

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Teaching

A Case Study Involving a Teacher's Experience of Teaching Harry Potter, Critical Literacy, and Critical Theory



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Abstract

Several studies have discussed the possibilities of working with *Harry Potter* from perspectives of critical literacy and critical theory, in other words, to critically approach the novels while reading and writing. However, most of the previous research has failed to address how one can implement critical literacy in connection with *Harry Potter* in Swedish schools. This research project had as an aim to fill this indicated gap by conducting a case study, involving a Swedish upper secondary teacher's experience of teaching the *Harry Potter* novels from critical literacy perspectives. The case study included an interview with the teacher and a collection of their teaching material. The data were analysed, and compared to previous research, in order to examine a possible generalisation by focusing the conclusions on this specific interviewee's ways of teaching the novels. The conclusions drawn were that one can advantageously work with critical literacy and *Harry Potter* using different questions and discussion topics to initiate one's students' critical mindsets. Critical theories were concluded to simplify, or concretise, the use of critical literacy, since they provide students with more specifically addressed perspectives. Furthermore, working with the aspects of critical literacy simultaneously covers several parts of Skolverket's curriculum and the syllabus for English. These results indicate that *Harry Potter* can be analysed with the help of critical literacy perspectives in Swedish upper secondary schools, by using the proposed methods of the interviewed teacher.

Keywords: Harry Potter, critical literacy, critical theory, Sweden

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Introduction

This study researches how *Harry Potter* can be used in the classroom from a critical literacy perspective. According to Lozic (2012), critical literacy is when students are considering indifferences in society and other differences in power meanwhile being critical to those aspects while reading (Introductory section, para. 4). The importance of this study is due to the vitality of working with critical literacy in Sweden since one of Skolverket's (2013) requirements in their curriculum for upper secondary school is, in fact, that students should critically approach texts that they are exposed to (p. 9). A considerable amount of previous research shows how critical literacies can be implemented while working with the *Harry Potter* novels; furthermore, additional previous research has been conducted to concretise critical literacy through specific critical theories. Wilson (2014) presents critical theory as a component of critical literacy and demonstrates that it aids students in being critical since they are provided with a specific perspective, or rather theory, to use while delving into a given text (p. 69-70). One of the perspectives that is discussed in this paper's analysis section is how students can specifically examine racism in *Harry Potter*. Home (2010) stresses, for instance, that *Harry Potter* is beneficial in illustrating racism through several aspects in the novels (p. 76). These thoughts marked the beginning of the ideas for this paper and clarified the impact and the importance of using critical literacy and critical theories in connection with literature.

Previous research fails to address how one should work with critical literacy and *Harry Potter* in Swedish schools. Those studies that do exist have tended to take either a general view on how to implement critical literacy and critical theory in connection with the novels (Marshall, 2003, p. 16; Driscoll, 2013, p. 267), or the implementation of these perspectives in America (Deets, 2009, p. 742). There is some completed research on the topic; however, more research on this current issue in Sweden is needed to fill the indicated gap. Therefore, this case study is conducted by including a Swedish upper secondary teacher. This case study involves an interview with the teacher and a collection of their teaching material, concerning

Harry Potter and critical literacy. The aim of the study is to investigate different options and methods of using critical literacy in connection with the novels of *Harry Potter* in a Swedish classroom of English teaching. The aim is further conveyed through the two following research questions: How can critical literacy be used in the literature instruction in connection with *Harry Potter*? How can critical theories be used to simplify and concretise the use of critical literacy?

The remainder of this paper is divided into the following sections: theoretical framework and previous research, methodology, analysis, and the conclusion. In the theoretical framework and previous research section, the concepts of critical literacy and critical theory are explained and exemplified in connection with *Harry Potter*. The second section is methodology, where all procedures are explicitly described, from data collection to data analysis. The analysis consists of a discussion of the transcribed interview, the collected teaching material, and the previous research, in order to suggest how teachers can work with *Harry Potter* from the perspectives of critical literacy and three specific critical theories.

Theoretical Framework and Previous Research

This segment contains a theoretical framework where the terms critical literacy and critical theory are defined, in order to prepare the reader for the research background. The succeeding part covers previous research about critical literacy and critical theory, and how they have been used in connection with *Harry Potter*. Eventually, parts of the Swedish curriculum and the syllabus for English, that are relevant to the teaching of critical literacy and *Harry Potter*, are presented. The connection between the two concepts, critical literacy and critical theory, is explicitly shown through the theoretical framework and the previous research section. Various critical theories that have been used in connection with *Harry Potter* are displayed, in order to show the spectrum of theories used throughout the novels. Furthermore, the interviewed

teacher uses critical theories similarly to the previous research to simplify, and clarify, the use of critical literacy, which is discussed in the analysis.

Critical Literacy and Critical Theory as a Theoretical Framework

Critical literacy is a term which is discussed through many different perspectives. However, the general understanding of the concept is having a critical attitude while reading and writing, focusing on social differences in society (Ko, 2013, p. 92-93; Luke, 2000, p. 451; Driscoll, 2013, p. 266; Leland, Harste, Ociepka, Lewison & Vasquez, 1999, p. 71; Hyesun, 2018, p. 25). The concept of critical literacy has direct relevance for meeting the aims set out by Skolverket (2013) which states that teaching should foster students' belief of people's equal value, without regard to their different backgrounds (p. 4). This is one of the reasons for choosing critical literacy as an apt theoretical framework to use for this study.

Luke (2000) and Lozic (2012) explain that students need to achieve an understanding of the various societal constructions in order to create a critical literacy analysis (Luke, 2000, p. 451; Lozic, 2012, Introductory section, para. 2-3). Luke (2000) further defines it as "teaching and learning literacy - shaping and constructing the uses of texts and discourses - require a critical knowledge of and engagement with these fields" (p. 451). Furthermore, a wider description of the term is described by Lozic (2012), where she states that critical literacy contains several different components, which leads to her final definition. Pupils should "[...] critically view class, gender, ethnicity, and other matters of justice and power [...]" (Lozic, 2012, Introductory section, para. 4; translation mine), in order to achieve an understanding of a text, or an excerpt of one (Introductory section, para. 4).

From the perspectives of critical literacy, McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004) argue for the importance of viewing texts from different angles. One needs to focus on whose ideas and thoughts are being expressed in a text, and whose perspective might be absent (p. 55). Furthermore, "it is a dynamic process that examines relationships, expands our thinking, and

enlightens our perceptions as we read [...]” (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004, p. 55). To connect critical literacy with the second component of the theoretical framework, critical theory, Wilson (2014) proceeds with a discussion of the difference between critical literacy and critical theory. It is established that critical theory is a part of critical literacy, or rather, an aid for students and teachers. By applying one or several critical theories when reading or writing, one can make the use of critical literacy clearer for the students since they are given a particular perspective to view a specific matter through (p. 69-70). Tyson (2006) also believes that critical theories make the thoughts of critical literacy clearer, as they enable the students to focus on one or two particular perspectives at a time (p. 3). When one tries to specify the reasons of one’s assumptions and opinions of a text, one is using critical theory, since it is a way of concretising and defining a specific method of viewing texts (Tyson, 2006, p. 6).

Previous Research Concerning Critical Literacy

Wilson (2014) argues that “helping students gain critical literacy goes beyond preparing students for exit exams, college, and work to developing thoughtful, reflective citizens” (p. 69). This is closely associated with Skolverket’s (2013) requirements within the curriculum for upper secondary school for teachers to rear their students into caring and non-judgemental humans (p. 4).

Hyesun (2018) states that there are four different aspects of critical literacy: how one can discover authority and privilege through text, how minority groups are viewed in society, how one can connect politics to the reading and analysis of texts, and eventually, that teachers should scaffold their students in being critical to what they read and hear (p. 28-29). It is further suggested to scaffold one’s students’ critical thoughts with questions related to people’s privilege in society and their different ways of communicating (Hyesun, 2018, p. 28-29; as cited in Luke, 2012). As a part of critical literacy, Hyesun (2018) further presents the ideas of Zamel and Spack (1998), that “students should be provided with [...] the capacity to

critique and negotiate the privileged academic discourse and discuss the personal and political consequences of participating in them” (p. 29). Firestone (2013) views the teaching of critical literacy in a similar way:

Call it what you will – media literacy, critical engagement, consciousness raising – I envision my job as providing the students with tools that allow them to look below the surface [...] to find the hidden meanings, motivations, and interpretations that reside there (p. 181).

