 Year 12 English Extension Program

Unit Title: Literary Worlds, Elective 3: Reimagined World

Duration: 1 year

Rationale

In the Common Module Literary Worlds, students develop their understanding of how ideas and ways of thinking are shaped by personal, social, historical and cultural contexts. Within this, they extend their awareness of the diversity of ideas, attitudes and perspectives evident in the texts which are representative of the complexity of our world. Students engage critically with a range of texts as representations of the experiences of others with an awareness of notions of identity, voice and points of view. These deepen understanding of how texts construct private, public and imaginary worlds that can explore new horizons and offer new insights. This focus develops an awareness of how values are presented and reflected in texts.

The elective Reimagined Worlds explores representations of a variety of reimagined worlds that challenge or confirm the known, question the unknown and explore the possibilities of different realities. Through their study of textual representations in set texts and related material, students are invited to re-evaluate understandings and perceptions of their own world and the ways texts can offer creative and provocative insights into humanity. Students appreciate the potential of texts to push the boundaries of the imagination in creating new worlds and alternative experiences. Through this, students critically evaluate how texts challenge and reflect cultural contexts and how values and assumptions shape meaning.

Students will experience a range of set texts which invite engagement with the key concerns of the Module and elective. Life on Mars by Tracy K Smith pushes the extremes of perspective from our intimate lives to the universe, forcing a profound paradigm shift. Ursula Le Guin crafts an imaginary world in The Left Hand of Darkness in which the human becomes the outsider struggling to understand the cultural values of another society. In this way, our own cultural and gender assumptions are examined, challenged and questioned, demonstrating how we are products of our times, our ways of thinking and cultural values. By employing the common Science Fiction trope of cognitive estrangement in the removal from Earth to an alien planet, Le Guin makes strange our own world and opens us to new insights about humanity. Guillermo Del Toro in Pan’s Labyrinth utilises the three distinct storylines to directly explore the shifting between the three worlds – the private life of the family, the public world of the Spanish Civil War and the imaginary world of the labyrinth.

Critical and creative understanding of reimagined worlds will be explored through analytical and creative interactions with the texts. The very nature of the elective Reimagined Worlds invites students to experiment with and push the boundaries of both form and content in their own compositions.

Texts

* The Left Hand of Darkness - Ursula K LeGuin (prose)
* Life on Mars - Tracy K Smith (poetry)
* Pan’s Labyrinth - Guillermo Del Toro (film)
* Various other related texts

Focus Questions

* How do texts represent the complexity and diverse perspectives of individual and collective lives?
* How can the representation of different realities lead to a challenging or confirmation of the known and a re-evaluation of values?
* How can pushing the boundaries of the imagination lead to new insights about ourselves and our world?

Outcomes

* EE12-1: demonstrates and applies insightful understanding of the dynamic, often subtle, relationship between text, purpose, audience and context across a range of modes, media and technologies.
* EE12-2: analyses and experiments with language forms, features and structures of complex texts, discerningly evaluating their effects on meaning for different purposes, audiences and contexts
* EE12-3: independently investigates, interprets and synthesises critical and creative texts to analyse and evaluate different ways of valuing texts in order to inform and refine response to and composition of sophisticated texts
* EE12-4: critically evaluates how perspectives, including the cultural assumptions and values that underpin those perspectives are represented in texts
* EE12-5: reflects on and evaluates the development of their conceptual understanding and the independent and collaborative writing and creative processes.

Assessment

* Assessment task 1: Creative Task – Portfolio of creative composition and reflection
* Assessment task 2: Critical Task – Encompassing one or more of the set texts as well as student self-selected related material
* Assessment task 3: Formal Examination

Program

| Outcomes/ Content | Teaching and Learning | Evidence of Learning |
| --- | --- | --- |
| EE12-1Students understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features by evaluating how complex texts construct meaning and communicate valuesEE12-2Students engage personally with texts, articulating and justifying personal responses to representations of a range of complex human experiences in sophisticated texts | Part AIntroduction to the Module and Elective: Engagement* View the short film Head Over Heels directed by Tim Reckart to explore the purpose of a distortion of reality. Intentionally starting with a more realistic piece offers teachers and students the opportunity to expand their preconceived ideas about what ‘re-imagined worlds’ are to genres beyond SF and Fantasy. Students should understand that reimagined worlds can be utilised in realism and satire as well for a variety of purposes including to critique, challenge or question social norms, values and attitudes. The aim of this viewing activity is to unpack students’ own experiences of reimagined worlds and to consider what the technique of distortion of reality offers a composer and a responder.

