13. He *appeared* at the seminar two hours late. (turn)
14. A man should certainly *keep* his promise. (stand)
15. I didn't *have time to* visit all the attractions. (get)
16. How did you *get* such a funny name? (come)
17. You may *continue* with your work now. (carry)
18. I must *take care of* my little brother. (look)
19. We *don't have much* petrol *left*. (run)
20. It *appeared* to be more difficult than she thought. (turn)

1. Put off
2. Took on
3. Came round
4. Turned down
5. Carried out
6. Look me up
7. Put me up
8. Take to her
9. Came across
10. Look into
11. Went down well with
12. Getting along
13. Turned up
14. Stand by
15. Did not get round to visiting (Note the ing-form)
16. Come by
17. Carry on
18. Look after
19. Are running out of
20. Turned out

Vocabulary 3

Forfatter: Jan-Louis Nagel
Vocabulary 3 (115311)

Pronunciation and Spelling

English is a peculiar language when it comes to spelling and pronunciation. Many words have the exact same pronunciation, but a different spelling and meaning. Such words are called homophones and come in pairs or even groups.
The words listed below all belong to a pair of homophones. Make a sentence with the missing word of the pair.

1. Nose
2. Through
3. Miner
4. Piece
5. Steak
6. Rain
7. Higher
8. Sauce
9. Sweet
10. Male
11. Blue
12. Cue
13. Flower
14. Idle
15. Stare
16. Board
17. Guest
18. War
19. One
20. Fair

1. He always *knows* best.
2. He *threw* it all away.
3. This is just a *minor* problem.
4. We should work for *peace* in the world.
5. There is much at *stake* here.
6. The *reign* of Queen Elizabeth I was the Golden Age.
7. We can always *hire* a car.
8. I have it from a reliable *source*.
9. At the hotel we had a large *suite.*
10. The letter came in the *mail* this morning.
11. The wind *blew* away the dead leaves.
12. Be patient and line up in a *queue*.
13. We need *flour* to bake bread.
14. Do you have an *idol*?
15. There is a *stair* leading to the first floor.
16. I think I'm *bored* to death.
17. I never would have *guessed*.
18. She *wore* the same dress yesterday.
19. Chelsea *won* by 2 to 1.
20. You have to pay a *fare* on the bus.