One example of how to work with critical literacy in a classroom is presented through an observation in Ko’s (2013) article “A Case Study of an EFL Teacher’s Critical Literacy Teaching in a Reading Class in Taiwan”, where students had read an article about why fewer females were becoming scientists and engineers than men. The article stated that society creates an environment where it is not as acceptable for women to attend those jobs than it is for men. The teacher asked the students to express their opinions on the article and its statements and were then asked if they could come up with any consequences that these prerequisites might have. The last question that the teacher asked his students was if they knew any way to make the choice of professions equal between sexes. By asking these questions, the teacher supported his students into thinking critically and making them see injustices in society, such as when women are deemed as inferior when attempting to enter a profession (p. 98-100).

Driscoll (2013) states that using *Harry Potter* is a good way to continue the discussion of indifferences in society (p. 267) since it “invites discussion of personal and social values” (Driscoll, 2013, p. 267). Marshall (2003) also encourages teachers to use *Harry Potter* and to chair classroom discussions about literature, in order to begin developing students’ critical thoughts (p. 16). A lesson plan is presented in Marshall’s (2003) article, containing seven steps, as a way to raise the students’ interest in discussing the novels. The lesson began by asking the students if someone has read any *Harry Potter* novels or watched any of the

movies. Afterwards, the teacher presented a short summary of the plot, then she created two sides on the board with pros and cons of reading *Harry Potter*, where the students get to discuss two different opinions on the matter. The fourth step is where critical literacy appears, and the teacher gave the students a handout where they had to answer questions, using a critical approach, and give specific reasons for their answers from the novels (p. 16-18). Finally, they filled in “the third column to indicate whether they think [...] *Harry Potter* is a positive, negative, or neutral influence” (Marshall, 2003, p. 17) on their answers.

Previous Research Concerning Critical Theory and *Harry Potter*

There are multiple theoretical frameworks through which *Harry Potter* can be read, and some of those that deal with issues of particular interest from an educational perspective are Marxist criticism, feminist theory, and critical race theory. In this segment, a cross-section of research is debated where the aforementioned theories are mainly discussed. This section’s presented previous research is chosen due to its connections to educational practice, where both aspects from the chosen critical theories are presented, as well as their appropriateness in classroom situations.

It is explained through Driscoll (2013) that applying critical literacy is to gain an understanding for minorities, which can be done through different perspectives while reading *Harry Potter*. Using critical theory is one of the examples that is brought up in Driscoll’s article “Using *Harry Potter* to Teach Literacy: Different Approaches”. In this case, the aspects of the ‘deaf lens’ are presented as a way to explore *Harry Potter* and other characters in the book from deaf people’s point of view. This lens is used as a way for non-deaf people to get an insight into deafness as one of the many minorities in society (p. 266-267).

Wilson (2014) further explains critical theories as a way to concretise critical literacy, and a way to structure students’ critical thinking, since aspects of critical theories provide students with specific terms and questions related to a certain theory (p. 70). Tyson (2006) proposes to

“think of each theory as a new pair of eye-glasses through which certain elements of our world are brought into focus while others [...] fade into the background” (p. 3). Furthermore, critical theories can scaffold students in understanding and viewing the world from different angles (Tyson, 2006, p. 3). While working with critical literacy and critical theories, Lozic (2012) argues for the importance of teachers making their students familiar with various social constructions that are present in society (Språkliga maktrelationer måste synliggöras [Linguistic relations of power must be made visible] section, para. 1).

Advancing to more specific critical theories, Wallace and Pugh (2007) argue to discuss aspects of class for educational purposes while analysing literature (p. 98). Working with class in literature is, according to Tyson (2006), a critical theory called Marxist criticism, which entails that you take the economic aspect into consideration and how that affects someone’s socioeconomic class in society (p. 54). Wallace and Pugh (2007) discuss how class is present in *Harry Potter*, and how one as a teacher can provide students with tools to find evidence of effects of socioeconomic class in the novels. It is suggested to position the different characters according to their wealth, and thereafter try to specify how that affects their own behaviour towards other characters. For example, the hatred and oppression that the Weasleys are experiencing from the Malfoys is because of their economic situation (p. 98).

An additional applicable critical theory for *Harry Potter* is critical race theory, which, according to López (2003), is when one examines how racism is maintained by people in society (p. 83), in this case, in the magical world of Harry Potter. It is debated that “the Harry Potter books are deeply invested in teaching [...] their readers [...] how to confront, eradicate, and ameliorate racism through its depiction of the racism that underlies Voldemort’s campaign against ‘Mudbloods’” (Home, 2010, p. 76). According to Alkestrand (2016), Hermione is discriminated through the use of power in the magical world since she is Muggle-born, and Muggle-born, or half-blood wizards, are subordinate to pure-blood wizards (p. 219). Due to the fact that she “is restricted by the race discourse of Muggle-borns”

(Alkestrand, 2016, p. 219; translation mine), Hermione has to work a lot harder than pure-bloods. Furthermore, it is a way for her to more quickly adapt to the society of the magical world (Alkestrand, 2016, p. 219). Deets (2009) further supports the claim of racism in the *Harry Potter* novels as a way to discuss the novels by connecting them to how racism is present in the human world, in this case, America (p. 742). To oppose the depicted racism, Home (2010) presents a description of a concept called multicultural antiracism, meaning that if one can get a comprehension of differential groups in society, one can begin working against these preconceptions (p. 78).

Another difference in power is often the differences between genders, and according to Tyson (2006), “[...] feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature [...] reinforces or undermines the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women” (p. 83). Tsatsa (2013) discusses the ideas of Mulvey (1975) and presents the male gaze as a part of feminist theory and argues that there is a correlation between how women are seen by men, and their position of power (p. 6). Tsatsa (2013) further raises an example of the male gaze from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* where “Hermione has to adapt her looks to become more feminine and thereby satisfy the male gaze. By shrinking her teeth she succeeds in getting a date with the most coveted boy, Viktor Krum” (p. 12). Mikulan (2009) argues that Hermione is an example of how women are negatively illustrated in the novels, and that she frequently appears as emotional and anxious. Furthermore, these characteristics are generally referred to as unfavourable, and are in turn connected with the female sex (p. 289-290). Cherland (2008) also notes that Hermione is portrayed as “Hermione the giggler [...], Hermione the helpful and capable [...], Hermione the emotionally expressive [...], and Hermione the clever [...]”. These all draw on discourses [...] that work to constitute girlhood in Western culture [...]” (p. 278). These premises, Tyson (2006) debates, are elements preserved from patriarchal structures and that they are the foremost reason that the oppression of women remains in society (p. 91-92).

However, according to Fry (2001), the *Harry Potter* novels oppose the stereotypical gender roles (p. 157). Croft (2009) also argues that the novel's depiction of character's different position in power is more related to their various backgrounds. Hermione is an example of this inequality, and the only way for her to reach an equal amount of power is by increasing her intelligence and knowledge (p. 130). Fry (2001) further explains that the hero of a story is often portrayed as male and a role model whom one strives to become. In the *Harry Potter* novels, the definition of a hero is reconstructed through the portrayal of Harry and Hermione, as they are both equally necessary and heroic (p. 161-162).

Skolverket's View on Critical Literacy

As previously mentioned in the critical literacy section, Skolverket (2013) proposes that teachers should foster their students into caring people, who should not differentiate people because of their various backgrounds (p. 4). Through that mindset, students are required to view material from a critical perspective (p. 8), which is a part of critical literacy. In other words, they should "have the ability to critically examine and assess what they see, hear and read in order to be able to discuss and take a view on different issues concerning life and values" (Skolverket, 2013, p. 9). It is also noted that inter alia fiction should be used in the classroom as a way to gain an understanding of certain matters (p. 8), which ties in with what is presented on critical literacy and *Harry Potter*.