Teachers note: Resources in this unit of work have live links to films, podcasts and articles. In order to access these live links, these should be emailed or shared online.Using Resource 1 and class discussion, view [Head Over Heels](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96D-bRx5KuU), short story (duration 10:21) and address:* The central visual metaphor of the husband and wife living upside down from each other:
	+ What does this distortion of reality offer Reckart as a composer?
	+ The meaning of the central visual metaphor in relation to the rubric for the Common Module Literary Worlds as the representation and illumination of the complexities of individual and collective lives
* The exploration of conflicting perspectives in the film is a key aspect of the Common Module Literary Worlds and a theme which has meaning and context in any conflict. Two people who see the world differently have to learn to live together.
* The other central feature of the film is its lack of dialogue. Consider this choice in light of the fact that this film is ultimately about communication.
* The film is an opportunity to talk about the sacrifice that fuels marriage, but using puppets and stop-motion animation to achieve this. Reckart wanted the world to have a realism and be tangible, so there is an element of verisimilitude which allows the audience to recognise aspects of our world and culture, placing it in a familiar frame of reference
 | View the short film Head over HeelsActive student engagement in discussion about the use of the short film form to create an extended visual metaphor of conflicting perspectives.Students discuss the key concerns of the Common Module in the context of the short film.In their written and verbal responses, students demonstrate their developing awareness and understanding of the key concerns of the Common Module Literary Worlds |
| EE12-4Students engage personally with texts by considering critical perspectives to test their own perspectives in understanding and evaluating particular ways of thinking, cultural assumptions and values represented in textsStudents understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features, evaluating how language, style and form are used to represent particular perspectives Students respond to and compose texts which experiment with language to craft creative compositions, communicating particular perspectives and values effectively | Part BIntroduction to the Elective Reimagined Worlds through creative writing:* Before reading, view [What is Satire?](https://teams.microsoft.com/_#/conversations/General?threadId=19:afdeeaa6fdbc4f3484d4c50220a217e6@thread.skype&messageId=1523487915766&ctx=channelhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WsP2spflY4) YouTube for a quick reference. Duration 5:01 minutes.
* Focus text - Jonathan Swift A Modest Proposal
* This text is used to introduce the idea that social satire also creates reimagined worlds in order to challenge the values and assumptions of our own contexts
* By imagining or conceiving of a social issue in a new way, Swift offers insight into the cultural and political context of his time
* Students read Swift’s satirical essay, as well as the article by Jared Lovin (Resource 2) Students engage in note making and discussion of:
	+ Context and purpose
	+ Techniques/features
	+ Values and beliefs
* Students use Swift’s text as a model to apply to an issue that needs challenging in our world, creating a modest proposal for today.
* View [Is satire dead?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCtdQl4SyZs) Ted Talks (Duration 10:27 minutes) to help understand how satire writing works and its vital role in our social and political context.
* Students share their compositions in a read-around in class – students discuss each other’s work
 | Active engagement in reading and discussing Swift’s essay. Students make notes on the features of Swift’s essay.Sophisticated completion of the creative writing task will demonstrate students’ developing ability to understand the concept of social satire as means of critiquing, and in this way, reimagining our world.Sharing compositions with peers will open up for students a reflective process. |
| EE12-2Students use the aesthetic qualities of language in composing complex and original texts for pleasure, refection and understandingEE12-3Students evaluate composers’ stylistic choices to inform their own compositional choices | Part CContinuing engagement with the concept of ‘reimagining’ as embellishment:* Part of the etymology of the word ‘imagine’ comes from Old French “to decorate or embellish”. Students will engage with this concept through poetry.
* The poem ‘Himalayan Rock Salt’ from A Constellation of Abnormalities (Puncher and Wattmann, 2017) by Paul Cliff is used as a model here to demonstrate the ways composers engage with the everyday or mundane to embellish our experience of the world, offering us new ways of seeing and exploring the possibility of different realities.
* Students will choose an everyday object and research the construction/history/manufacture of it. They will then write a poem constructing the imaginary world of the everyday object of their selection.
* Provide students with a structure:
	+ Start realistically with details of the construction/manufacture of the object
	+ Reimagine the journey of the everyday object and how it might enter your life/world
	+ End with the end result – the object in your life and the new perspectives on the world as a result of the reimagining of that object
 | Students’ increasingly sophisticated responses demonstrate their deepening engagement with the elective.Students will craft original compositions reflecting their more complex understanding of the ways in which reimagining offers new insights |
| EE12-2Students manipulate textual form and stylistic features to construct original texts the express an informed perspectiveStudents create sustained texts in a variety of modes and media, demonstrating understanding of evolving literary conventions | Part DEngagement with language forms and features through short stories:* Lesson focus:
	+ Creating a narrative voice
	+ Creating a hook and grabbing the audience
* Simon Rich short stories (Resource 3)
* Simon Rich’s stories challenge the values of various segments of society, for example, those of indulged upper-middle class Americans through the eyes of an unexpected or everyday thing in the short story Animals
* Select two or three short stories and unpack with students the distortions/stretching of reality by asking “what if” of the reimagined worlds of Simon Rich as a way of delving further into the elective
* What is achieved by not telling the stories using realism? Why is estrangement used?
* Students write their own short story from the perspective of the everyday object they used for their poems, focusing on an effective hook to engage the audience and the creation of a narrative voice
 | Students will engage with selected short stories by Simon Rich through analysis of purpose and language forms and features. Their responses and analysis will demonstrate increasing complexity and sophisticationStudents will demonstrate in their composition of a short story an understanding and awareness of creating a narrative voice, and creating an engaging opening, as well as a more insightful understanding of the techniques used to create estrangement from reality, and the possibilities offered by this. |
| EE12-1Students understand and apply knowledge of language forms and features by experimenting with a range of literary forms in presenting creative compositionsEE12-2Students engage personally with texts through their use of the aesthetic qualities of language in composing complex and original texts for pleasure, reflection and understanding | Part EFreeing literature by tightening the rules:* A central concern of this module and elective is the idea of literary play and literature as play. Modernist writers such as Raymond de Queneau embody this in the OuLiPo (Ouvroir de Litteratuer Potentielle – workshop of potential literature) tradition.
* Writers and mathematicians in the OuLiPo gathering impose rigorous constraints on their writing in order to reimagine and offer new insights into the world of literature and the art of writing.
* Using Raymond de Queneau’s Exercises in Style in which a mundane encounter is retold in 99 different ways, students will experiment with imposing their own oulipian constraints in the retelling of a mundane encounter, for example repetition; switching every noun in the story with another noun; writing without using a specific letter of the alphabet; changing the form of the retelling; or switching forms, genres and voices.
* Students need not write 99 retellings, rather a suite of 3 – 5 retellings will suffice!
* [Oulipo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oulipo) : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oulipo
* [Brief Guide to Oulipo](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/brief-guide-oulipo): https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/brief-guide-oulipo
* [Freeing literature by tightening its rules](https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/jul/12/oulipo-freeing-literature-tightening-rules): https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/jul/12/oulipo-freeing-literature-tightening-rules
 | Engagement with this complex literary tradition will allow students to demonstrate in their own compositions an appreciation of the way in which reimagining the art of composition can open up new creative possibilities for writers, and thus, new insights about the creative process. |
| EE12-3A student independently investigates, interprets and synthesises critical and creative texts to analyse and evaluate different ways of valuing texts in order to inform and refine response to and composition of sophisticated texts | Part F* This part of the unit can occur concurrently with previous sections as students gain more understanding of the concerns of the module and elective
* Flipped classroom – students find their own examples of reimagined worlds/stretching of reality/distortions:
	+ Cartoons
	+ Photography
	+ Ted Talks/Podcasts
	+ Fairy Tales
	+ Art works
	+ Short stories
	+ Satirical articles
	+ Short films - Tropfest
* Students bring their examples in to class for student-led discussion unpacking the reasons for the reimagining, the values in our society the text challenges and the techniques used.
* Students choose a focus/teaching moment (for example, description of setting, character, narrative voice, perspective, creation of an effective introduction, effective ending, and so on), then lead a discussion of how these techniques could be applied to our own writing.
* A short written task is set for homework and sharing in the next lesson

Formal Assessment Task: Portfolio of 3 imaginative pieces and reflection statement (provided with this unit)Module Statements and Essential Questions:* Students construct essential questions in order to unpack and challenge the main ideas of the module statement for ‘Reimagined Worlds’.
* The questions should be constructed to tackle the language and ideas of the module statement and to build students’ conceptual understanding of the module prior to engaging with the texts.
* Teachers and students should refer to these questions at key points in their study of the prescribed texts to ensure a focused approach and to guide analysis of the key texts. Additionally, the essential questions constructed by students will assist in their choice and analysis of related material.
 | In their selection of materials for use in the classroom and their teaching of these, students will demonstrate a perceptive understanding of the key ideas encompassed in the module and elective rubrics.Self-selection of material allows students greater authority over their learning, and their increasingly sophisticated understanding will be evidenced by judicious selection of materials and the creation of teaching resources to support class discussion |
| EE12-3A student independently investigates, interprets and synthesises critical and creative texts to analyse and evaluate different ways of valuing texts in order to inform and refine responses to and composition of sophisticated textsEE12-4A student critically evaluates how perspectives, including the cultural assumptions and values that underpin those perspectives, are represented in textsEE12-2A student analyses and experiments with language forms and features and structures of complex texts discerningly evaluating their effect on meaning for different purposes, audiences and contexts | Prescribed Text: The Left hand of Darkness by Ursula Le GuinFocus Question:How does Le Guin develop a fictional vehicle to take readers radically beyond the confines of our understanding of our world?* Allocate students the novel to read over the summer holidays.
* Provide students with the following essential questions so that they may focus their reading:
	+ What aspects of our known world does Le Guin confirm (that is, what remains familiar, for example, contrasting political ideologies and social hierarchies)
	+ What cultural values relating to gender and gender roles, technology, attitudes towards knowledge are evident? What values does Genly bring with him to Gethen?
	+ Which values does she challenge? What can’t Genly quite let go of?
	+ What are the “unknowns” that Le Guin questions?
	+ What possibilities are explored through the new world and the different reality Le Guin crafts?
* How has Le Guin invited us to re-evaluate understandings and perceptions of our own world? To further focus students’ attention on the ways in which Le Guin crafts her fictional world and achieves a reimagining of our world, ask students to consider the following as they read for the first time, making notes:
	+ The shifting point of view and fragmentary narrative structure – whose diverse perspectives are offered? How do these help to construct notions of identity?
	+ The mythology and detail of the narrative world – which aspects of the world has Le Guin chosen to recreate and for what purpose?
	+ The alien landscape and environment are realised with great detail and beauty. Find an example that resonates with you
	+ Identify and describe the contrasting political systems and social hierarchies on the planet Gethen
	+ What symbolism has Le Guin employed and for what purpose (for example, the symbol of the wintry landscape, yin and yang, the Gobrin Ice, the colour red and blood, darkness and light)
	+ What do you believe is the ultimate insight into humanity taken from the novel?
* Students should bring their observations to class to share in the form of a presentation. Teacher to use own discretion in establishing the parameters of the presentation. Students should ensure they address the following:
	+ What does Le Guin choose in her reimagining (mythology, landscape, social hierarchies) and why?
	+ What aspect of the reimagined world resonated with you in your reading
	+ What techniques and imagery for example, did Le Guin use? Provide examples and quotations from the text.
* These focus areas will form the basis for more in-depth teaching

