Appendix IV

Literature - based Communicative Activities

A. The be-all and end-all.

This unit brings together texts which might seem to have nothing in common at first sight - Animal Farm, Paradise Lost, Macbeth and Iris Murdoch’s The Sacred and Profane Love Machine. They are united by the theme of rebellion, and many complementary aspects will be found.

Following Animal Farm, the extract from Paradise Lost is meant to appear (and be) difficult. In reading literature, students must be prepared to face difficulties of many kinds, and to acquire the means to tackle them. The whole of Reading Between the Lines offers ample opportunities to do this, while the exercise accompanying the Milton passage directs attention at features causing specific problems. Do not, therefore, be daunted by this and the extract from Macbeth which follows it; there are good reasons for their inclusion.

1.1 Theme

a) Elicit examples of violence today (Ulster, Lebanon, race riots, etc.), without going into motivations too
deeply. Is violence a useful or justifiable way to achieve one’s aims? Is it ever successful?
b) Movement, crowds, facial expressions etc.
c) Reaction and recounting. If this is outside students’ direct experience, have them talk about news broadcasts they have heard/seen.
d) Some countries were created out of violence (Kenya, Cyprus, Algeria, Italy), others destroyed (who remembers Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia, Aden, Biafra, the Austro-Hungarian Empire?). Is terrorism in any form justifiable in our own times?

1.2 Dictionary work, Are ‘rebellion’ and ‘uprising’ the same? Bring out the difference between the general application of ‘rebellion’ and the particular, when it does mean the same as ‘uprising’.

**Text A** George Orwell, Animal Farm

a) Because they had not been fed, and then when they began to help themselves’ (11.27-28) were attacked. Obviously they had been discontented with Mr. Jones’s regime for some time.
b) Mr Jones ‘had become much disheartened’ (11.5-6) and taken to drink, leaving his farm to neglect. ‘His men’
(1.11) had consequently become 'idle and dishonest'
(1.12) and the whole thing was going to the bad.
c) He is probably some kind of pet (see 1.11). Only
this can be deduced or imagined from the present extract.
In fact, he is a tame raven, Mr. Jones’s special pet,
much disliked by the animals.
d) The first sentence makes it clear that the animals’
plans were not specific in terms of what would be done,
or when. Then ‘though nothing of the kind had been
planned beforehand’ (11.33-34) confirms this at the
moment when the revolt proper begins. ‘At last they could
stand it no longer’ (11.25 -26) begins to set the
Rebellion in motion. The men ‘in the store-shed with
whips in their hands, lashing out in all directions’
(11.30 - 31) drive the animals to violence, through their
own violence.
e) A very short time: ‘After only a moment’ (11.41-42)
leads to ‘A minute later’ (1.43), and the animals have
triumped.
f) On the evening of Sunday 22nd June. The animals
could have been fed either on the Friday, or on the
Saturday morning.
g) Open response.

2.2 Encourage use of 'might have' or 'would have' forms.
In fact, they explored the whole farm and eliminated all traces of humanity from it, and all 'anti-animal' equipment, then are given 'a double ration' of corn before settling down for the night.

2.3 This exercise will bring out similarities in expression and theme between Text A and Text B.
   a) broke in (1.26), whips (1.30), lashing out (1.31), flung (1.34), butted and kicked (1.36), uprising (1.39), thrashing and maltreating (1.40), in full flight (1.44), pursuing (1.46).
   b) He is recounting 'A Fairy Story', as he tells us in his sub-title to the book. Like an allegory, the simplicity of the animals' story hides (not very deeply) a serious moral concern in the tale.
   c) The language used should clearly be seen to be modern. Animal Farm was first published in 1945.

3.1 Text B John Milton, Paradise Lost

Because of the nature of the exercise - learning how to work things out for yourself - refrain from giving background information about Milton, the subject of
Paradise Lost (Satan and his followers were expelled by God from Heaven for disobedience), and the battle in this extract (between the powers of Heaven and Hell).

a) i) and ii) Play the recording of lines 32 to 44, or read them aloud, as they echo Orwell’s battle, with ‘storming horrible discord’ (11.34-35), ‘raged’ (1.36), ‘dire was the noise of conflict’ (11.36-37), ‘dismal hiss’ (1.37), all indicating sounds. Other violent words include ‘madding’ (1.35), ‘flaming volleys’ (1.38), ‘assault’ (1.41), ‘inextinguishable rage’ (1.42). Compare these with the words picked out in question 2.3 (a). Orwell’s are words of action and movement, Milton’s more of sound and movement - the effect is remarkably similar.

