RELATED TEXTS FOR AREA OF STUDY: DISCOVERY

Edited by Sam Schroder
Contributors: Laura Hodge, Narelle Nightscales, Danielle Vandenberg, Kirsten Watson, Tricia Weeks

Welcome to a new regular section in mETAphor 2015. Teaching new texts for a new HSC prescriptions list is hard enough work without having to locate lists of good related texts. This section is designed to help you out by giving an overview of a few good texts to add to your lists. We’ll focus on one module per issue but we’ll also include updates on modules we have already covered so this won’t be the last news on Discovery texts. You should also go to the Reviews section where you’ll see a table listing the review books and recommending possible related texts for suitable modules. Please contribute your related text suggestion following the format below.

As you can see, this is a space for teachers to share and we encourage and acknowledge recommendations from anyone who has a good idea on a useful text. The focus for different issues will be

- Issue 2: Module C Advanced and Standard
- Issue 3: Extension Modules
- Issue 4: Module A Standard

Discovery recommendations are still welcome in any issue. As you can see the length of the recommendation depends on you.

Please send any suggestions to Sam Schroder: sam.schroder@det.nsw.edu.au

PROSE FICTION

The Picture of Dorian Gray
Oscar Wilde
Ward, Locke and Company, 1891

Genre: Philosophical fiction/gothic horror

Summary:
Dorian Gray, our young and impressionable protagonist, is the subject of a full-length portrait by Basil Hallward. Basil has great admiration for Dorian and is quite infatuated with Dorian’s youth and beauty. Lord Henry Wotton, an aristocrat, and friend to Basil quickly influences Dorian through his hedonistic perspectives, and encourages him to seek a life of sensual pleasures and beauty. Dorian begins to lament the inevitable loss of youth and beauty and successfully sacrifices his soul, and as a result the portrait suffers the loss of youth and beauty rather than Dorian himself. As the portrait ages, it also reflects the sins he has committed in order to maintain his beauty and hedonistic lifestyle.

Discovery:

1. **Discovery of self.** Dorian is easily influenced by his meeting with Lord Henry and as a result believes that beauty and pleasure are the only things worth pursuing. Once he has committed such heinous crimes, including the brutal murder of Basil, he cannot redeem himself and pays the ultimate price for vanity. His discovery of self comes too late.

2. **Discovery of other worlds (and underworlds).** One of the worlds Dorian discovers (and destroys) is that of a family acting in a small theatre. He falls in love with Sibyl Vane, an actress. However, once his infatuation of her fades he easily rejects her. Sibyl is heartbroken, and commits suicide. Dorian accepts that his life’s ambition is to pursue pleasure, and as a result explores, discovers and experiments with every pleasurable activity and vice he can find.

3. **Discovery of societal values.** Dorian is infatuated with the idea of a hedonistic lifestyle and is continually praised for his youth and beauty. Aesthetics is highly valued in this society, and Dorian moves easily between the underworld and high society because of his youth and beauty. Dorian’s obsession with beauty, youth and pleasure stems from the values within the society in which he lives.
4. **Discovery that humanity cannot go against nature.** Dorian promises that he will change, but the portrait does not revert to its beauty. In an attempt at redemption he destroys the portrait but ultimately destroys himself.

5. **Discovery of the individual and how far one will go for love, revenge, manipulation, admiration, youth/beauty and hedonism.** Basil confronts Dorian about wicked rumours that surround him about his hedonistic lifestyle. Dorian does not deny the rumours, and takes Basil to see the portrait that is now hideously altered due to Dorian’s crimes. Dorian becomes angered by Basil, stabs him to death and has his body destroyed. James Vane, another victim of Dorian’s lifestyle, is destroyed by the death of his sister and is killed while seeking revenge upon Dorian Gray.

6. **Discovery of the ugliness within beauty.** As Dorian destroys others, his portrait begins to physically alter to represent his sins. Although his outward appearance reveals nothing about the ugliness of his actions, the portrait reveals how sinful his life has been.