Introduction to Science Fiction Genre:* Le Guin’s Science Fiction writing has been influenced by both her personal context and upbringing as the daughter of an anthropologist, and her experiences with the more social sciences such as psychology and sociology. Additionally, Le Guin published The Left Hand of Darkness in 1969, and the essential question she poses “what is gender?” comes out of her experiences with the second wave of Feminism. Le Guin deliberately selected the genre of Science Fiction as the vehicle for her thought experiment on gender.
* As a lead-in to the way Science Fiction can respond to the anxieties and concerns of a time period, provide students with newspaper articles and other stimulus material to imagine a world in the near-future, addressing a contextual concern around the development of science and technology and the impact on humanity (see Resource 4). These compositions will be shared with peers in class for discussion.
* Reading and Listening - How can Science Fiction as a genre reflect and respond to the concerns of a society?
	+ [Aliens have taken the place of angels](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2005/jun/17/sciencefictionfantasyandhorror.margaretatwood) by Margaret Atwood (https://www.theguardian.com/film/2005/jun/17/sciencefictionfantasyandhorror.margaretatwood)
	+ [Guardian books podcast: Science Fiction now and tomorrow](https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2012/jan/06/books-podcast-science-fiction-now-tomorrow) (https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2012/jan/06/books-podcast-science-fiction-now-tomorrow)

Science Fiction as a re-imagining:* Student-led investigation into Le Guin’s personal, cultural and political context – upbringing and background, interest in mythology, Eastern philosophy and sociology and the Second Wave Feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s which challenged conventional thinking about gender equality
* Research the New Wave of Science Fiction to situate the text within its context:
	+ What were the concerns of the new wave and why did the values embodied in Science Fiction shift from those of Golden Age Science Fiction?
	+ Writers of the new wave portrayed thought experiments in which mankind turns its scientific gaze onto itself. How did this shift in style and focus in Science Fiction lead to it being taken more seriously as a literary genre?
* Listen to The Modern Scholar - From Here to Infinity: An Exploration of Science fiction Literature lectures by Professor Michael Drout. [Audio recordings of the lectures](https://archive.org/details/FromHereToInfinity/12-01%2BWomen%2Band%2BGender.mp3) available at: https://archive.org/details/FromHereToInfinity/12-01+Women+and+Gender.mp3

The following lectures will be particularly useful:* + ‘What is Science Fiction?’
	+ ‘A New Set of Questions – The New Wave’
	+ ‘Women and Gender’
* Science Fiction as the literature of cognitive estrangement:

“…by imagining strange worlds we learn to see our own world in a new perspective” – Patrick Parrinder* + Cognitive estrangement has become a crucial trope in Science Fiction writing: “A concept derived by Darko Suvin from Russian Formalism's notion of ostranenie and Bertolt Brecht's closely related (but Marx inflected) notion of the estrangement-effect in his Metamorphoses of Science Fiction (1979), a structuralist attempt to distinguish the genre of science fiction writing from other forms of fiction. As Fredric Jameson points out in Archaeologies of the Future (2005), this is a rather exclusive definition, which emphasizes the rational scientific dimension of science fiction and rigorously excludes the kinds of flights of fancy associated with fantasy fiction. For Suvin, the key to cognitive estrangement is the presence in a story or novel of what he calls a ‘novum’, that is a device or machine that is absolutely new and whose presence compels us to imagine a different way of conceiving our world.”

([Oxford Reference](http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095622261): http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095622261)* + See [Strange Horizons website](http://strangehorizons.com/non-fiction/articles/estrangement-and-cognition/): http://strangehorizons.com/non-fiction/articles/estrangement-and-cognition/ for a breakdown of cognitive estrangement in Science Fiction and the work of scholar Darko Suvin
	+ If cognitive estrangement depends on a “novum” (as above), how does Le Guin achieve cognitive estrangement in The Left Hand of Darkness? What is the novum? How does this compel us to reimagine our own world? How has Le Guin challenged the context in which the text was composed? What values and assumptions are challenged and re-evaluated?
	+ Imaginative response: consider a pressing social concern. Invent a novum which allows you reimagine this aspect of our world. Craft an imaginative response in which you demonstrate this novum and how it allows for a different way of conceiving the world. Sharing of student responses. In class discussion, students should be prepared to explain and justify the choices they have made in their creative piece, as well as respond to feedback from peers.

Detailed study of the novel:* In Le Guin’s portrayal of Genly Ai’s struggle to come to terms with cultural and social norms alien to his own (for example, no fixed genders, no wars), the novel holds a mirror up to human society, compelling a questioning and challenging cultural assumptions.
* See the study guide created by Rebecca Rass of Pace University for detailed analysis of the place of the novel in the Science Fiction genre, themes, characterisation, chapter-by-chapter [analysis, critical responses, glossary and discussion points](http://www.angelfire.com/ny/gaybooks/lefthandofdarkness.html): http://www.angelfire.com/ny/gaybooks/lefthandofdarkness.html
* Themes explored:
	+ Pacifism and violence – consider the representation of the two contrasting political systems
	+ Love and betrayal (read Sarah LeFanu’s article ‘[The King is Pregnant](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/jan/03/sciencefictionfantasyandhorror.ursulakleguin)’ https://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/jan/03/sciencefictionfantasyandhorror.ursulakleguin. How does the novel raise questions about fear and trust?)
	+ Gender
	+ The self and Other
	+ Ethical issues cultural imperialism/difference, genetic experimentation and the roles of mythology and religion in society
	+ Duality and unity
	+ Negotiating the difference between cultures (risking intimacy, trust, sympathy – evident in Genly’s telepathic communication with Estraven)
* Consider Le Guin’s depiction of the winter landscape. How is landscape integral to the concerns of the novel? Read the article ‘[The Landscapes of Science Fiction’](http://www.unboundworlds.com/2016/09/landscapes-sci-fi-lily-brooks-dalton/) by Lily Brooks-Dalton available at Unbound Worlds http://www.unboundworlds.com/2016/09/landscapes-sci-fi-lily-brooks-dalton/