b) i) This question enables students to identify the participants and the parts they play.
- ‘he’ (1.14) raised his weapon and served Satan a blow on the head.
- Satan (1.16) took ten paces back and was forced to kneel.
- ‘The rebel thrones’ (1.24) were amazed and angry. They did nothing immediately.
- Michael (1.27) sounded the trumpet to announce battle.
- 'the faithful armies' (1.29) praised God.
- 'The adverse legions' (1.31) joined in the battle.

ii) Answers are given in 3.1 (c) of the Student's Book.

d) i) One of God's men, Abdiel in fact, is speaking to Satan as can be seen from his insistence on 'God' (11.1-9), on obedience and 'servitude' (1.3), and from the constant use of 'thee/thy/thine' (11.5-6,8,12-13) contrasting with 'our' (1.7) and 'me' (11.8-12). See also question 3.2(d).

ii) Dictionary work in preparation for question (iii) to (vi).

iii) That the one who rules is the best fitted to do so, and is superior to those he rules. God's worthiness.

iv) Servitude for Abdiel would be the opposite of his present position, as it would mean serving 'the unwise' (1/4), someone who is now worthy to be master, perhaps because he has rebelled against his master as Satan did. Those who serve Satan are thus in servitude (1.3) because Satan himself is not free to be the just and true master - 'Thy self not free' (1.6); rather he is
imprisoned by the crime of his rebellion. Abdiel considers himself 'blest' (1.9) and happy in the service of God, who is 'worthiest to be obeyed' (1.10 echoing 1.2). We can imagine that he would prefer to serve in Heaven than reign in Hell.

v) 'Thine' are Satan's followers, 'thee' is Satan himself. The third person pronouns refer to different characters: 'he' (11.2-3) is used in general, meaning 'anyone who' (although the reference is indirectly to God); him/'his' (11.4-5) are similarly general ('anyone who hath rebelled') referring, by implication, to Satan; 'his' (1.9) refers directly to 'God; in the same line.

vi) Line 11 tells them to expect imprisonment ('chains') rather than blissful freedom ('realms').

e) 11-13: You should expect chains, not realms, in Hell; meanwhile, take on your head this greeting from me, now that I have, as you have just said, returned from my flight.

18-19: He recoiled (and retreated) ten huge paces.

32-34: Now storming, fury and clamour, such as had never been heard in Heaven till, now rose.

Milton's word order gives greater stress to
certain words - for example 'rose' (1.32), which loses all its impact when placed at the end of its sentence.

3.2 a) Orwell by words indicating action, Milton by words indicating sound and movement.

b) Milton was endeavouring to create an epic language worthy of his subject - hence the 'poetic' style and use of language (greatly dependent on sound, as we have noticed) which came to be called Miltonic. Orwell's subject matter is equally serious, but his use of animals as characters (see question 2.3(b)) led him to use the deliberately simple language of the fable or fairy tale.

c & d Open response. The question gets students to focus on the sense of periods. Paradise Lost was first published in 1667. Its language is clearly antiquated. Its style is peculiar to Milton, and the religious context (Old Testament) gives it a kind of religious resonance of tone.

e) Open response. Students have worked out much of the content of the Paradise Lost passage for themselves, with the guidance of the exercise. Point out that Milton himself gave his readers guidance in the 'Argument'
(summary) prefacing each of the 12 books of Paradise Lost.

4.1 Text C William Shakespeare, Macbeth

a) The rhythms and pauses suggest Macbeth's agitation - he is confused.

b) The only positive possibility he sees is, if it were over quickly and success were immediate, avoiding 'the life to come' (1.7). All the rest is negative: 'judgement' (1.8), 'justice' (1.10), 'trust' (1.12), etc. The killing will not be over quickly - the consequences will always remain. Macbeth is Duncan's 'kinsman and his subject' (1.13), 'his host' (1.14), and Duncan has been a 'meek' (1.17), 'clear' (1.18) and virtuous king. Macbeth's motive is 'only vaulting ambition' (11.26-27).