7. **Discovery of sin and punishment as a result of human flaws.** Dorian is punished for his sins of vanity, hedonism, and his inability to resist sensual pleasures, and realises that seeking repentance cannot undo his crimes.

Relevant Discovery synonyms: exploration, revelation, experimentation, exposure, unearthing.

**Suggested by:** Danielle Vandenberg, Ambarvale High School

**The Scarlet Ibis**

James Hurst
http://www.calapitter.net/dead/39/scarlet_ibis.html (online) 1918

**Text category:** Short Story

**Genre:** Familial, Drama, Relationships

**Summary:** This story explores personal/emotional, social and familial Discovery. It involves the story of a young boy who has a brother who has to struggle with different physical disabilities. The narrator of the story tells the story of his brother Doodle’s life, and how he was expected to die young. The brother does not, in fact, die but continues to live, being a burden to his brother because of his physical issues. The narrator helps his brother become more physically able, and is admired for this; however, his true intentions are actually selfish. The writing is rich, emotional and symbolic, and has substantial ideas that could relate to most aspects of the Area of Study: Discovery.

**Discovery:**

1. **Personal and Emotional Discovery** – how the narrator must struggle with a brother that he both loves and finds a burden. Through this relationship he discovers more about himself, and we discover more about families.

2. **Social Discovery** – through the complex nature of families, and how they can influence our choices and actions. Therefore, we discover the multitude of family types, and how they impact on our own identities.

Relevant Discovery synonyms: New understandings, different ramifications for individuals and their worlds, affirms or challenges assumptions or beliefs about human experience and the world, experiences that can be confronting and provocative.

**Suggested by:** Tricia Weeks, Arthur Phillip High School

**PRINT MEDIA**

**American Schools Are Training Kids for a World That Doesn’t Exist**

David Edwards, 2014
www.wired.com/2014/10/on-learning-by-doing/

**Genre:** online news

**Summary:** This news article, published on wired.com, serves to illustrate that the way American students are educated is outdated. In order for students to become global citizens, students need to be educated using 21st century ways of thinking. This includes experiential learning where students make discoveries for themselves; this leads to innovation in many fields, and could revolutionise the way learners learn.

**Discovery:**

This text relates to Discovery in a number of ways. Firstly, it outlines how people are encouraged to think differently; it stimulates new ways of thinking
that lead to change. Secondly, it outlines how the future holds many possibilities for those who explore and discover for themselves. The article also extrapolates how making discoveries can challenge one to think about their place in the world: 'The time is now to support the role of learning in the pursuit of discovery and to embrace the powerful agency of culture.'

**Relevant Discovery synonyms:** experiment, education, innovation, unearthing, revolution, advancement.

**Suggested by:** Narelle Nightscales, Bonnyrigg High School

**NON FICTION**

**Openside: My Journey to the Rugby World Cup**

David Pocock
New Holland Publishers, 2011

**Genre:** Autobiography

**Summary:** The title really says it all. This autobiography explores the life of David Pocock, former Wallabies Captain, from his childhood in Zimbabwe to his selection for the Australian national rugby team.

**Discovery:** A really accessible book exploring self-discovery, changing perspectives of others, unexpected and confronting discovery. This non-fiction text takes us through Pocock’s own views of his transformation as an individual, philanthropist and sportsman, including many of the challenges he faced along the way.

**Relevant Discovery synonyms:** Challenging, provoking, unexpected, eye-opening, transforming, self-awareness, journey, questioning, realisation, uncover, learning.

**Suggested by:** Kirsten Watson. Canberra Grammar School.

**FILM**

**Into The Woods**

Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, 
Book and direction by James Lapine 
Brandman Productions Inc, 1990

**Genre:** Musical theatre film. Comedy/ drama/ fairy tale

**Summary:** Well-known fairy tale characters venture into the woods in order to get their wish. On the way they grow and learn many things about themselves, others and the world and reach their ‘happily ever after’ at the end of Act One. However, in Act Two they learn that their actions have consequences and that happily ever after isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. They all must venture into the woods again in order to right wrongs, solve problems and take responsibility for their actions.