Compose an imaginative piece in which you craft an evocative landscape which is integral to the concerns explored.Ursula Le Guin’s thought experiment:* Listen to/read stories on gender identity to introduce the premise of Le Guin’s thought experiment and demonstrate how the debate that she raises in The Left Hand of Darkness published in 1969 is particularly pertinent today.
	+ [My life without gender strangers:](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/07/my-life-without-gender-strangers-are-desperate-to-know-what-genitalia-i-have#img-3) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/07/my-life-without-gender-strangers-are-desperate-to-know-what-genitalia-i-have#img-3
* One of the essential questions the novel asks is ‘how does one explain the observed differences between men and women?’ Le Guin has said that she was inspired to write the novel to try and answer the question “What is woman”?
	+ Read the excerpt from the introduction to Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex (1949), paying special attention to the idea of the other. This work is considered the Bible of Feminists. The work is available here, [The Second Sex](http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1949_simone-de-beauvoir-the-second-sex.pdf): http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/1949\_simone-de-beauvoir-the-second-sex.pdf
	+ Compare her ideas to those of Le Guin’s in The Left Hand of Darkness. In what ways is Le Guin’s androgynous society the answer to Beauvoir’s criticism of the inequality between the sexes? From your initial reading of Le Guin’s novel, did you notice any failings in her representation of a genderless society?
* Read the following articles from The New Yorker:
	+ ‘[Is Gender Necessary’](https://americanfuturesiup.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/is-gender-necessary.pdf) (1976) and ‘Is Gender Necessary – Redux (1988) by Ursula Le Guin: https://americanfuturesiup.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/is-gender-necessary.pdf
	+ ‘[A Safe Trip into Androgyny](http://www.newyorker.com/books/book-club/a-safe-trip-into-androgyny) by Jon Michaud http://www.newyorker.com/books/book-club/a-safe-trip-into-androgyny
	+ And the response ‘[Stranger in a Stranger Land](http://www.newyorker.com/books/book-club/stranger-in-a-stranger-land)’ by Jon Michaud http://www.newyorker.com/books/book-club/stranger-in-a-stranger-land
	+ ‘[Afterword](http://theliterarylink.com/afterword.html) – The Gender of Pronouns’ by Ursula Le Guin (written in 1994) http://theliterarylink.com/afterword.html
	+ Students to answer the question posed at the end of the ‘Stranger in a Stranger Land’ article: Have critics and readers alike overemphasised the place of gender in Ursula Le Guin’s The Left Hand of Darkness? Write a short persuasive piece in which you outline your opinions regarding the success or failure of Le Guin’s thought experiment and the place of gender in the novel. Make explicit reference to key readings and examples from the prescribed text

Critical Responses:* Read the following article from the International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities. Students to make notes on the critical perspectives offered as they read. [The King was Pregnant](http://ijellh.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/49.-P.V.GEETHA-LAKSHMI-PATNAIK-paper-final-2.pdf): http://ijellh.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/49.-P.V.GEETHA-LAKSHMI-PATNAIK-paper-final-2.pdf
* Using the eNotes on The [Left Hand of Darkness Summary](https://www.enotes.com/topics/left-hand) (available for purchase at https://www.enotes.com/topics/left-hand) read the three critics responses to ‘The Left Hand of Darkness’. Students to make notes as they read. Students could try coding the text as they read using different coloured highlighters for points they agree with, points they disagree with, points they have questions about, points they found illuminating.
* What is your own critical response to the novel?

Bringing it together:* Consider the following questions for consolidation. These could also be used as a basis for critical responses
	+ In exploring the possibility of different realities, why do you think Le Guin chose the SF genre? What does this genre offer her in achieving her purpose? Le Guin has said “Science Fiction is not about the future but about the present”. In what ways is the novel about the present?
	+ Which aspect of the world does Le Guin reimagine/which aspect of the known is Le Guin challenging?
	+ How does Le Guin push the boundaries of the Science Fiction genre, narrative form and the imagination to create a new world? What creative and provocative insights are we offered through this?
	+ How has your conceptual understanding grown throughout the study of this prescribed text? Comment on your understanding of the complex ideas articulated in the text and how they have been represented

Formal Assessment Task – Critical Response | Through their personal engagement and initial responding to the text, students will demonstrate developing skills in articulating their understanding through reading, writing and discussion.Student responses will initiate the process of developing more sophisticated analysis and the ability to express critical ideas based on an initial reading of the prescribed text.Through more focused reading, students initiate and develop their understanding of how cultural values and assumptions are represented in an imaginative text and develop their contextual knowledge, articulating their personal responses to a range of complex human experiences in sophisticated texts. Compositions will demonstrate a perceptive awareness of and experimentation with crafting language to express an imaginative response to a range of texts. Through the creative process, students will investigate how Science Fiction as a genre holds a mirror up to society to critique, question and challenge values and assumptions.In their reading and listening, student responses to the focus question will demonstrate an increasingly insightful awareness of the relationship between the genre of Science Fiction and context.Students’ investigation will lead them to a more nuanced understanding of how cultural, historical and social contexts are represented in critical and creative texts. Students evaluate how changing contexts and values influence how texts are composed and interpreted.Student responses will demonstrate an increasing awareness and sophistication in expressing imaginative responses. Additionally, students will be able to articulate and justify their manipulation of language to achieve a distinct purpose. In their responding to feedback from peers, students will evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches they have experimented with.In their detailed study, students will engage on a deeper level with the details of this complex text, examining the connections between texts and contexts. In doing so, students will be considering how the representation of content is shaped by context and communicate values.Students begin to engage with various theoretical perspectives and to analyse the way in which social, historical, cultural and personal values are inscribed in texts In their reading and responding to various critical responses, students will critically examine the multiple ways the text is valued in different contexts and by different audiencesStudents will test their own perspectives and understanding, evaluating particular ways of thinking and the way cultural values and assumptions are embedded in texts In their personal and critical engagement with the text, students demonstrate a sophisticated and perceptive insight into the connections between texts, composers, responders and contextsStudents reflect on and evaluate the growth of their conceptual understanding of the way complex ideas are represented in texts |
| EE12-2Analyses and experiments with language forms, features and structures of complex texts, discerningly evaluating their effects on meaning for different purposes, audiences and contextsEE12-5Reflects on and evaluates the development of their conceptual understanding and the independent and collaborative writing and creative processesEE12-3Independently investigates, interprets and synthesises critical and creative texts to analyse and evaluate different ways of valuing texts in order to inform and refine response to and composition of sophisticated textsEE12-2Analyses and experiments with language forms, features and structures of complex texts, discerningly evaluating their effects on meaning for different purposes, audiences and contextsEE12-4Critically evaluates how perspectives, including the cultural assumptions and values that underpin those perspectives, are represented in texts | Prescribed Text: Pan’s Labyrinth, Del ToroHow does del Toro push the boundaries of the narrative form to challenge the perceptions of our world, offering creative and provocative insights into humanity?* History and fantasy are intertwined in this film. Before viewing the film, explore both.

