English-Extension 1-
Mapping literary worlds p2 transcript

(Duration 7 minutes 31 seconds)

Welcome back to the HSC hub students support session for English Extension one. This is the second part of resource one for English Extension one, Mapping out Literary Worlds. The focus of this part is on extending our work from the first part in analysing the module description. We will build on the two key ideas, the deliberate construction of literary worlds, and the informed personal response to them in order to refine our conceptual focus on the module.

Remember, if you're a student working alone, or a teacher working with your class, to check the necessary materials in the list provided in the booklet that accompanies this resource. And just a reminder that parts one and two of this resource connect to the single student resource booklet for Mapping out Literary Worlds. In part two of this resource, we will refine our understanding of the conceptual basis of the Common Module by bringing our general ideas together in a series of analogies and analyses that situate the module in relation to the Electives and other key concerns of Stage six English. To complete this resource, we will examine one possible purpose for the deliberate construction of Literary Worlds in the light of contemporary social, political, and cultural contexts.

Here are the learning intentions and success criteria for this second part of the resource. For students to, consider the relationship between the Common Module and the Electives. Evaluate the relationships between texts through the Literary Worlds lens. Analyse the construction of Literary Worlds as a response to the modern. For students to be able to - better prepare for the exam with a strong notion of the difference between the Common module and the Electives. Analyse their own sample texts in terms of genre and intertextuality. Analyse their own sample texts in terms of their connection to notions of modernity.

Now that we have explored, in the first part of this resource, the two key strands of thinking in the module description, the intentions of the writer and the responses of the reader, we're going to bring them together in a series of activities. The first of these is an analogy you can use to differentiate the Common Module from the Elective you have also been working on. The Literary Worlds module aims to survey a large field of human interest. While the Electives ask you to funnel down into a specific area. So, take a wide view. How do your example texts connect with others? What kinds of literary worlds are created? What aspects of the real world are reflected? The Common Module therefore points students towards the wide view over time, to the breadth of worlds as opposed to the narrow more focused view demanded in the Electives. We are encouraged to see the text positioned in time and in relation to other texts, before we funnel down into the specific concerns of the Electives. As part of this breadth, we're encouraged to explore all the potential reasons why writers create worlds and all the potential ways we might respond. Even when writing about a particular case study, be aware of where that example fits into the breadth of thinking about composers and their choices.

One way to think about this is through genre and intertextuality. A wide view of something like Harry Potter would look for its connections and interactions with other texts. JK Rowling's Harry Potter series connects with other literary worlds in a myriad of ways: fantasy, magic and horror genres, schoolyard drama genre, the appropriation of mythical creatures from ancient and oral traditions, fantasy being used to explore social and political issues such as racism. Now pause the recording and consider one of your own case study texts through the questions in activity nine in the student booklet.

Now, use the table in activity 10 to apply your thinking further using the appropriate terminology from the syllabus. What kinds of connection can you think of that link your case study text to other texts? We've started you off of with three types of connection in the left hand columns. Intertextuality, appropriation, genre. Can you think of any others? Note that intertextuality and genre are in the glossary at the end of the student booklet. Then in the right hand column, be sure to explore how these connections impact on your personal response to that text. In particular, does thinking about the text like this alter your feelings about the balance between reader response, new historicism and new criticism? Remember these key theories from part one? Pause the recording now to complete this activity.

Our key point here is that both writer and reader are responding to something. The writer responds to their own life, to other texts, to their political context, by their deliberate creation of a text. The reader responds to the text by laughing, crying, rebelling, creating. Then if the reader happens to be a student in the HSC, by creative and analytical writing. And finally, an idea that will be the cornerstone of the next resource in this session for extension one. Each is framed by their context. The personal and political context of composition and response that shape the values through which texts are created and responded to.