The interviewed teacher used several parts from the syllabus for English 7 in their teaching of *Harry Potter*, and two objectives, in particular, are suitable for the use of critical literacy with the novels. According to Skolverket (2011), students are required to use "strategies for drawing conclusions about [...] texts in terms of attitudes, perspectives, purposes and values, and to understand implied meaning" (p. 11). They should also be able to adapt their "oral and written production and [...] argue from different perspectives, apply, reason, assess, investigate, negotiate and give reasons for their views" (Skolverket, 2011, p.

12). These quotes from Skolverket support the need for critical literacy and critical theories in the teaching of literature since the students are obliged to view texts from a certain aspect and argue for their cause.

Methodology

This project used a case study approach to explore one Swedish teacher's experience of teaching the *Harry Potter* novels. Nunan (1992) presents the ideas of Dobson, Hardy, Heyes, Humphreys, and Humphreys (1981), Shaughnessy and Zeichmeister (1985), and advocates one suitable and frequently used variety of case study, which entails that one particular examinee is used through various methods (p. 76). A Swedish teacher in an upper secondary school in southern Sweden was contacted. Their colleague had worked with *Harry Potter* for several years and that teacher later agreed to be a part of this particular case study.

Data Collection Procedures

Nunan (1992) explains case studies as something involving more than one instance of data collection processes (p. 74). Two different procedures were completed, which suits Nunan's model of a case study; conducting an interview and collecting previously used teaching material of the interviewee's teaching of *Harry Potter*. The conducted interview was determined to be a mixture between a structured and a semi-structured interview since, according to Nunan (1992), one should not enter a semi-structured interview with a set of composed questions. To be able to feel prepared for the interview, some questions were created beforehand, as suggested when conducting a structured interview. However, there was a desire to have the freedom and possibility of asking questions that one might have not written down or thought of before the interview (p. 149-150). Therefore, the decision was made to conduct a hybrid of the two forms of interviews.

The interview was conducted in English, and it was about 50 minutes long. The prepared questions were related to the teacher's general style of teaching literature, how they have taught literature using *Harry Potter*, and eventually about their different procedures of teaching critical literacy. However, as Nunan (1992) suggests, the interview began with a small introduction to the research project and the purpose of the interview. Before the interview started, the interviewee gave their permission of being tape-recorded, since transcription was the chosen method for data collection. Transcribing the interview was the most suitable option to use, in comparison to note-taking as an alternative option (p. 152-153). The foremost reason for transcribing the interview is that the analysis relies on explicit data, which can be used in the analysis in connection with previous research, and not as much as on external factors, for instance, the interviewee's gestures and body language during the interview. The time it took to transcribe the interview was compensated by the fact that one was able to gather the interviewed teacher's various utterances about their experience and thoughts about teaching with *Harry Potter* (Nunan, 1992, p. 153).

The second data collection procedure was to collect teaching material, which was provided electronically by the interviewed teacher. It consisted of four components: the first two components were introductions to literature, constructed as a power-point presentation and as a written instruction. The last two components were instructions, one concerning an oral half-time seminar and the second instruction dealt with the students' final written assignment in the module. All of the parts within the teaching material were anonymised by removing the names of the current school and teacher, and the interviewee gave their permission for their teaching material to be used in this study.

Data Analysis

Advancing from collecting data to analysing the data, Nunan (1992) discusses the ideas of Cohen and Manion (1985) and states that while performing an analysis of a case study, one

wishes to transfer the results from the collected data to a general population (p. 77). In this particular case study's analysis, the aim was to discuss the possibility for teachers to implement various teaching methods in their own classrooms, as suggested in the interview and in the teaching material. To simplify the data analysis process, a table was constructed in order to structure, and ensure, that the chosen data fitted the different parts of the analysis. The column furthest to the left in the table, included the various sub-headings of the analysis, and the following columns' headings were: theoretical framework, previous research, interview, and teaching material. The chosen parts from the transcribed interview and the collected teaching material were related to the theoretical background and previous research and were later put into the corresponding sub-headings in the table. Furthermore, the data were discussed and analysed with the support of previous research on teaching literature using *Harry Potter*. The possibility of correlations between the collected data and previous research were examined throughout the analysis in order to make a generalisation; however, concentrating the conclusions on the applicability of this particular examinee's method of teaching the novels.

In the analysis, the interviewee's method of working with *Harry Potter* and critical literacy was discussed and compared. The analysis began with an introduction to this teaching method by explaining how students are first introduced to general concepts and questions at issue. It then progressed towards how critical theories are examples of critical literacy, and eventually, honed in on three specific theories to apply in one's teaching of *Harry Potter*. The aforementioned aspects of the interviewee's teaching were continuously supported by previous research concerning the topic.

Limitations

Nunan (1992) discusses different authors' interpretations of case studies' reliability and validity and their various significance. There are different viewpoints on the current matter,

particularly concerning validity, and one of the arguments was that external validity might be insignificant for case studies. However, some authors disagree with this claim and imply that external validity is as important as internal validity (p. 80). Furthermore, Nunan (1992) raises the ideas of Yin (1984), by stating that case studies' construct validity is disputable since the gathering of data is personal (p. 80). Nevertheless, the data consist of teaching material carefully assembled with clear connections to Skolverket's syllabus for English, which causes the data to increase in transferability. The second questionable part of validity, according to Nunan (1992) and the ideas of Yin (1984), is external validity, since there are issues in making generalisations of the different collected data (p. 81). On the contrary, Nunan (1992) presents Stake's (1988) hypothesis that a case study is keener on the results from a specific case (p. 80). For this study, one is interested in both assumptions of external validity, due to the prime interest in this particular examinee and situation, but also that one wishes to recognise a generalisation of using *Harry Potter* for the English subject in Swedish upper secondary schools.

Analysis

The analysis consists of continuous conclusions drawn from the transcribed interview, the collected teaching material, and previous research presented in the background section. The relationship to professional practice is continuously integrated through the interviewed teacher's experience on teaching critical literacy with the *Harry Potter* novels, and through connections to Skolverket's requirements within the curriculum for upper secondary school and the syllabus for English. The interviewed teacher completed a project involving *Harry Potter*, and several other literary texts, which was electronically provided by the interviewee and presented as an appendix at the end of this study. The interviewed teacher's material was aimed towards students of English 7 and therefore is the discussion centred around the goals for English 7. The material's overall aim was for the students to read a variety of texts and to be able to discuss, conclude, and compare the different texts with each other. They were

assessed through two different seminars where they were supposed to orally discuss the chosen texts. They were eventually examined through a written task where they were required to write an analysis about one out of five pre-determined topics, including at least two of the texts that they have been working with.

Implementing Critical Literacy in the Teaching of Literature and *Harry Potter*

A general view of the interviewed teacher's approach to working with critical literacy and *Harry Potter* is discussed in this subsection, before proceeding to concrete examples of exercises, and eventually the use of critical theory. Rather than stating that they were specifically working with the concept of critical literacy, the interviewee incorporated critical literacy into the literature instruction (Appendix A, p. 6). The interviewed teacher considered it vital for their students "[...] to be critical because they shouldn't believe everything that they read" (Appendix A, p. 8). In the theoretical framework, it was similarly concluded that one of the most important factors of engaging in critical literacy is to critically read and write texts (Ko, 2013, p. 92-93; Luke, 2000, p. 451; Driscoll, 2013, p. 266; Leland, et al., 1999, p. 71; Hyesun, 2018, p. 25). Furthermore, Skolverket (2013) presents that students are required to "critically examine and assess what they see, hear and read in order to be able to discuss and take a view on different issues" (p. 9), which relates to the contents of critical literacy.