**Discovery:** This related text works particularly well with learning of his son’s death, decides to complete the pilgrimage on which his son was about to embark. The Camino de Santiago, also known as the Way of St James, was a traditional route of pilgrims across Southern France into Northern Spain. Totally out of his comfort zone, Tom Avery carries his son’s ashes towards the end point of Santiago, meeting along his way a range of interesting characters, each of whom have their own reasons for taking this pilgrimage. This film is funny, tense and emotional.

**Discovery:** Tom and his son Daniel often clashed over Daniel’s spontaneous personality. While Daniel loved adventure, his father saw structure and a solid job as the most important factors in life. Tom’s 791km trek forces him to reassess his values, consider others’ perspectives and cultures, whilst undertaking a challenging journey, that he is told he will fail. Leaving his comfort zone behind, Tom discovers much about himself, others and his son.

**Relevant Discovery synonyms:** Unpredicted, spontaneous, self-awareness, rejuvenation, rediscover, unearth, journey, investigate, expedition, challenge, revelation, unknown, transformation, enlightenment, pilgrimage, unfolding.

**Suggested by:** Kirsten Watson, Canberra Grammar School.
The Tempest. In order to make a discovery, the characters must experience displacement from the known. Once in the woods, they learn through their experiences and make discoveries about themselves, others and the world. Similar to The Tempest, not all characters make discoveries about themselves. The Princes (like Antonio and Sebastian) fail to learn, despite their displacement, and as a result continue to live as they did before and make no discoveries. This raises questions about why some characters make discoveries and others don’t, linking to how ‘the process of discovery can vary according to personal...contexts and values.’ This text also leads the viewer on a voyage of discovery. The characters are fairy tale characters that most people will be familiar with; however, their ‘fractured’ journeys into the woods highlight the faults in our traditional fairy tale stories, make us look at these familiar characters in new ways, and raise new questions about how we should live in the world, and the stories we should tell.

Relevant Discovery synonyms: Searching, exploration, encounter, revelation

Suggested by: Laura Hodge, Bossley Park High School

IMAGES

The Conciliation / The National Picture

Benjamin Dutterau, 1840/ Geoff Parr, 1985
Published in the ‘Change’ Booklet (HSC Prescriptions, 2001-2003), NSW Board of Studies,

Genre: History

Summary:
The Conciliation by Dutterau depicts the meeting between the Aboriginal people of Tasmania and British 'Protector of the Aborigines,' George Augustus Robinson. It is an idealised image of the meeting. Robinson is salient and is presented as powerful.

The National Picture is an appropriation of The Conciliation. The Aboriginal and European characters have been swapped so that there is only one Aboriginal character remaining. The photograph of Truganini (the last full blooded Aborigine from Tasmania), coupled with the fake studio set and animal skins, makes a comment about the effects of the meeting between the Aboriginal and European communities and causes us to question the representation shown in the older painting.

Discovery:
The Conciliation depicts the discovery of new land and new people. Both groups of people are discovering something new in this photo. Robinson is the obvious discoverer in this painting, but the Aboriginal people are also discovering the newcomer, as shown by the sense of wonder they have towards him. The power of the discoverer, especially in a colonisation situation is also shown, with Robinson being the salient image.

The National Picture causes us to reread the original painting. It causes the viewer to ‘rediscover’ the Australian / European colonial experience and helps us to develop ‘new understandings and renewed perspectives’ of the historical situation. This text could also help students to understand ‘how texts have the potential to challenge ... assumptions ... about aspects of human experience and the world.’ This text aims to convey the effects of discovery.

Relevant Discovery synonyms: Colonisation, encounter, exploration

Suggested by: Laura Hodge, Bossley Park High School