Fantasy, Fairy-tale and Myth* Mythology, Magic and Cultural references such as Cronos complex, hero’s journey, Ophelia, Pan/Faun, Labyrinth, Mandrake, “Eros and Psyche”, Goya’s “Saturn devouring his son”, underground realm, praying mantis, “Theseus and the Minotaur”
* Fairy-tales references such as: “A long time ago…….”, the number 3, toad, magical objects such as book, stones, book, chalk and tree, wicked step-mother (father), fairy/insect/messenger, trickster, princess, king, 3 tasks, key, “Bluebeard” and “Rapunzel” references. Fairy-tale narrative structure.
* Read Wilhelm Grimm’s “Dear Mili” and Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Match Girl”
* Watch ReEnchantment ABC: http://www.abc.net.au/tv/re-enchantment (can be purchased online).

Research for the imaginative exploration of the purpose, conventions, imagery and language of the fairy-tale to explore the moral human dilemmas. In groups, students construct their own fairytale in response to current issues.Historical and Cultural Context[WWII in Colour: Spanish Civil War](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvz_53bjP4) (9.45 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvz\_53bjP4 Students begin the process of investigation of context developing an “expertise” on an aspect of the Spanish Civil War. Choose a topic to research and present to the class.* Spanish Civil War 1936 – 1939
* Nationalists vs Republicans
* Fascism and Francisco Franco dictatorship
* Town of Belchite, Spain (devastated by the civil war – ruins represent the underground kingdom in the opening scenes of the film.)
* Republican or Loyalist Rebels after the civil war

After watching the film* Read [Screenanarchy interview with del Toro](http://screenanarchy.com/2006/12/pans-labyrinthinterview-with-guillermo-del-toro.html) (some swearing – but there are interesting observations about the film and del Toro’s father): http://screenanarchy.com/2006/12/pans-labyrinthinterview-with-guillermo-del-toro.html
* Watch Youtube: [Mark Kermode interview with Guillermo del Toro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqdEKahV-gs): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqdEKahV-gs
* Readings: [Mythology, Fairy Tale and Depth Psychology in Pan's Labyrinth](http://integr8-sciencethesacred.blogspot.com.au/2010/12/mythology-fairy-tale-and-depth.html) including story of “Rapunzal” and “Eros and Psyche”: ttp://integr8-sciencethesacred.blogspot.com.au/2010/12/mythology-fairy-tale-and-depth.html

Explore the following website Cinephilia and Beyond‘Pan’s Labyrinth’: [A Richly Imagined, Dreamlike Voyage of Self-Discovery and Character Formation](https://cinephiliabeyond.org/guillermo-del-toros-pans-labyrinth/) https://cinephiliabeyond.org/guillermo-del-toros-pans-labyrinth/ The Website contains the * script
* storyboard
* article about genre, tropes and design
* director’s notebook
* behind-the-scenes photos
* design photos
* and the following film clips:
	+ Evan Puschak’s video essay – Pan’s Labyrinth: Disobedient Fairy Tale
	+ Youtube video on The making of Pan’s Labyrinth,
	+ Guillermo del Toro on His Influences and Creative Process

Multiple GenresHow does the use of multiple genres challenge our assumptions of our world?Pan’s Labyrinth is a genre hybrid which allows for different readings (differential coding) according to the emphasis placed by the audience. * Fantasy – magical settings, mysterious creatures
* Fairy-tale – language of the voiceover, innocent child hero, three-part structure of tasks, “happy ending” for the fairy-tale narrative
* Historical Drama, War Film – Realism. Creates WWII settings, portrayal of Vidal and battles between troops and rebels. (However, also note elements of the Western in the rebels in the woods scenes)
* Psychological Drama – focus on characters and their state of mind

With elements of:* Horror
* Magical Realism

[What Is Magical Realism, Really?](http://www.writing-world.com/sf/realism.shtml)http://www.writing-world.com/sf/realism.shtml and “[Pan's Labyrinth: Magical Realism](http://jesselatour.blogspot.com.au/2012/04/pans-labyrinth-magical-realism.html)” (includes interview with del Torro)http://jesselatour.blogspot.com.au/2012/04/pans-labyrinth-magical-realism.html * Bildungsroman
* Western (in the rebels scenes)
* Melodrama

List the genre markers for each of these such as:* Narrative – type or plot structure
* Iconography – images, costumes, props, objects expected
* Characters – type and roles
* Settings

[Pans Labyrinth Notes](http://penicuik.mgfl.net/files/2014/11/Pans-Labyrinth-notes-244vjis.doc): http://penicuik.mgfl.net/files/2014/11/Pans-Labyrinth-notes-244vjis.doc Questions* What are the expected values pertaining to each genre?
* How does the use of multiple genres provide creative, provocative and other insights into humanity that are offered in the film?
* How does Del Toro push the boundaries of genre, narrative and the imagination?
* Consider how the themes, such as the importance of disobedience, affect the form and is reflected in his reluctance to adhere to a genre – but rather push the boundaries.
* Consider how the use of multiple genres welcome multiple interpretations.

Structure using parallel narrative stylesParallel narrative styles:Historical Drama: In 1944 Franco Fascist Spain, Captain Vidal and his troops take control of a mill in the mountains of Spain. They stockpile food causing the civilians to suffer. Ofelia arrives with her mother, Carmen, who is about to give birth to Vidal’s expected son. It is a cruel and dangerous world. Rebels are in the woods. Mercedes, his house-keeper, and Doctor Ferriero secretly supply the rebels.Fantasy: Ofelia discovers an insect fairy who leads her to the labyrinth where she meets the Faun. She learns is the reincarnation of Princess Moanna and must complete 3 tasks:1. Obtain the key from a giant toad living inside a giant tree
2. Use the key to retrieve an object form a locked door guarded by the Pale Man.
3. Spill the blood of an innocent into the portal of the underground.
* When exploring the sequences below, consider the incongruity of using these parallel plots with its two styles of narrative? What is the effect of this apparent incompatibility? Symbols and meaning can often have multiple implications. Del Toro says, “If the movie works as a piece of storytelling, as a piece of artistic creation, it should tell something different to everyone.”