To initiate the students' critical thoughts, the interviewed teacher provided their students with a list of terminology and a list of study questions connected to the teaching of literature, since the interviewed teacher considered that a beneficial way of introducing them to literature and critical literacy (Appendix A, p. 5-6). The lists included a range of terminology, from 'symbolism' to 'point of view', and questions about how to characterise texts and how they are narrated (Appendix B, Introduction to literature, p. 1, 3, 6). This is similar to the approach of Marshall (2003), where the teacher supplied their students with critically addressed questions on a handout (p. 17). The interviewee's study questions were expressed

in a simple way; the purpose was for the students to regard the study questions as a guidance to focus on certain matters while reading (Appendix B, Power-point presentation slide 7, p. 1). Some questions, with a more specific purpose, were also added as further support for the students. E.g.:

How is [sic] the characters represented in each story? Who are they, how do they express themselves and why? Can you find any clues of their personality/background based on their conversations? Do you see any differences in how male and female characters are represented in the story? (Appendix B, Notes from power-point presentation slide 7, p. 2).

The questions above were created in line with Hyesun's (2018) perception of how to work with critical literacy. It is argued that "critical literacy educators engage students [...] by asking questions about the relationship between language and power" (p. 28-29; as cited in Luke, 2012). The interviewee's questions similarly address the aforementioned issue, for instance, the connection between a character's background and how they communicate. Furthermore, the ideas of Driscoll (2013), Ko (2013), and Marshall (2003) support the interviewed teacher's view on and style of teaching. They argue, in various ways, that one as a teacher should scaffold one's students in developing a critical mindset, in other words, working from a critical literacy perspective (Driscoll, 2013, p. 267; Ko, 2013, p. 98-100; Marshall, 2003, p. 16). The interviewee proposed that one, as a teacher, should direct the classroom discussions according to the project's goals (Appendix A, p. 9). Marshall (2003) agrees and explicitly states that teachers should lead discussions with the students (p. 16). However, the interviewed teacher meant that it is important to let the students interpret and discuss the different texts in any possible way, which will most likely end up resulting in an aspect that is interesting to them (Appendix A, p. 9). This, in turn, is a method of reaching one of the interviewee's project goals: to make the students discuss and compare different texts.

To narrow these thoughts down, and apply them to *Harry Potter*, Skolverket (2013) states that fiction is a useful way of implementing critical literacy (p. 8). Furthermore, the interviewee held the view that *Harry Potter* is suitable since “there’s so much to find, you can talk about themes, [...] you can [...] dig deeper into this novel, in a way that I think that the students find this type of work to be more relevant to them” (Appendix A, p. 4). Driscoll (2013) also argues explicitly for the use of *Harry Potter*, as it lets students explore different layers of society and to get an awareness for minorities (p. 266-267). As the interviewed teacher suggested, one way of working with the novels is to give the students critically addressed questions and tips in order for them to actively participate in discussions from various viewpoints (Appendix A, p. 5-6). Skolverket (2011) further emphasises these conclusions as requirements within the syllabus for English; students should “argue from different perspectives [...] and give reasons for their views” (p. 12). Marshall (2003) additionally follows Skolverket’s requirement and stresses that it is beneficial to ask one’s students to support their answers with explicit examples from *Harry Potter* (p. 17).

Using Critical Theory to Clarify Critical Literacy

In this subheading, claims are presented to demonstrate the correlation between previous research and the interviewed teacher’s perception of critical theory and critical literacy. Wilson (2014) states that to work with critical literacy is to create contemplative and questioning students (p. 69). The interviewee agreed with these thoughts and emphasised that teachers should support their students to “think for themselves and also to say that ‘I perhaps have not noticed some of the bits that you want to focus on, and that is perfect’” (Appendix A, p. 9). In order to enable students’ critical thoughts, Driscoll (2013) and Wilson (2014) propose that one can use critical theory to hypostatise critical literacy (Driscoll, 2013, p. 266-267; Wilson, 2014, p. 70), since, according to Tyson (2006), critical theory provides students with a certain perspective to critically examine texts (p. 3). Moreover, Skolverket (2011)

requires students to use various specific perspectives while analysing texts (p. 11-12). These ideas support critical theory being used as a way of working more explicitly with critical literacy.

The interviewed teacher advocated *Harry Potter* as a suitable form of text for creating discussions, and they have used the novels through specific contexts, perspectives, and lenses. To work with critical literacy in a distinct way, they have used critical theories of feminism, class, and they have considered other societal structural injustices in connection with the *Harry Potter* novels (Appendix A, p. 5). Since the interviewee presented that they have worked with many different perspectives of critical theory and *Harry Potter*, the analysis is now advancing towards three specific areas: feminism, class, and racism. It was discussed in the previous research segment how these areas can be used in connection with the novels, and it will now be discussed how the students can be led into reflecting upon *Harry Potter* through specific perspectives.

Teaching Feminist Theory Through *Harry Potter*

The first critical theory to be discussed as a method of concretising critical literacy is feminist theory. Feminist theory is a commonly used theory while analysing and discussing literature, which was presented through different articles in the background section. The interviewee is not an exception and has also used various perspectives and forms of feminist theory in their teaching of literature, specifically with *Harry Potter*. As previously mentioned in the previous section, the interviewed teacher argued that *Harry Potter* is a series of novels which one can use to initiate students' critical thoughts and that it is particularly easy to apply to perspectives from feminist theory (Appendix A, p. 3-4). Tyson (2006) states that feminist theory, or feminist criticism, is a method of exploring how women are oppressed throughout literature in various ways (p. 83). The interviewed teacher advocated *Harry Potter* as applicable to this critical theory, since "[...] there are so many opportunities to talk about for example how [...]"

male vs female characters [...]” (Appendix A, p. 3) are portrayed. The oppression of women in *Harry Potter* and the differences between male and female characters are discussed from different perspectives in the following paragraphs.

Tyson (2006) defines that using feminist theory visualises the patriarchal oppression against women in society (p. 91-92). Hermione was exemplified by the interviewee as a target of this patriarchal oppression. The interviewed teacher stressed that in comparison to Hermione’s two male friends, Ron and Harry, she works and studies a lot harder than they do in order for her to prove herself. She always appears as a person who makes conscious and rational decisions, whereas the two main male characters can make more spontaneous and unreasonable decisions (Appendix A, p. 7). Cherland (2008) agrees and states that Hermione is often portrayed as happy, hysterical, and gifted, which are three very different qualities connected to norms of Western societies (p. 278). These are examples of how Tyson’s (2006) description of feminist criticism shows how literature can emphasise women’s limitations in society (p. 83). Furthermore, this extract from *Harry Potter* exemplifies how Hermione is hindered because of her gender, in contrast to her male friends. In order to work actively with these perspectives of feminist theory with one’s students, the interviewee provided explicit questions and topics concerning feminist theory both for the oral half-time seminar and the final written assignment. One of the discussion topics was for the students to “discuss how female and/or male characters are portrayed in the texts. Discuss similarities/differences in language, appearance, character traits, genre etc” (Appendix B, Half-time seminar, p. 1). This discussion topic might be suitable since the students would then have to compare female and male characters. It could then be beneficial, as Marshall (2003) stresses, to ask one’s students to justify their answers with specific examples from the novels (p. 17). Skolverket (2011) also emphasises that students are obliged to justify their utterances (p. 12). This, in turn, could possibly lead the students into comparing the recently mentioned example with Hermione, Harry, and Ron, since they are the three main characters of the novels.

The male gaze is an additional case where the oppression of women is exercised, and where the interviewee's discussion of differences in the portrayal of male and female characters in the novels (Appendix A, p. 6) is applicable. Tsatsa (2013) observes that Hermione is repeatedly targeted by the patriarchal oppression from the male gaze. For instance, when Hermione wants to go on a date with Viktor Krum, a famous and desirable competitor in the tri-wizard tournament, she uses a spell to make her teeth smaller. She performs this act, in order to be good enough for a man, in other words, to meet the requirements of the male gaze (p. 13). As previously mentioned, the interviewed teacher mentioned that they discussed how characters are differently portrayed and the vitality of different characters' appearances, because of their gender (Appendix A, p. 6). Furthermore, that could be connected to the precedingly mentioned example of the male gaze in *Harry Potter*, as an approach to clarify the male gaze to the students.