As we have seen, the response of the writer to her or his lived experience, is one of deliberate creation of a literary world. Let's explore this extract. “When I speak of writing. what comes first to my mind is not a novel, a poem or a literary tradition. It is a person who shuts himself up in a room, sits down at a table, and alone, turns inward. Amid its shadows he builds a new world with the words… As I sit at my table for days, months, years, slowly adding new words to the empty page, I feel as if I'm creating a new world, as if I am bringing to being that other person inside me. In the same way, someone might build a bridge or a dome, stone by stone.”

In this extract from the stimulus text used in the NESA sample HSC exam, this focus is clear from the extended metaphor about building in red text. Notice, however, that the action of creation is concrete and decisive, but it can also be internal and ill defined “inward… amid its shadows”. These references are in blue. There is more analysis of this text in the forthcoming resource three of this Extension one session which unpacks the exam. But for the moment, notice how much emphasis there is through the module description and related documents such as the past exams on a sophisticated understanding of the crafting work of the composer. It is both external and somehow inside the artist. There are also strong parallels with the Advanced Module C here out there in the focus on the complexity of our understanding of how craft happens.

But it is not just the writer who is actively engaged. In this further quote from the same stimulus text, we can see that both a writer and reader are imaginatively engaged with the literary world. “All writers who have devoted their lives to this task know this reality: whatever our original purpose, the world that we create after years and years of hopeful writing, will, in the end, move to other very different places.”

The writer is imaginatively engaged with composition and the reader with reception. Yes, the work of the reader, especially one charged with creating an informed personal response is also active and ongoing. Before you attempt the final activity in this section of the resource, consider this analogy for the Common Module. The Common Module is a holiday package made up of multiple destinations in various countries. The reader is the traveller. Excerpts from literature or short texts are navigated. Each time a new text is met, the traveller escapes into its world. At each new city, you will absorb some of the culture and learn about new ideologies. The Elective module is a holiday package with the one country on the destination list. The traveller may explore multiple cities in this country, but only one world is entered. Allowing for a much deeper appreciation of the contexts that permeate the society and shape the values of the individuals and the collective groups within that world. Can you think of any other analogies that would help you keep the key ideas of the module in mind as you prepare for exams? See activity 11 in the student booklet for a space to create your own analogy.

This visual is an attempt to represent the key ideas of the module in the form of a poster. [image depicts a doorway opening to a mountainside with an ascending path]. Can you create your own version? Take a moment now if you need a brain break, or if you're feeling particularly creative, and design your own poster. Just something simple, an image and a slogan. Perhaps something that could be used to advertise an event where writers discuss the literary journeys that their texts have taken them on and the journeys their readers will be taken on. Pause the video here before section two begins and try this second component of the analogy activity from activity 11 in the student booklet.

Let's extend that analogy a little further. Each time we travel we do so for a purpose. This driving reason may be more or less conscious and more or less serious. Sightseeing, relaxation, cultural exploration, escape from normality. There is a sense in which both composers and responders create and escape into like a drive into the countryside. literary worlds because of the particular social and cultural milieu we live in. A context that may be termed modernity. There are other possible timeframes or contexts that our literary world may be responding to. But for the purposes of this resource, we will briefly examine this notion of the modern as a fertile way to evaluate your texts, both prescribed and self-chosen.

A feature of literary worlds created over the last couple of centuries is the way they can be seen as responding to modernity. In the final few slides of this resource, we will explore how the idea of the modern can be a useful one for tying together some of the threads we have been following in this resource. Again, we're taking a wide view here. Looking at something that might allow you to conceive of many different literary worlds, through the ways in which each is defined against one of the key features of our common cultural, political, and social context. The writers of texts you've been considering may well have been engaging with the premodern. Whether that is the ancient or medieval world. Most of the texts prescribed for the Electives, and most of the texts you are likely to be engaging with, as case studies in a Common Module, however, are likely to have originated during the individual and collective experiences of the modern world. Usually defined as during the last five centuries. In fact, one of the reasons why Shakespeare continues to fascinate and inspire us is because his literary worlds often deal with the emergence of the modern. In the character of the driven Iago from the play Othello, for example. Who is villainous and attractive in the way he manipulates the world around him for his own benefit. He's a very modern man indeed. As the module and Electives are transhistorical, they focus on literary responses to the emerging modern world, and the various challenges it has thrown up to individuals and societies within it. These include the varied and diverse perspectives individuals have towards those experiences and the various identities it shapes, as well as how voices that have been silenced or marginalised, are expressed through new worlds that represent a new world order.