Film Sequences1. The beginning is the end - Compare the language of the opening and Closing scenes

The parallel tales of the political and imaginary worlds are established in the opening scenes and titles. Beginning of the film (Beginning – 0:02:20) introduces the political reality and then a fairy-tale.Column A:Black background with white titlesSpain 1944 The civil war is overHidden in the mountains, armed men are still fighting the new fascist regime.Military posts are established to exterminate the Resistance.Column B:Ofelia sprawled on the ground. A thick ribbon of blood runs from her nose. But - the blood is flowing backward into her nostril. Drop by drop the blood leaps up and disappears.Narrator :A long time ago, in an underground realm,where there were no lies or pain,there lived a princess who dreamt of the human world.She dreamt of blue skies, soft breeze and sunshine.One day eluding her keepers, the Princess escaped.Once outside, the brightness blinded her and erased her memory.She forgot who she was and where she came from.Her body suffered coldness, sickness and pain.And eventually she died.However, her father the King always knew that the Princess’ soul would return, perhaps in another body, in another place, at another timeAnd he would wait for her until he drew his last breath, until the world stopped turning...Note the ruins of the town of Belchite, Spain in the opening of the film\*End of the film (1:44:05 – End) As the film comes to the end, note the language of a fairy-tale re-emerges. What other particularities do we find in the language used in the voiceover?Is the ending a tragedy or a “happy ending”? How can your decision be justified?Other Fairy-tale moments:* Ofelia’s story about the rose (13:15 – 14:43)

Outline Ofelia’s story to her brother. How this could be interpreted in the context of the surrounding events in the film. Compare lighting, colour, camera movement, dialogue.* The Faun’s introduction (21:15)
* The Three tasks (see below)
1. Fairytale

First Task (27 minutes)Retrieving a key from the belly of a monstrous toad.Note the parallel with Vidal’s key and Mercedes’ deceitSecond Task (53 minutes)Using the key to unlock the door guarded by the Pale Man to retrieve a dagger.Consider parallels to Vidal’s dining room.Third task (1:44 minutes)To spill the blood of an innocent.The importance of disobedience – connect to DoctorFind further connections between these 3 tasks of the Fantasy and the events immediately surrounding them in the Historical Drama1. Horror

Consider when these Two narratives collideHow are elements of horror used to bind both worlds together? * Read [Film Genre in Pan’s Labyrinth](https://allthepiecesmatter364.wordpress.com/2014/10/20/film-genre-in-pans-labyrinth/): https://allthepiecesmatter364.wordpress.com/2014/10/20/film-genre-in-pans-labyrinth/
* Compare the film techniques used in the parallel narratives. Compare the Pale man scene (53) with the dinner scene (39 minutes). What elements of the “real” world appear in this horror sequence?

Analyse the filmic techniques including imagery, mise en scene, special effects, costume, makeup, set design, props, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, lighting, camera movement, camera angle, camera shot. Note the use of colour in the two narratives.* Note the historical images which occur in the fantasy sequences: ominous pile of baby/children's shoes (Holocaust) in the Pale Man scene along catholic images, remember the ruins of the town of Belchite, Spain in the opening of the film\*
1. Magical realism

“[What is Magical Realism, Really?”](http://www.writing-world.com/sf/realism.shtml) http://www.writing-world.com/sf/realism.shtml Exploring Magical realism using Mandrake scenes (1:04 and 1:21)After reading the link on Magical Realism, re-watch the scenes focusing on the adult perspective. Magical Realism offers a different world view other than the objective one.How are these two perspectives (Ofelia and adult) constructed?1. Historical Drama

Characters – The dinner (39.00 min) The most important characters of the film’s historical drama appear in this scene: Ofelia, Carmen, Vidal, Doctor, Mercedes, Pedro. What are our first impressions? How are these constructed? What are the perspectives these represent?* Consider the deformities of the central characters during the film.
* Compare to the Faun and the Pale Man
* Compare the horror in the fantasy with the horror, tension and violence of the “real” world?
* Violence comes in various forms: sudden, tense, tortured and deforming. Do you think the sometimes disturbing violence is necessary?
* Read “[Mythology, Fairy Tale and Depth Psychology in Pan's Labyrinth](http://integr8-sciencethesacred.blogspot.com.au/2010/12/mythology-fairy-tale-and-depth.html)”

http://integr8-sciencethesacred.blogspot.com.au/2010/12/mythology-fairy-tale-and-depth.html* Read [Between Earth and Sky](http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/5/2/33/htm): Transcendence, Reality, and the Fairy Tale in Pan’s Labyrinth http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/5/2/33/htm

Themes: End of film: Importance of disobedience and free will. 1:23 Doctor’s monologue after disobeying Vidal to assist torture victim.1:37 – end of film As the film comes to its end, Ofelia takes her little brother and tries to escape from all the violence around her, into her fairy tale. The ending is a “happy”one for the fairy-tale but a tragedy in the Historical drama. Beyond the concrete events in these last scenes, students may discuss whether there is any allegorical meaning to the ending of the film or analyse how the director deals with the past. Consider how the final scenes could be interpreted depending on the genre emphasised.* What other themes are explored and developed in the film?
	+ Choice
	+ Imagination
	+ Power
	+ Trust
	+ Trauma of War
* How does Pan’s Labyrinth challenge or confirm the known? Question the unknown? Explore the possibilities of different realities?
* Is the realistic world more truthful than fantasy? What truths are to be found in both worlds? How does this film push the boundaries of the imagination in creating new worlds and alternative experiences?
* Can it be considered a 21st Century Romanticism - a reaction to realism, science and rationalism?
* How does the film invite us to re-evaluate understandings and perceptions of our own world?

Reviews and Blogs – for both content and development of expression* [Film Quarterly](https://filmquarterly.org/2007/06/01/pans-labyrinth/)

https://filmquarterly.org/2007/06/01/pans-labyrinth/* [Embracing the Darkness, Sorrow, and Brutality of Pan’s Labyrinth](https://www.tor.com/2011/05/25/the-darkness-of-pans-labyrinth/)

https://www.tor.com/2011/05/25/the-darkness-of-pans-labyrinth/* “[Pain should not be sought – but it should never be avoided](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/nov/05/features.review1)” - Guardian Review

https://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/nov/05/features.review1* [Screenville film blog](http://screenville.blogspot.com.au/2006/11/pans-labyrinth-2006del-toro.html):

http://screenville.blogspot.com.au/2006/11/pans-labyrinth-2006del-toro.html | Students research the mythology allusion used in the film.Students examine fairy-tales and explore the imagery, characters and language of the fairy-taleStudents experiment with the fairy-tale genre. Students’ investigation will lead them to a more nuanced understanding of how cultural, historical and social contexts are represented in critical and creative texts. In their detailed study, students will engage on a deeper level with the details of this complex text, examining the connections between texts and contexts. In doing so, students will be considering how the representation of content is shaped by context and communicate values. Students analyse the genre markers finding examples from the film to support their ideas.Students explore the filmic techniques used in the realism of Historical Drama as compared to Fantasy. Student will explore techniques such as imagery, mise en scene, special fx, costume, makeup, set, props, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, lighting, camera movement, camera angle, camera shot. Note the use of colour in the two narratives.Students analyse language, costume, hair/makeup, speech, responsesGroups focus on one film technique in the sequence, list all elements, technique and effect. Present to the class.Students explore the connections between genres incorporated in a complex text.Students begin to engage with various theoretical perspectives and to analyse the way in which social, historical, cultural and personal values are inscribed in textsIn their reading and responding to various critical responses, students will critically examine the multiple ways the text is valued in different contexts and by different audiences |
| EE12-2A student analyses and experiments with language forms, features and structures of complex texts, discerningly evaluating their effects on meaning for different purposes, audiences and contextsEE12-1A student demonstrates and applies insightful understanding of the dynamic, often subtle, relationship between text, purpose, audience and context, across a range of modes, media and technologiesEE12-3A student independently investigates, interprets and synthesises critical and creative texts to analyse and evaluate different ways of valuing texts in order to inform and refine response to and composition of sophisticated texts | Prescribed Text: selected poems from Life on Mars by Tracy K SmithIntroduction to the suite of poems:Smith’s poetry invites multiple interpretations. She offers a collection of nuances, challenging the “dog-eared” certainty of the past. Smith’s poetry is all about playing with perspectives in order to incite a paradigm shift in her reader.Display the image ‘The Blue Marble’, a famous photograph of the earth from space in 1972. Students are to consider the ramifications and psychological impact of seeing ourselves from such a great distance for the first time. How might seeing ourselves from a distance impact our religious, cultural values? Do you think it would make us stronger or more vulnerable? How might it shake our assumptions? How does it affect how we perceive distance? First, ask students to try and imagine the impact in a short imaginative response. Provide them with quotes from people who have seen the Earth from space. Students are to read and select quotes that resonate with them and refine their short imaginative responses using the quotes as stimulus:* [Space Answers](https://www.spaceanswers.com/space-exploration/20-inspirational-space-quotes-you-need-to-know/): https://www.spaceanswers.com/space-exploration/20-inspirational-space-quotes-you-need-to-know/
* [Quotes from astronauts gazing upon their home planet](http://homepages.wmich.edu/~korista/astronauts.html): http://homepages.wmich.edu/~korista/astronauts.html
* [Seeing Earth from Space](http://bigthink.com/experts-corner/seeing-earth-from-space-how-true-awe-changes-you): http://bigthink.com/experts-corner/seeing-earth-from-space-how-true-awe-changes-you