The instances, as mentioned above, can be used to provide one's students with different aspects of feminist theory, or feminist criticism. As Luke (2000) and Lozic (2012) describe, the pupils need to grasp certain structures in society, to enable them to critically analyse texts (Luke, 2000, p. 451; Lozic, 2012, Introductory section, para. 2-3). By providing the students with the proper tools and questions concerning feminist theory, one can help them discover patriarchal structures and the oppression of women in literature, particularly in *Harry Potter*.

Teaching Marxist Criticism Through *Harry Potter*

The interviewed teacher advocated working with class, as another aspect of critical literacy, in connection with *Harry Potter* (Appendix A, p. 6). Tyson (2006) defines the concept of working with class, or rather socioeconomic class, as Marxist criticism (p. 54). As mentioned previously in the analysis, the interviewee wanted to direct the students into specific perspectives of critical theory; nonetheless, providing them with opportunities to draw conclusions themselves (Appendix A, p. 9). During the interviewed teacher's years of

teaching critical literacy with *Harry Potter*, some students wanted to problematise the socioeconomic aspects in the novels (Appendix A, p. 9). The teacher has discovered that it is beneficial to be guided by one's students, which is an example of best practice in connection to critical literacy. The Weasley family was presented by the interviewee as an example of lower-class citizens in the *Harry Potter* novels (Appendix A, p. 9). On the contrary, "characters from higher classes are generally evil" (Appendix A, p. 9). Wallace and Pugh (2007) elaborate these ideas further and stress that Malfoy harasses Ron due to their families' different economic positions (p. 98). The conclusions from the novels above could be beneficial for the students in order to prepare them for their final written assignment, created by the interviewee. By initiating the students' thoughts regarding the connection between socioeconomic power and malevolent contra benevolent characters, they would conceivably manage to analyse the topic "Heroes vs Villains" (Appendix B, Essay: English 7, p. 1) from the perspectives of Marxist criticism.

To further prepare one's students, one could give them an exercise, or question, concerning Marxist criticism in preparation for the half-time seminar, constructed by the interviewed teacher. Wallace and Pugh (2007) suggest that while working with *Harry Potter* and class, teachers should provide their students with "a list of the main teenage characters [...] and ask them to rank them from richest to poorest and to cite evidence from the text to support their distinctions" (p. 98). The interviewee stressed that "it depends on the students, how deep we dig into these various theories" (Appendix A, p. 9). The aforementioned exercise could be a method of specifically enabling discussions for students interested in aspects of Marxist criticism, by including it in the instruction for the half-time seminar.

Teaching Critical Race Theory Through *Harry Potter*

Critical race theory is the third and final critical theory discussed in this analysis section, which, according to López (2003), involves investigating how racism is upheld and present in

society (p. 83). Since the interviewed teacher advocated the importance of enabling students to discover problematic aspects in both society and in literature (Appendix A, p. 10), critical race theory was chosen as the last critical theory to discuss. Several sources were presented in the background section to demonstrate various ways of critically delving into the illustrated racism in *Harry Potter*. For instance, Home (2010) states that the persecution of Muggle-borns, led by Voldemort, is an appropriate illustration of racism. Furthermore, it is a beneficial method for students to discover and eventually defy racism in the novels (p. 76), which falls in line with Skolverket's (2013) requirements for students to not discriminate people due to their different backgrounds (p. 4). The interviewee agreed and argued that the *Harry Potter* novels "are not only for the students to read, but to be able to analyse the situation, as well as society as a whole" (Appendix A, p. 10). Deets (2009) maintains these perceptions of the novels and suggests that teachers should aid their students in making connections between racism in the magical world and the world they live in (p. 742).

These mentioned aspects could be demonstrated to initiate the student's critical thoughts concerning racism in *Harry Potter*, and further compare them to racism in society. This could, in turn, prepare the students for the half-time seminar and the final written assignment, as similarly suggested in connection with Marxist criticism. One of the discussion topics for the half-time seminar, created by the interviewed teacher, covered the importance of language and one question within that particular discussion topic was: "How does the language differ in the texts and how does it affect the story?" (Appendix B, Half-time seminar, p. 1). This could hopefully lead the students into a discussion of the use of the word 'Mudblood' and its meaning in *Harry Potter*; however, it might be beneficial to add a further question for clarification, for instance: 'What kind of language is used to oppress and marginalise people in the texts?'

In the instruction for the final written assignment, the students could similarly discuss differences in language, as they could for the half-time seminar, with the topic 'language and

terminology' (Appendix B, Essay: English 7, p. 1). If the aforementioned procedures and preparations would have been completed, the students would probably be confident in discussing the language and terminology of critical race theory in connection with *Harry Potter*, for the final written assignment. A second suitable topic, provided by the interviewee, was 'Heroes vs Villains' (Appendix B, Essay: English 7, p. 1), which was already discussed as similarly applicable for Marxist criticism. Since the main villain in *Harry Potter*, Voldemort, is the leader of the movement against Muggle-borns (Home, 2010, p. 76), and one of the main heroes, Hermione, is Muggle-born and in turn oppressed by this particular movement (Alkestrand, 2016, p. 219), the topic about 'Heroes vs Villains' could lead the students into a discussion of the present racism in the novels.

Conclusion

The general theme throughout this paper has been revolving around the various possibilities of using and implementing critical literacy into the teaching of *Harry Potter*. The interviewed teacher's experience of working with the *Harry Potter* novels have been taken into consideration during all parts of the analysis. A general view of working with critical literacy was discussed, and it was concluded that the interviewee's opinions and methods of critical literacy were in line with both previous research and Skolverket's requirements. Furthermore, students are expected to have a critical mindset while reading, and teachers should scaffold their critical thoughts through various questions and by directing the classroom discussions in certain directions. This leads the conclusion to the next part of the analysis, where the interviewed teacher advocated *Harry Potter* as a suitable series of novels to apply certain theories to. The thoughts of Driscoll (2013) and Wilson (2014) were used to claim that critical theories can be used to concretise critical literacy (Driscoll, 2013, p. 266-267; Wilson, 2014, p. 70), and Tyson (2006) states that specific perspectives are used while working with critical theories (p. 3). Eventually, three explicit perspectives were used to demonstrate the validity of

critical theories being used in connection with *Harry Potter*, and as an approach to clarifying critical literacy. Clear examples of questions and exercises connected to the three different critical theories, or perspectives, were discussed in concord between the transcribed interview, the collected teaching material, and the previous research.

The limitation of this study is that there was only one teacher who participated in this case study. Because of the limited amount of time for this project, the choice was made to only use one participant for this case study; however, as mentioned by Nunan (1992) in the methodology section, the type of case study that only includes one examinee, is valid and fairly commonly used (p. 76; as cited in Dobson, Hardy, Heyes, Humphreys & Humphreys, 1981, and Shaughnessy & Zeichmeister, 1985). A second limitation, also touched upon in the methodology section by Nunan (1992), is that there is a problem in making generalisations with a single examinee (p. 81; as cited in Yin, 1984, p. 39). On the other hand, the previous research was continuously used to support the examinee's experience of working with *Harry Potter*, as well as the collected teaching material.

For future and further research on this particular subject, if there would be more time to complete a similar project, one could interview more teachers who have worked with *Harry Potter* and critical literacy. An interesting aspect could be to compare and contrast teachers' different experiences of working with *Harry Potter*, where some might have worked with critical literacy perspectives and some teachers have not, in order to explore various reasons behind teachers' motives for teaching the novels. One could also conduct a study where one could compare *Harry Potter* to another text in a similar context, in order to discover the advantage of using *Harry Potter* instead of another piece of literature.

To conclude this paper, the implications of this study are as follows: *Harry Potter* can beneficially be used in connection with aspects of critical literacy. There is a range of questions and discussion topics which can be used to initiate students' critical thoughts. The interviewee used several examinations: two oral seminars and one final written assignment.

