

RECOVERED VOICES

Lesson Plan: Art as Resistance and Protest

Written by Olga Bezrukov for L.A. Opera

Duration: This lesson plan can be adjusted for a field-trip to either see the opera or attend the museum. Not including the field-trip, the duration is 3 class periods of 50min. each.

Grade Levels: 9-12

Subjects: Literature, English, History, Political Science

Standards:

California State Board of Education Language Arts Content

- Grade 9/10; 2.0 Reading Comprehension (focus on informational materials): Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.
- Grade 9/10; 3.0 Literary response analysis: Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes
- Grade 9/10; 3.3 Analyze interactions between main and subordinate characters in literary text (e.g. internal and external conflicts, motivations, relationships, and influences) and how they affect the plot
- Grade 9/10; 3.4 Determine characters traits by what they say about themselves in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue, soliloquy
- Grade 9/10; 3.5 Compare works that express a universal theme, and provide evidence to support the ideas
- Grade 11/12; 2.0 Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion and description. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organization and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0. Using the grades 11/12 speaking strategies outline in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:
- Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns, using appropriate rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion).
 - Draw comparisons between the specific incident and broader themes that illustrate the speaker's beliefs or generalizations about life.
 - Maintain a balance between describing the incident and relating it to more general, abstract ideas.
- Grade 11/12; 2.4 Deliver oral responses to literature:
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works (e.g., make assertions about the text that are reasonable and supportable).
 - Analyze the imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text through the use of rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, persuasion, exposition, a combination of those strategies).
 - Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.
 - Demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
 - Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

History-Social Science Content Standards.

- Grade 10 10.5 Students analyze the causes and course of the First World War.
10.6 Students analyze the effects of the First World War.
- Grade 11 11.7 Students analyze America's participation in World War II.

Process:

Class 1

Preparatory:

Suggested: The translation of the original story, *Der zerbrochene Krug/The Broken Jug*, by Heinrich Kleist (available on: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=9405298#>)

- 1) Throughout the generations, art has been used as resistance and a tool to protest some of the events that were happening in the world. Explain that the work, *Der zerbrochene Krug/The Broken Jug*, could be considered an artistic medium used to demonstrate legal injustice. (*This work was written in 1942, the same year Victor and his family was sent to concentration camp Terezin--* according to <http://mitglied.lycos.de/mwiener/ullmann/index-e.html>)
Give out the synopsis (**Worksheet A**) to students the day previous to class, and have students read the synopsis as well as research the political and historical context of late 1930s and early 1940s as homework.
- 2) Art supplies, glue, posters, magazines for cut outs, and scissors

Process:

- 1) As a class discussion, review the synopsis and brainstorm what was happening in the world historically and politically before the opera was written, **Worksheet B**.
- 2) As a class answer the discussion/follow up questions.
- 3) Divide the class into groups.
- 4) Allow the groups to choose an artist and do research either using internet or library resources.
- 5) Allow the groups to prepare the presentation.

Class 2

Prep: Art supplies, glue, posters, magazines for cut outs, and scissors.

Procedure:

- 1) Allow groups to gather and start presentations.
- 2) As groups are presenting, have students fill out **Worksheet C**.
- 3) Answer the questions in class discussion.
- 4) Either create new groups, or allow students to stay in their groups to make an Art Resistance Poster.
- 5) In groups assign students to pick an issue and create a poster that speaks out as resistance art and protests the issue they have been discussing.

Class 3

- 1) Allow groups to gather and finish their posters.
- 2) Present the group posters to class.

Assessment

- 1) Students will be able to read and understand the synopsis of the opera *Der zerbrochene Krug/The Broken Jug*.
- 2) Students will be able to research the historical/political events pertaining to the time period.
- 3) Students will be able to analyze the story as it pertains to the period it was written in as well as relate it to present issues.
- 4) Students will be able to discuss their ideas in class.
- 5) Students will be able to draw parallels between the story and events in history.
- 6) Students will be able to come up with a statement and support it with evidence.
- 7) Students will be able to work in groups.
- 8) Students will be able to see the historical and contemporary effects of arts in society.

- 9) Students will be able to put their ideas in a presentation form and present it to class.
- 10) Students will be able to finish Worksheets A, B and C.
- 11) Students will be able to create a poster that speaks as Art Resistance to present issues.
- 12) Students will be able to present their thoughts to their peers.

INTRODUCTION WORKSHEET A- ART AS A RESISTANCE

For generations, art has been used as a tool for resistance and to protest to some of the things that were happening in the world. Read the synopsis of this opera that was written by Viktor Ullmann and research some of the things that were happening politically and historically in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The opera *Der zerbrochene Krug/The Broken Jug* (translated English title) was written by Viktor Ullmann based on the story by Heinrich von Kleist. Viktor Ullmann was born in January 1, 1898 (<http://www.viktorullmannfoundation.org.uk>). In September of 1942, Viktor Ullmann, his wife, and his oldest son were deported to the concentration camp Terezin. According to <http://mitglied.lycos.de/mwiener/ullmann/index-e.html>, website dedicated to Ullmann, "on 16th October 1944, Viktor Ullmann was sent – together with his last wife – from Terezin to **Auschwitz**, where he presumably perished two days later in the gas chambers."