4.2 a) 'It' is the assassination.

b) If the whole thing could be considered to be over and done with as soon as the deed was done, it would be better to do it quickly: that is, if the killing led to no difficult consequences but, with his death, only to success. If it were a self-contained action - in that case we could avoid all future problems.

c) The grammar of these first seven lines is confused,
hesitant, then galloping - probably reflecting, Machbeth's agitation and wishful thinking.

d) That those who live by the sword shall die by the sword that, as Hamlet puts it, he might be 'hoist with his own petard' (Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, iv, 206), and have his evil plot rebound on him.

e) He is a good, virtuous, righteous kind. The angels emphasise Duncan's goodness, in complete contrast to Macbeth's evil in killing him, which is 'The deep damnation of his taking off (1.20). It is a simple conflict between good and evil.

f) 'Striding' (1.22), 'horsed' (1.22), 'couriers' (1.23), 'spour' (1.25), and perhaps 'o' ereleaps .. And falls' (11.27-28) if they are read as meaning one who mounts a horse too fast and falls on the other side. The impression is one of power, speed, authority, danger through recklessness.

g) It could be 'side', as in (f) above, echoing Macbeth's fear of a fall.

h) He is not yet ready and, in fact, does not do the deed until the next scene, after another soliloquy. After this present soliloquy, he suggests to Lady Macbeth
that they should abandon the murder plot, but she
convinces him that it must go ahead.

5.1 Text D Iris Murdoch. The Sacred and Profane Love
Machine.

(Luca is Harriet’s young son).

a) No reason is given. There is no evidence that
anyone in the airport lounge has been deliberately chosen
as a victim. The killing was therefore gratuitous. (It
has no direct connection with anything else in the novel,
either).

b) ‘A long glittering tube’ (11.13-14) and the
‘crackling of deafening sound’ (11.17-18) suggest machine
guns.

c) Open response. Newspaper reports could be used as
contrast to or for comparison with Murdoch’s narration.
How effective is her style in making the scene real?

d) Open response.

5.3

a & b) Students discuss their perceptions of the
different style of the passages. Asking them to choose
sentences is simply a way of enabling them to focus on
the task.

209
6. **Simulation**

   Recommended duration  
   (a) 15 minutes  
   (b) 30 minutes  
   (c) 15 minutes  
   Total 1 hour

   Many students get very heated about this topic; the writing of notes on one's own opinions is a way of ensuring some order in the discussion. Some students might wish to opt out; they can make notes on what the others say in preparation for (c).

7. **Violent language**

   a) Notice that 'blood' is not mentioned in these texts, until the very last words of the Murdoch text, when it comes as quite a shock. Rather the violence is described in a distanced way. It is this objectivity of description that is at the heart of the question. In sensational literature and journalism there is a kind of participation in the violence which borders on vicarious enjoyment of it. The following passage, taken from a popular daily newspaper, is useful in showing direct involvement in a violent scene.

   A war veteran with 10 medals was viciously scarred
for life by two young thugs - for just 4 J.C. 60. was
left unconscious and bleeding at a bus stop after the
two-minute attack. His face was brutally slashed and
the wounds needed 27 stitches. Last night at his home
J.C. told of his nightmare after leaving a social club.
    "I was approached by a young man who asked me for
the time. As soon as I looked at my watch another youth
came from behind screaming 'We want your money.' I
managed to punch one of them, but a knife was pulled out
and blood seemed everywhere. Then I backed out.

Contrast this with the anonymous, unsensational news
item with the simple heading ‘Rail death’.

A middle-aged man was killed yesterday when he
stepped into the path of the 10.36 Bognor Regis to
Victoria train at West Green, West Sussex.

The first passage is, in a way, less shocking. The
adverbs ('viciously', brutally') and heightened language
('scarred for life', 'nightmare') emphasise what is
already a nasty story, but the second passage is somehow
more effective in its understatement of the facts and its
odd detailing of place names. Have students rewrite the
second passage in the style of the first, and vice versa.
b) Use a story from local news which might be reported in a newspaper. On the basis of (a), students might be able to invent a story. The recounting of personal experience will have a different kind of subjectivity. Does the story seems less effective if narrated in the third person?

**POSTSCRIPT**

Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains.


(Source: McRAE and BOARDMAN, 1884)
Now another example of a school scene, this time from Charles Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby. Mr. Squeers, the headmaster of Dotheboys Hall, demonstrates his philosophy of education to Nicholas, his new assistant. Try to decide what Nicholas' feelings are about Squeers.

He could not but observe how silent and sad the boys all seemed to be. There was none of the noise and clamour of a school-room, none of its boisterous play or hearty mirth. The children sat crouching and shivering together, and seemed to lack the spirit to move about. The only pupils who evinced the slightest tendency towards locomotion or playfulness was Master Squeers, and as his chief amusement was to tread upon the other boys' toes in his new boots, his flow of spirits was rather disagreeable than otherwise. After some half-hour's delay Mr. Squeers reappeared, and the boys took their places and their books, of which latter commodity the average might be about one to eight learners. A few minutes having elapsed, during which Mr. Squeers looked very profound, as if he had a perfect apprehension of
what was (15) inside all the books, and could say every word of their contents by heart if he only chose to take the trouble, that gentleman called up the first class.