These various examinations enable students to express themselves in a variety of ways, and the different examinations support teachers to simultaneously cover several parts of the syllabus for English. This project, that includes critical literacy and *Harry Potter*, also covers vital parts of the Swedish curriculum for upper secondary school which state that teachers should foster their students into humans with respect for other people regardless of their various backgrounds (Skolverket, 2013, p. 4). Critical theories, such as feminist theory, critical race theory, and Marxist criticism, highlight problematic aspects in society and in literature, which can make students aware of people's various situations and privileges. Critical theories can further support students in concretising their critical mindsets by honing in on explicit theories and perspectives.

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Appendix A

M = Max, T = Interviewed teacher.

Transcription - Interview

M: Welcome to this interview for my bachelor's thesis in English.

T: Thank you so much.

M: The answers from this interview will be the foundation of the essay's analysis. The essay will be about the teaching of *Harry Potter* in a Swedish upper secondary school and specifically directed towards the teaching of critical literacy in combination with literature. And you as the interviewee will be entirely anonymous, and you are free to interrupt the interview at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

T: Ehm, no, not really.

M: Okay, perfect. So, just to warm up – how long have you been a teacher?

T: I have been a teacher for, let's see, I think it's my sixth year now, but it's my first year here in Malmö, but I have worked for five years in Växjö before that, because that is the city where I used to study, I ended up there.

M: What subjects do you teach?

T: I teach English and economics, focusing on entrepreneurship and marketing.

M: Why did you choose to teach English?

T: Well, that is actually a tricky question, at least for my sake. Because I actually wanted just to study English at university level and I noticed that the teaching program had basically all the courses that I wanted to do. I actually didn't have a plan on becoming a teacher from the beginning, I wanted to be an interpreter or basically just working with the English language. But then I started with my teaching education and I found that this was very exciting, and I very much enjoyed the program, so I ended up there basically, and now I am here.

M: Generally speaking, when you choose texts and literature for your classes, what are some key factors that you think about?

T: Key factors... Basically I try to make sure that there is a mix in terms so that the students get the opportunity to read literature that they might have heard of, that might be trending or something that is, sort of, in the modern literature, and I also of course want to give them a sense of, well for example, we have talked a bit about Simone De Beauvoir and sort of also, what was it you said, with for example critical... what was it, critical?

M: Critical literacy.

T: Critical literacy, yes. Basically, in the sense from feminist literacy as well. And therefore, we have also talked a bit about *the Handmaid's Tale*, and we sort of compared it to previous works of feminist literature, and how that is today and so on. So basically, I try to make sure that the students, and they are, I always try to say to my students that they are more than welcome to suggest if they have encountered a text or anything that they found that 'this might be very interesting to work with', then sure, of course. I try to mix, basically, and try to give them a sense of that, both something that they can encounter and that can be exciting to read. For example, *Harry Potter*, some students, when we have worked with this novel haven't read the novels, they have watched the films, but they haven't read the novels. Some students have said afterwards that they are now very intrigued into working with an actual book. That is of course a win for me as a teacher.

M: Good, so, we talked about this a little bit before the interview; but, which Harry Potter novels did you use in your teaching and how did you choose which novels to use?

T: I have chosen *the Half-Blood Prince*, in my first year I chose to work with *the Order of the Phoenix*, and why I have chosen these is basically because the characters are older, and since I mainly work with it in English 6 or in English 7, I want the students to also feel that, because in my impression, the language is a tiny bit more advanced in the later books, in comparison with for example the first one. So, I want them to, and also in my experience, the two novels or the two that comes after, I think is the three first novels; the Azkaban, and the other ones. And I think that after, because the students might have read the first three books, but then they sort of lost track of the others, and therefore, I picked these ones to get a sense of that there

are more books, there's much more to get from the rest of the series, which is of course very interesting. And also, because these books are in general a bit darker, they find that they are a bit more interesting to work with.

M: Why did you choose to work with *Harry Potter* in the first place?

T: Because I find that it is a piece of literature, which has basically, at least in my opinion, we have sort of grown up with the series. Most of us have some kind of relation to *Harry Potter*, in the sense that we have either experienced or watched the films, or I think that we have, in my opinion, everyone has a knowledge of the *Harry Potter* series; what the characters are, and so on. Therefore, I find that it's very useful to work with, because then the students feel that it's relevant to what they are experiencing now, and also what they are experiencing outside of school and outside of the classroom.

M: What reasons do you see for using *Harry Potter* in the classroom, when you can use a work from an already established literary canon?

T: Such as?

M: Something that is, perhaps, part of the classics, that you have read about, and you have heard of, *Harry Potter* is perhaps not part of that, such as, for example, *Oliver Twist*.

T: Well, I think that, as I mentioned before, I think it's important to use both, that is basically my way of going into literature, because I want the students to see that we can work with literature, it does not have to be something that is written a hundred years ago, or fifty years ago, it can actually be something that is written now, by an author that is of course still alive, of course has shaped how we understand modern literature as well. I really enjoy it, and I also find that, this is also in my opinion, but something that we have discussed in class is that *Harry Potter* I think also, you can, there are so many opportunities to talk about for example how the characters are in terms of feminism, male vs female characters, you can talk about the style of narrative, you can talk about setting, because it's of course in a magical world. There's so much to find, you can talk about themes, I mean, you can basically really dig deeper into this novel, in a way that I think that the students find this type of work to be more relevant to them, if we compare it to, for example, I have worked with *Sense and Sensibility*,

and of course this is also a great novel, although the language is a bit more difficult, and therefore, I find that the students distanced them a bit more from what the novel is actually about, because they found that it is a bit difficult, it is a bit hard to understand, they don't really get the sense of understanding of the characters in the same way, as they do in for example *Harry Potter*, or for that matter *Game of Thrones* as we have also worked with.

M: We have already talked a bit about it, if you could further explain, why you choose to work with these kinds of works, as *Harry Potter*, *Game of Thrones* etc?

T: Well, as I mentioned before, I think they are modern, current, and students have a relationship with these different types of works already. They have perhaps read it in their spare time, they have perhaps watched the series, or the films. Therefore, I find that it is a great way to work with this, because they have some sort of knowledge early on, and you can sort of dig deeper into it now that they are a bit older, they have some understanding for example how we portray male and female characters. And they can dig deeper into something that they are already familiar with.

M: You mentioned that you use *Harry Potter* for stage 6 and 7?

T: Yes.

M: I guess you think that it's most beneficial for that kind of age, why do you think that it's suitable for them?

T: Well, of course it can be adapted, you might as well work with it in English 5, but I find that, for example, in grade 2 and 3, both in terms of the students, they are more comfortable in using the language, using English, discussing. I think it's easier for me as a teacher to give them an assignment, or give them for example, this sort of structure in a project, and they can split up, discuss this in groups, and they will actually discuss it, they will not just sit, you know. I think that they are a bit more mature in that sense, and I think that the discussions, and the analysis of what we are doing is also more beneficial if the students are just a few years older. I find, but of course, it might also be accidental not to work with it in English 5, I have not tried it, I am not going to say too much about that.

M: Did you find that *the Order of the Phoenix* or *the Half-Blood Prince* worked the best, and why?

T: It varies a lot, I find that both of the books, are very good in the sense that the students are able to talk about plots, settings, and characters, themes, styles, and symbols. My personal favourite is *the Half-Blood Prince*, and therefore we have focused a bit more on that one, but I can't really say one or the other are more successful, as I have found that both are very successful in the area that we have worked with them, in this way, two type of books.

M: Good, I guess I have gotten the impression from you that you know what critical literacy is?

T: Yes, I do.

M: Okay, good, so my question is really: Have you used critical literacy in connection with *Harry Potter*?