Modernity in our usage, as you will be aware, does not mean contemporary. It refers to a set of characteristics that can be used to describe the nature of human civilization over the last few centuries. The modern is a complex notion that is usually seen to involve, the rise of reason over religion and its effect on humanity, the growth of the urban world and its impact on culture and individuals, the complexity and size of human institutions and structures, the rise of the state and its impact on individuals, the growth of technology and its impact on society, the rise of voices and experiences that challenge the dominant or grand narratives of the Western world. It divides us for example, from the medieval world. The factors listed here led in a complex way to successive artistic responses in a way that is then a simplified map of the development of literary worlds. The waves of modernity led to the rise of Romanticism, then Realism, Modernism and Postmodernism, each with characteristic preoccupations, perspectives, and values. In activity 12 in the student booklet, you will find the first of a series of questions that guide you to consider the connection between a chosen text of yours and this concept of modernity. Pause the recording here and consider the first question. Which of these aspects of modernity if any, does the case study text you have chosen deal with? If it is something that is not on this list, feel free to add to the list under activity 12 in the booklet.

[Slide reads: The modern through a character. Characterisation as part of the deliberate construction – activity 13, student booklet.

Iago torments Othello through the literary world created by Shakespeare, eventually bearing most responsibility for the death of Othello (honour) and his wife Desdemona (love).

These are two highly non-modern concepts, so in this world we watch deceit and self-interest triumph over an older world of truth and trust.

Is there a character in one of your chosen texts that interacts with aspects of the modern?]

Let's consider one way in which composers can construct their worlds to bring problems related to modernity into focus. Pause the recording here and read this brief overview of Iago from Shakespeare's Othello, remembering that this is a mere introduction and that as always with Shakespeare, there is a lot more going on underneath the rather simplistic symbolism suggested here. But the example does remind us that the literary world can interact with modernity in complex ways, especially through the texts' characters. Use activity 13 in the booklet to explore a character you have chosen from a text of yours.

[Slide reads: Ways of responding to the modern
Is the deliberate construction of literary worlds to…?

* Soothe?
* Critique?
* Subvert?
* Inspire or call to action?]

Even while responding to the modern, composers have choices in what they are hoping to achieve. Clarifying the purpose or purposes of the composer you considering is vital to understanding the nature of the literary world they have carefully constructed. It is also crucial to your task of evaluating the effectiveness of that world in achieving the composer's purpose. Orwell's world, for example, clearly aims to critique totalitarian regimes. Notice how important all the features of his text are. Yes, that's textual integrity, to him achieving the purpose. The narrative voice, the imagery, the characterisation.

Shakespeare's Othello, on the other hand, interrogates the values of a moment of historical transition, a hinge if you will, from the medieval to the modern. Iago's modern values of manipulation, self-interest and independent thinking are found to be repugnant because they result in the fall of honour, truth and love. And yet. And yet he's such an attractive character, witty, fallible, fascinating. Can you see what insights about the fast-approaching modern world Shakespeare might have been wrestling with through the construction of a multi layered literary world?

Let's return to your chosen case study text to apply this way of thinking. One, does the composer of your text, interrogate notions of modernity in some way? If not, then what is the deliberate construction of the literary world trying to achieve in relation to modernity? Two, explore how one feature of the literary world of that text allows the composer to achieve his or her purpose regarding the modern.

In the student resource booklet, you will find the last activity for this section. It is an activity that will help sum up the two parts of this resource about the deliberate construction of Literary Worlds. The Harvard thinking routine in activity 15 is called elaborate, sort, connect, extend. It will help you prepare a summary of your thinking around the literary worlds. Follow the instructions there to brainstorm around this concept in the light of the work you have done in this resource.

End of Transcript