Questioning Strategy:* Provide students with the prescribed poems
* Students should conduct an initial reading of the poems. As students, they should underline all the cultural and historical references, unusual words and phrases they notice. Write questions or note down ideas that are suggested to them on their copies of the poems. This will form the basis of class discussion and allows students to engage personally with the poems before exploring critical perspectives.

Model analysis using Sci Fi:Initiate discussion by asking students to share their questions and observations from their initial reading with a partner. Partners engage in discussions and attempt to answer each other’s questionsAfter initial discussion, students conduct another close reading of the poem. Have any of their questions been answered? Note down any new insights suggested by discussion with your partner.Teacher-led discussion. Close reading of the poem, stopping at key points to allow students to ask questions and research or clarify meanings.What is the significance of the title Sci-Fi?* Discuss genre, including the Golden Age of Science Fiction and Space Opera as a sub-genre of Science Fiction
* The significance of the Golden Age in the development of the Science fiction genre was in its reflection of the cultural fascination with space as the final frontier. The genre entered the cultural consciousness and began to reflect the anxieties and technological pursuits of the time

The poem not only imagines a future world, but also asks us to turn our view in on ourselves and consider the impact of technological development on what it means to be human. Smith’s collection of poems won the Pulitzer Prize for its portrayal of an “authentic mix of joy and pain”. Students are to find images from the poem that might be positive about the future we are building for ourselves, and images that are painful.* What does this imagined future suggest about our world?
* What do you find most provocative about this poem? How has Smith represented provocative images?
* How does Tracy Smith construct the idea of the human using technology to create alternative worlds?
* How does Smith’s reassuring tone combine with disturbing imagery to create an unsettling cognitive dissonance

Students should refer to the essential questions they developed earlier and apply these to the poem Sci-Fi to ensure their analysis contributes to their ongoing development of their conceptual understanding.My God, It’s Full of Stars:My God, It’s Full of Stars is a suite of poems characterised by a sudden looking-outward at the immensity of the universe. Smith’s focus moves beyond the cinematic long-shot to the telescopic, and then can swing suddenly back to minutiae of daily life.* In this suite, students firstly will underline all cultural references, names, quotations, scientific references, Biblical allusions, references to mythology, personalities – anything they think might be significant to the meaning of the poem, including language and imagery that is particularly resonant.
* Students are allocated a poem from the suite to analyse in depth. Students must prepare a presentation in which they explain and unpack their allocated poem. They must also provide a handout for their classmates. Students should use the essential questions they developed earlier to structure their presentation and analysis. Students research the significance of the references they have identified in their allocated poem, considering why Smith saturates her poetry with these Twentieth Century Cultural references. Students should research these cultural references so that they can appreciate and absorb the scope of time and place that Smith visits in her poetry.
* Smith saturates her poetry with these references – kitschy, futuristic aesthetic; visions of the future from 40 years ago – a 20th Century obsession. She grappled with the big questions by immersing herself in this aspect of Science Fiction 🡪 these were our first tentative steps into space, into the final frontier 🡪 challenged us on so many levels (scientifically, spiritually) 🡪 these were the great explorers of the 20th Century.
* See [Tracy Smith reading from My God, It’s Full of Stars](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tracy+Smith+life+on+mars&&view=detail&mid=B152E8F0DEA9493B5C03B152E8F0DEA9493B5C03&FORM=VRDGAR). In this clip, she explains her use of the cultural references in the poem. https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tracy+Smith+life+on+mars&&view=detail& mid=B152E8F0DEA9493B5C03B152E8F0DEA9493B5C03&FORM=VRDGAR
* Read the quote below by Joel Brouwer of the New York Times Book Review – how accurate is Brouwer’s quote when applied to the suite of poems entitled My God, It’s Full of Stars?

“Life on Mars first sends us out into the magnificent chill of the imagination and then returns us to ourselves, both changed and consoled” – Joel Brouwer, New York Times Book Review – unpack Brouwer’s use of the words “magnificent chill” – what does this indicate about Smith’s poetry?* “…the optics jibed” find definitions of the word ‘jibed’ – How is this imagery resonant of Smith’s poetry itself? She forces us to look at everything differently. We are so trapped in our small worlds, and she is asking us to look outside.

Don’t You Wonder, Sometimes?* Research Bowie in terms of Ziggy Stardust and his songs which explore themes of man, isolation and space
* See the song ‘Sound and Vision’ by David Bowie. The title of the poem is a line from this song
* See the [Rolling Stone article](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/ziggy-stardust-how-bowie-created-the-alter-ego-that-changed-rock-20160616): http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/ziggy-stardust-how-bowie-created-the-alter-ego-that-changed-rock-20160616
	+ Why does Bowie resonate with Smith 🡪 it is unusual for an artist to write in such a way about another artist? Perhaps she appreciates another artist who reimagines alternative realities and other worlds.
	+ Explore notions of intertextuality and authority 🡪 referencing other texts (or artists) lends authority to the original, but also invests the new text with authority. What are the qualities of Bowie and Ziggy Stardust that Smith chooses to reference? What does she value?
	+ Friedrich Nietzsche: “People press toward the light not in order to see better, but in order to shine better. We are happy to regard the one before whom we shine as light.”
* How does the intertextual reference to Bowie and his alter-ego Ziggy Stardust assist Smith in her playful exploration of the possibilities of different realities?