T: Well yes, I have, because this is what I was talking to you about prior to the interview, that basically how we are working with it. That they get a number of texts, one of them being *Harry Potter*, they get to dig deeper into the texts. They work with terminology relevant to literature and critical literacy, in terms of that they are for example as I mentioned, the first examination is the half-time seminar where they get the opportunity, for example, to discuss how, if we go back to... what's it called? If we go back to... feminist literacy?

M: Well, if we are going to narrow down what critical literacy is, one can use critical theory as a way to structure it, and feminist criticism is one of the theories that you can use.

T: Okay, yeah. But basically, what I wanted to show you, is that for example, they now get the opportunity in the half-time seminar to focus more on, for example, discuss in this year. They are going to discuss how female and male characters are portrayed in text, to define differences in language, appearance, bla bla bla bla. So basically, they're working with this in a way and they are also in a previous, I think last year we worked with class, how this is portrayed in the novels, and so on. I don't explicitly tell them that we are working with critical literacy, in that sense, but we are of course steering it in a much more brief version,

since this is, especially in English 6 it's really difficult to dig deep into this, but I find that they are just to discuss the theories, but to construct it in another way, I find that it's very useful for the students.

M: And on the other hand, you don't need to explain to the students that it is critical literacy, but you are still working with critical literacy.

T: Exactly, because that might only confuse them. That they want to, but of course, when I worked with this in English 7, they also have, it's this one, they have quite a lot of terminology that I want them to be familiar with. Just to make sure that they are, well basically that they have a sense of you work with literature, even though that it is on a level that you usually don't go into, but that is also because I am very interested in this. But I think that it will benefit them, from at least that they have the opportunity to work with this briefly, no matter what they are going to do next, and the final examination in this project is then going to be, I think this year we are going to work with: female and male characters, show meaning, man is evil, language and terminology, and heroes vs villains. They then have basically all of the texts that we have worked with, I think it comes down to six or eight texts, Jonathan Swift is one of them, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Anne Frank*, *Harry Potter*, and *Game of Thrones*, so they get a mix of texts, and they get to dig deeper into critical literacy.

M: What I am seeing now is that you are focusing on feminist criticism, and using such terminology; Why did you choose that kind of lens to apply to *Harry Potter*, can you give some explicit examples of that?

T: Do you mean from the text or do you mean within the critical lens.

M: Well, both actually, how it can be applied to the text, and how you sorted that out.

T: Well, basically, to begin with, why I want to work with this is of course because I find it very relevant today, with everything we usually, this is not the first thing when they get to English 6 or 7, but what we do before this is that we talk about for example... what's it called... I'm loss of the word. We work with this media sensation, in terms of sexual harassment, I have completely forgot what it's called, but you know what I mean.

M: Yeah, I do.

T: Okay, let's move on. I find that it's relevant in the sense of the *Harry Potter* text, that we talk a bit about, for example, you have three, I would say, main characters which of course are Harry, Ron, and Hermione. Hermione being the typical good girl, present as someone who always has to be in charge, in terms of that she always knows everything. The boys, Harry and Ron, can be a bit more... they are more prone in the texts, but also in the films of course, to work on impulse, and to act on impulse. But Hermione always seems to have this sense of that she knows always what she is doing, she has been studying very hard to know this and this, and that is of course something that I find quite interesting in terms of these characters, and that it is something very relevant to discuss.

M: In terms of gender etc.

T: Yes, exactly, and I also find that for example, if we talk about the other characters, they can also see that for example we have the bad, or the villains in the novels as well. You can talk about... I think, is it Umbridge who is in the Order of the Phoenix?

M: In the Order of the Phoenix, yes.

T: Yes, so we talked a bit about Umbridge; how she is portrayed, that she is this typical stereotype of an older woman I would say, with kittens and pink and all of that. We basically talk about this, and then I let the students steer the conversation a bit as well and see if there is something that they have noticed, in terms in how they portray gender and so on.

M: Very interesting, you also use other literary works?

T: Yes.

M: Do you use these kinds of lenses in the same way through other literary works?

T: Well, when it's relevant, of course when we talk about, for example, we have one week where we focus more on autobiography, and then I focus, or at least I have focused on, but I think I will change it for this year. But we have talked about Anne Frank, and Steve Jobs for example, and here we necessarily don't talk about this in the sense of feminist criticism, or we

don't do this same analysis, we don't dig deeper into that. Mainly we can talk about class, social structures, society, and history.

M: Well, that is also very good because all of those things are part of critical literacy, how they have a critical mindset.

T: Yes, exactly.

M: And as a teacher, helping them in creating that for themselves.

T: Yes, exactly, and I think that basically what we are doing in this project, or how I generally tend to work with literature is how they, and also while working with film, is to be critical because they shouldn't believe everything that they read, they should also make sure that for example we also talk about something that is very essential, when they have received a number of texts. So, does it matter if the author for example is a man or a female, does it matter if the author wrote this in this period of time, or for fifty years ago? How did the society look in this particular period, and how can we tell by reading the text? So, they should be critical, they should learn, that if I have this text in front of me, what clues can I get from just reading this, in terms of how the author viewed the society that they were in? So, I think that it's very central, to how I and many others works with literature at this level, I would say.

M: We've talked about feminist criticism, but you also mentioned class, and other social differences in society, have you worked specifically with that with *Harry Potter*?

T: We have of course talked about it in relation to the texts and so on, and basically as I mentioned before, the students have the opportunity to steer the conversation in a way that for example what have you noticed and so on, and so on. Of course we talk about, we have talked about class, I think that was one student who mentioned this, and had a quite strong opinion on how class is portrayed, if we compare for example to as Harry Potter, who is of course, he is the central character, he is also the one who basically I would say is on the lower classes of, for when he arrives at Harvard, oh no, not Harvard, sorry, Hogwarts... Monday morning ha ha. And then, in comparison with for example class, the others who generally tends to be regarded as characters from higher classes are generally evil in a sense. The ones that are, for example Ron and the Wesley family are generally seen as lower-class citizens, and also lower-class wizards. The sort of the struggle here, and how it developed throughout the novel,

and the novels, and which one they are working with. It depends on the students I would say, how deep we dig into these various theories.

M: That's also good, because you are more there to help them develop their critical mindsets, and how they can see that themselves, which is very good.

T: Yeah, and I find that as a teacher I don't think that you should be the one with all the answers when you go into this kind of project, you should instead try to encourage them to think for themselves and also to say that "I perhaps have not noticed some of the bits that you want to focus on", and that is perfect, because that is basically the point of this area and this project. Therefore, as I mentioned before, I am not quite sure, for example, this year what the conversations will be about, mainly. Of course, I will try to steer them into at least cover bits of what I have then planned for them to do in the examinations, but they always get the opportunity, they always get the, basically, the option to choose what they want to focus on, and they also get the opportunity a few weeks prior to the examination to give suggestions on what they could focus on, or how we could structure this, so that they will get the sense that "this is something I really want to focus more on".

M: So, they get to choose parts of the examination?

T: Yes, of course. They also get to choose the structure of the essay, because I have noticed that many students are more, I found that they are much more motivated when they have been part of the outline, and the structure of certain examinations. For example, in the case with the essay, which is the final thing we do, we basically have, of course I have the general structure, of introduction, body, and conclusion and so on. They should have three arguments, one of them being a counterargument, and so forth. But, if one of them want to, for example, pretend to be the author and write more of a letter to the press, which is perhaps argumentative, that is of course okay. As long as they show that they can use the text, the sources that we have worked with, and that they can then focus on whatever it is that we decide to do. So, it's up to them I would say. The same goes for the half-time seminar, that they can talk about what they find is the most relevant aspect of their experience of the different kinds of texts and so on.

M: If we would go into the teaching of *Harry Potter*, meeting the aims within the syllabus for English. Do you think that *Harry Potter* help meeting these different aims the syllabus contain, or do you view it mostly as something that helps the students read?

T: No, I think that it helps because you can talk about political and social factors, I mean, in English 7 for example, we begin the course by listening to a commencement speech by J. K. Rowling, so that is basically a connection there, prior to, and how her life basically formed some of the stories in *Harry Potter*, that she has worked for Amnesty and so on. So, of course I find that the work in itself are not only for the students to read, but to be able to analyse the situation, as well as society as a whole, and how you can view the different structures of class, well even politics I would say, in the novel.