The Broken Jug

Written in 1942, based on a play by Heinrich Kleist

Synopsis taken from L.A. Opera website:

<http://www.laopera.com/productions/0708/recovered/synopsis.htm>

The story takes place in Huisum, a provincial Dutch village near Utrecht, in the eighteenth century. Licht, the clerk of the village court, arrives in the courtroom one morning to prepare for the day's proceedings. He discovers Adam, the village judge, in a generally disreputable state, nursing a badly lacerated face and an injured leg, with a highly questionable explanation involving an altercation with a clothesline and a goat. Licht tells Adam to expect the imminent arrival of Walter, the district justice from Utrecht, who is on a tour of inspection of the courts in his jurisdiction. Alarmed, Adam tries to get everything in order, and orders his maids to fetch his wig. Much to his chagrin, they report that he had returned home without it late the previous night.

District Judge Walter arrives, eager to review the day's proceedings. The first case to be heard involves the angry Marthe Rull, carrying the fragments of a broken jug. She is joined by her distraught daughter Eve, the farmer Veit Tümpel and his furious son Ruprecht. Marthe reports that at eleven o'clock the previous evening she heard loud male voices coming from Eve's bedroom; she ran in to discover Eve and her fiancé Ruprecht together, with the shards of the broken jug on the floor. Marthe expects Ruprecht to pay for the damages.

Ruprecht claims that, suspicious that his fiancée was entertaining a male visitor, he had broken down Eve's door. After hearing the jug break into pieces, Ruprecht burst in just in time to hear the jug smashing into pieces and see a man attempt to escape through the window. Before the unknown intruder had crashed to the ground outside, Ruprecht had managed to strike him with the door handle. For her part, Eve says nothing about the night's events, other than to swear that Ruprecht didn't break the jug. Veit Tümpel's sister arrives, holding a wig she found in the trellis outside Marthe's house. Judge Walter, who has largely hidden his suspicions about the village judge, now clearly realizes that Adam is hiding something. When Adam frantically demands that Ruprecht be imprisoned, Eve overcomes her secret mortification and finally speaks up: Judge Adam himself broke the jug during an attempted seduction. Exposed in his own courtroom as the perpetrator of the crime on trial, Adam quickly flees.

Ruprecht begs Eve's forgiveness, while Marthe, still seeking compensation for the jug, plans to pursue her case against Adam in Judge Walter's court the following week. The characters sing the moral of the story: "None shall play the judge's part if he be not of purest heart."

WORKSHEET B- HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

In order to understand some of the ideas that the composer is trying to get across, it is necessary to understand the times the writer was living in.

The opera was written in 1942. As a class, brainstorm some of the things that were happening in late 1930s and early 1940s. Some of the answers are provided.

| Europe and outside Americas | America |
|---|--|
| <p>1938: -Japanese enter Tsingtao and install Chinese puppet government -Hitler appoints himself War Minister -Pogroms in Germany -Anti-Jewish legislation enacted in Italy</p> <p>1939: -Germany occupies Bohemia and Moravia; renounces the nonaggression pact with Poland and naval agreement with England -Hungary quits League of Nations -Italy invades Albania -Germany invades Poland</p> <p>1940: WWII ... etc...</p> | <p>1938: -President Roosevelt sends appeal to Hitler and Mussolini to cordially settle European problems. -US. Supreme Court rules that University of Missouri Law School must admit African Americans</p> <p>1939: -Roosevelt asks Congress for \$552 million for defense -Roosevelt demands assurances from Hitler and Mussolini that they will not attack -Roosevelt appoints William O. Douglas and Felix Frankfurter to the Supreme court</p> <p>1940: WWII ... etc...</p> |

Class discussion/Follow up questions:

In your opinion, could this opera be considered a direct critique of the political times?

What elements lead you to believe that it does/does not?

Could it be argued that this composer is using his ability to compose music to speak out against what was going on politically? Why or why not?

WORKSHEET C

There are many artists who use art to speak out, or to make the society aware of things that are happening around them.

In class assignment: In groups, pick an artist who uses art to speak up and make our society aware of our surroundings. Prepare a presentation on this artist. As a group, present the artist and his/her work. Discuss on how he/she is making a difference. Talk about how his/her work effects you as a person as well as it affected the society surrounding the artist. Does it/did it have an impact on our society?

Pick from the list or come up with your own. Protest Art and Art as Resistance examples:

- Any of the artists involved in ‘Degenerate Art’ (ex. Paul Klee, Kandinsky, Heckel, Kirchner, Nolde)
- Pablo Picasso- painted *Guernica* in protest of Spanish war
- Resistance through Negro Spirituals, ex. (The Ballad of the Underground Railroad by Rene Boyer-Alexander, Follow the Drinking Gourd)
- **Popular Music**- Some of the musicians of our century have written music against war in Iraq (Madonna, Lenny Kravitz, Beastie Boys, R.E.M and George Michael) Picasso painted *Guernica* in response to Nazi Germany and fascist Italy’s savage bombing during the Spanish Civil War.
- **South African Resistance Art (any of the artists involved in the project, ex. Jane Alexander, Willie Bester, Jonathan Comerford)**
- **Poetry**- Odysseus Elytis, Berrigan Brothers (Daniel and Phillip)
- **Photography**- Deborah Willis (the role of black image)

As you are seeing the presentations, fill out the blanks.

| Group number | Is this relevant to our society? Yes/No | Explain: |
|--------------|--|----------|
| | | |

Are there any additional issues that our society is dealing with that were not covered by presentations?

Assignment: In groups, pick an issue and create a poster that speaks as resistance art and protest to the issue at hand. Present the group poster to class.