The Universe: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* Movement of scope -> instead of visual, it is sound. Shifting backwards from the knowable, organised sound of music towards to unknowable silence of space. Smith sets up the cinematic reference in the title
* Students to find example of the dry humour throughout the poem, interspersed with existential angst.
* The burden of knowledge can be unsettling 🡪 “The dark we’ve only ever imagined now audible, thrumming” 🡪 it exists outside of us.
* Existential absurdist reference to silence in the final stanza 🡪 playing on our existential fears of silence forcing us to confront our existence.
* Smith looks at how scientific exploration forces us to reimagine our world 🡪 the recurring motif of “disappearing as if returning somewhere”. In her memoir Ordinary Light, Smith creates a beautiful meditation on the nature of death after the death of her mother:

I could sense my mother leaving, getting ready for some elsewhere I couldn’t visit…Every day, she seemed more closely aligned with a place or state I believed in but couldn’t decipher…It’s the kind of miracle we never let ourselves consider, the miracle of death.”The Universe as Primal Scream* Research the term primal scream and its place in primal therapy
* Read the following essay, “[The Universe as a Primal Scream](https://charlottemccash.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/the-universe-as-a-primal-scream.pdf)”. Students are to make notes from their reading for discussion: https://charlottemccash.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/the-universe-as-a-primal-scream.pdf
* Explore the poem using the questioning strategy from earlier and research cultural and biblical allusions, finding examples of the wry humour that Smith uses to craft her tone throughout -> this is another poem where there is a sudden “jibing” of Smith’s scope
* Using the quote from the essay “joy tinged with despair” 🡪 students have to justify their reading of all of Smith’s poems -> which one is it? Use evidence from the texts to support. Is Smith’s reimagining of our world joyful tinged with despair? Or is it ultimately despairing?

Bringing it all together:* Smith’s poetry, particularly My God, It’s Full of Stars, is an elegy for her father, creating intimate portraits of moments from her childhood. In her memoir Ordinary Light, Smith explains her father’s view of the world:

“…the majority [of books which] sat there [on the shelves] spoke to my father’s sense of the world – or the world as he’d like us to know it: a vast and varied place full of mystery and order, just those two forces working together and upon each other in ceaselessly fascinating ways.”How does Smith balance these two forces in her poetry?* Choose a quote below. Compose a critical response in which you illustrate how the selected quote is true of Smith’s poetry:
	+ ‘Small and big moments are observed in epiphanies that seem both surprising and inevitable” (Los Angeles Review of Books)
	+ “…reveals the profound in the quotidian” (San Francisco Chronicle)
	+ “Both precise and transcendent” (Vulture)

Links to reviews and resources:[Tracy K. Smith](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/tracy-k-smith?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIoLPUyKC61QIVnAgqCh2XGAPOEAAYASAAEgJhT_D_BwE): https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/tracy-k-smith?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIoLPUyKC61QIVnAgqCh2XGAPOEAAYASAAEgJhT\_D\_BwE [The Two-Way Tracy K. Smith](http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/14/531784281/tracy-k-smith-new-u-s-poet-laureate-calls-poems-her-anchor): http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/14/531784281/tracy-k-smith-new-u-s-poet-laureate-calls-poems-her-anchor [Tracy K. Smith is the new poet Laureate](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/14/books/tracy-k-smith-is-the-new-poet-laureate.html): https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/14/books/tracy-k-smith-is-the-new-poet-laureate.html [Finding Solace in Tracy K. Smith’s Prescient Poem “Solstice”](http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/finding-solace-in-tracy-k-smiths-prescient-poem-solstice): http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/finding-solace-in-tracy-k-smiths-prescient-poem-solstice [Meet our new U.S Poet Laureate](http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-poet-laureate-20170614-htmlstory.html): http://www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-et-jc-poet-laureate-20170614-htmlstory.html [Poems of Childhood, Grief and Deep Space](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/28/books/review/life-on-mars-by-tracy-k-smith-book-review.html): http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/28/books/review/life-on-mars-by-tracy-k-smith-book-review.html [Life on Mars Review](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/482402): https://muse.jhu.edu/article/482402 [Other Worlds](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/08/08/other-worlds): http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/08/08/other-worlds [Review: Tracy K. Smith’s Life on Mars](http://sotospeakjournal.org/review-tracy-k-smiths-life-on-mars/): http://sotospeakjournal.org/review-tracy-k-smiths-life-on-mars/ [Life on Mars Article](http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2012/august/life-on-mars.html?start=1): http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2012/august/life-on-mars.html?start=1  | In their initial responding and composing, students will develop their understanding of perspective and will refine their control of language and clarity of expression to convey increasingly complex thought and expressionThis comprehension strategy allows for personal engagement with the poetry prior to more in-depth analysisStudents will participate in classroom discussion, developing the confidence to share their initial thoughts and questions and collectively refining their understanding of the poemDuring teacher-led discussion, students will test their interpretations and will make notes on possibilities of interpretation. Note-making also on aspects of genre, as well as language and imageryIn engaging in more in-depth discussion and response, students’ written responses will demonstrate a deep understanding of the concept of reimagined worlds and the portrayal in poetry Through independent investigation and responding to the text, students develop their skills in sophisticated analysis and theorising about this complex textIn their responses, students will demonstrate a perspective on the text informed by theoretical perspectives and critical analysis Students will also demonstrate sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of Smith’s work, and the ways in which cultural assumptions and values have been represented |

Reflection and Evaluation

Other Related Texts

The Handmaid’s Tale (Novel or TV Series available on SBS on Demand):

* Triple J Hack “[Could The Handmaid’s Tale happen today](http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/handmaids-tale-reality-today/8745684)? http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/handmaids-tale-reality-today/8745684
* Use of an imagined world in the near future to challenge the cultural and political context of the text’s creation and represent insights into humanity
* Portrays the collective lives and social structures of the imagined future world, blurring the lines between the private and the public worlds to invite a re-evaluation of understandings and perceptions of our own world, offering provocative insights.

The Dressmaker (Film)

* Explores the complexities of individual and collective lives
* Chosen for its use of the female perspective, the use of many comedic sub-genres, distortion, the grotesque and it is rich with a plethora of interesting film devices

Cleverman (TV series available on ABC iView):

* Silenced voices – different perspectives are emerging in the form of Aboriginal voices in the narrative world
* The series is an allegorical representation which grapples with the current cultural, social and political climate of Australia through a fresh perspective
* Blend of genres – magical realism

Arrival by Denis Villeneuve (Film)/ or Story of your Life by Ted Chiang (short story):

* Subversion of the traditional SF alien invasion trope
* Disrupts traditional views on the experience of time and the nature of knowledge
* The film is an exploration of the ways that language encompasses a culture and philosophy
* [Arrival Movie Review](https://www.vox.com/culture/2016/11/11/13587262/arrival-movie-review-amy-adams-denis-villeneuve): https://www.vox.com/culture/2016/11/11/13587262/arrival-movie-review-amy-adams-denis-villeneuve
* [Arrival shows there’s still room for literary science fiction films in Hollywood](https://www.vox.com/culture/2016/11/15/13578838/arrival-science-fiction-ted-chiang): https://www.vox.com/culture/2016/11/15/13578838/arrival-science-fiction-ted-chiang
* The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis of Linguistic Relativity underpins the film: that is, that the structure of a language determines or greatly influences the world-view and cognition of the speaker

The Natural Way of Things by Charlotte Wood:

Black Mirror (Television series) – available on Netflix

King Charles III (BBC Two production):

* A speculative look into the future of the Commonwealth told as part political thriller, part family drama