Obedient to this summons, they ranged themselves in front of the schoolmaster’s desk, half a dozen scarecrows, out at knees (20) and elbows, one of whom placed a torn and filthy book beneath his learned eye.

"This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy.

Neckleby, "said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. "We’ll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, (25) then, where’s the first boy?"

"Please, sir, he’s cleaning the back parlour window", said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

"So he is, to be sure," rejoined Squeers. "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education. (30) system C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour W-i-n, win, d-e-r, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of the book, he goes and does it. It’s just the same principle as the use of globes. Where’s the second boy?"
"Please, sir, he's weeding the garden", replied a small voice.

(35) "To be sure, said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. "So he is B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, bottin, n-e-y, bottiney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby; what do you think of it?"

(40) "Significantly".

"I believe you, " rejoined Squeers, not remarking the emphasis of his usher.

"Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, sir, " replied the boy.

(45) "So it is," said Squeers, "Ain't it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, sir" answered Nicholas.

"Of course there isn't," said Squeers. "A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having (50) grammar at all?"

"Where indeed!" said Nicholas abstractedly.

"As you're perfect in that," resumed Squeers, turning to the boy. "go and look after my horse, and rub him down
well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up till (55) somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing-day-to-morrow, and they want the coppers filled."

So saying he dismissed the first class to their experiments in practical philosophy, and eyed Nicholas with a look half cunning and half doubtful, as if he were not altogether certain what he (60) might think of him by this time.

"That's the way we do it, Nickleby," he said after a long pause. Nicholas shrugged his shoulders in a manner that was scarcely perceptible, and said he was it was.

"And a very good way it is, too," said Squeers. "Now just take (65) those fourteen little boys and hear them some reading, because you know you must begin to be useful, and idling about here won't do."

Mr Squeers said this as if it had suddenly occurred to him, either that he must not say too much to his assistant, or that this (70) assistant did not say enough to him in praise of the establishment. The children were arranged in a semi-circle round the new master, and he was soon listening to their dull, drawling, hesitating
recital of those stories of engrossing interest which are
to be found in the more antiquated spelling (75) books.

In this exciting occupation the morning lagged
heavily on.

4.1 ......................................................

.....

What are you reactions to Squeer’s definitions and
spellings?

4.2 ......................................................

..... Which lines illustrate Mr. Squeers’s philosophy of
education and attitude to it? What are its advantages and
disadvantage?

4.3 ......................................................

.....

How is this situation similar to the one in the previous
text? How is it different?

4.4 ......................................................

.....

How would you describe the character Squeers? How does he
compare with Miss Jean Brodie?

4.5 ......................................................

This scene is portrayed through Nicholas’s eyes. Does
this mean you sympathize more with him and the boys than you did with Paul and his students? How do your reactions differ to the two stories?

4.6................................................... • •

As in the previous text, there is a lot of interesting vocabulary, 'evinced' (line 5) instead of showed for example. Often two words are put together to increase their effect, like crouching and shivering (line4). Pick out the words and phrases you find unusual or problematic and see if you can guess their meaning before looking them up in the dictionary to check how correct you were.

Discussion

The 'richness' of vocabulary is what makes novels and stories more enjoyable than just simple words on the page. A debate could be organized in which one side prefers simplicity and easy language, and the other prefers language rich with sounds and images. Don't all take the same side!

Is it difficult to find a good teacher? Discuss what makes the ideal teacher, and the ideal school - if they exist!

(Source: McRae, J. and Pantaleoni, L. : 1990)
C.

You are going to hear the first part of a short story by R.K.Narayan called 'The edge'. Before you listen, read the following statements. Eight of them describe the facts in the short story accurately. Two of them are false. As you listen to the story, tick the statements which are true. Mark the two incorrect statements with an X. The statements are not in order.

1. He was dressed in a dhoti, a shirt and a turban, (A dhoti is loose-fitting cloth worn around the middle part of the body, by Hindus.)
2. He carried a portable grinding machine operated with a pedal.
3. He had become a millionaire by sharpening swords for a Maharaja.
4. He liked to think that he could sharpen all kinds of instruments, not just knives.
5. He did not work in one single place, but was peripatetic (he moved from place to place).
6. His name was Ranga, and he would never tell anyone his age.
7. He did not have a moustache, but had a very full beard.
8. He was a man who loved to talk on and on.
9. He had a lot of trouble persuading tailors and barbers to have their knives sharpened.
10. He had a loud voice and used to walk in the city streets calling for people to come and have their knives and scissors sharpened.

(Source: Collie and Slater; 1987)