M: Do you have some explicit examples of some criteria that you use from the syllabus, that you look at while grading the students?

T: Well, yes, prior to every examination and also prior to, for example, when I introduce the project, I'm not sure if I have it in this particular slide [shows a power-point presentation on their computer], because in this I mainly have the terminology. But I always give them some sense of, depending on the course, so if it's English 6 for example, then we of course focus on a number of, let's say points, from the core contents from the course, I also tell them which criteria, and which requirements that we are going to focus on as well, so that they know and that they can always have this sort of overview; 'ok so this is what we are focusing on now, and this is something that we are required to know at the end of this school year, or this course'. The same goes for, of course, English 7, so it depends on the course to course. But I think as they are quite similar, in the sense that we need to cover politics and so on, and social structures, social contexts, and different... students should be able to work with this in the course, I find that it is very useful, as well as of course they get to be familiar with different kinds of genres, different kinds of texts, factual texts as well, as well as novels and so on. I hope I answered your question.

M: Well, yes, but we're sticking to it a bit. Do you think it's possible to include the parts in the syllabus where they talk about how words and grammar are learnt through different ways in the teaching, in this case literature? There is a quote from the syllabus that says: "Teaching in the course should cover the following core content: [...] How words and phrases in oral and written communications create structure and context by clarifying introduction, causal connection, time aspects, and conclusions" (Skolverket, Syllabus for English, 2011, p. 3).

T: Yes, of course. I find this, I am not sure how I'm going to elaborate on this, but I find it very useful, in the sense that it is a piece of literature. You can of course learn phrases, vocabulary, grammar and so on, and it is the main objective of working with reading comprehension.

M: Have you looked into the different characters' speech in literature?

T: Yes, of course, when we talk about style of language, and so on, language style and vocabulary, we talk quite a lot about this, in terms of how the characters are sort of, how they express themselves, and if they express themselves differently because of who they are talking to, what situation it is and so on.

M: And the sentence that you have there [pointing at the teacher's computer screen], if you could just read that?

T: This one?

M: Yes.

T: Language style, and vocabulary, why do you think that they used the language? Special words, etc, that they give examples of.

M: Okay, very good. So, then you hold a discussion with the students where they get to discuss that as well, their choice of language?

T: Yes, all of these, that I am showing you know on my computer, to make it clear to you when you listen to this later, I want the students to be able to apply these to every piece of literature that we work with, therefore for example; plots - very basic, what is the story about, setting – where does the story take place and how would you describe it, time and place, characters – who are they, background, protagonist and antagonist, type of work – how would you characterise this text, themes, and so on, and so on. Basically, I find that in this sense it's a very useful style to, or use as an approach, because the students don't feel that they are, that they get questions, so that they are very sort of limited, in terms of how they want to talk about the text, and how they want to analyse the text. Therefore, I use these, as, well of course

they are very basic, if I am going to work with this in English 7, but still I find that it's up to the students on which level they want to work with this.

M: So, if we were just do discuss the outline of your project, so that we get on tape as well. How do you work with these literary texts, and in this case one of the texts is *Harry Potter*?

T: Yes. I mean, what I do is that I have a, one can say an introduction to literature, which is basically a crash course. We talk about various styles of literature, how you can work with this, how you can experience it. I also have a discussion with the students when we begin, where I for example ask them what literature means to them, previous experience, why they find that literature is important, then I also have some funny slides here as well [shows pictures from power-point presentation], we talk about what literature is. We also discuss quite a lot in terms of terminology and in relation to working with literature, for example figurative language, figure of speech, and so forth, metonymy, meta language. I have basically, let's see, it's, for this case, it of course differs depending on the class, it depends on which year I am going to work with this project, and we work with it for roughly eight weeks for this particular area, and we begin in week 46 by having this short introduction to literature. Then we talk about terminology and so forth, and then the students get the other lesson to read, we begin with *Harry Potter* and, *the Game of Thrones*. The week after that, they continue to read on our first lesson and then we have a seminar. In this seminar they are going to be in two groups, so roughly 15 in each, then they discuss the texts based on the study questions as I have talked about before; plot, setting, characters, language style and so on, and then it's basically just to talk it through. Here of course, as the students are quite, or the groups are quite large, they can choose what to focus on. We can also, I also give them the opportunity to split up into smaller groups, in the classroom, so that they can talk about, if for example, one wants to focus on the characters, that is okay, if the other one wants to focus on setting or terminology and so on, they can focus on that.

M: If you split the groups up, do you then let them present to the entire class afterwards?

T: I always want to know of course what they have talked about, so, but I don't want to put them on the spot in this sense either. So, what I do, is I ask them for example, what did your group focus on, if it's a large group, then I will be a part of that group and then I know what

we have talked about, or what they have talked about. But I always give them a sense of that they need to tell the others what they have focused on as well, and generally the one who is most comfortable in speaking English in this particular group is the one who sort of elaborates on what they have talked about. But then for the examination, which is going to be somewhere around week 50, here they are in much smaller groups, they are roughly six in each group, or seven, and here they of course get the opportunity to present. Well, this is a seminar, so they are going to be graded on this as well, and here they get the opportunity to choose an area, and then they talk about this, they present this to the rest of the group, and this is also an opportunity to discuss findings afterwards, after all of the students have presented.

M: And then, you had a final examination as well, right?

T: Yes, then after the Christmas break, we continue having Jonathan Swift as a final text, is quite fun, as well as quite useful. Some students are not quite familiar with satire before we get to this, so it is very interesting, and I focus one or two lessons actually on just discussing these texts; how his style of narrative is, what happened in for example Ireland, and in Great Britain, we can talk a bit about history here as well, talk about social structure, talk about class, talk about basically everything in relation to this text. In week three or four, because it differs of course depending on the class, but then they have a preparation lesson where we discuss structure, what they should keep in mind, grammar, and so on, formal language perhaps a bit as well. Then, the lesson after that, or the week after that, they have the essay and here before this, we have also talked about if they want to do a classroom essay or if they want to do a take-home exam, and this basically, I give them this opportunity because I want them to feel that they really get the opportunity to express themselves here. Some want to do classroom essays, because it is of course quicker in a sense, but most of them prefer to do take-home exams, so they can sit and really dig deeper into what they have worked with and so on. So, it depends on the group, and on the class, but that's basically the project.

M: So, you're both examining them orally and in written speech?

T: Yes, and I am always taking notes during our seminars as well, so I have quite a lot of, on each student, after this particular area, and therefore, I found that it's very useful to have this either in sort of, now, as it is roughly the middle of the course, or to have this project at the end of the course, because I find that I get so much, that I use later on in grading the students, so I find it very useful in that sense.

M: Good! Well, I don't really think that I have much more to say.

T: Yeah... Is there anything that perhaps you want to know, about, I don't know, if there is anything about this [points at the computer, where the project is shown on a power-point presentation].

M: Yeah... I guess it's just the grading, how you do that? I have asked that before, but do you have a rubric for the discussions in the seminars.

T: Yes, always, I also provide them with what I call a simplified grading criterion, where I write in very basic English, for example, for A you are required to; this and this and this. Because, I find that some students even if we have talked about it, we have gone through it a lot of times, they still find that they are not quite sure what is the difference between, for example, nuanced and well-grounded. So, I try to simplify that for them, so that they don't sort of, that it bugs them, that they don't understand what the criteria is or what the rubric is. What it means, basically, for them. I always do that, even if it's English 7, because I find that they don't know it either, or it's difficult for them to understand.

M: Yes, it is difficult to understand.

T: Yes, it is difficult even for us to understand, so, of course it is difficult for them as well. So, that is one thing that I do prior to the examination, then I of course, as we work with a platform called 'school soft', I always update the criteria, and the rubric. When they have received my feedback, they can also see what criteria they have received on this particular examination. So, they get one for the half-time seminar, and one for the essay, but then I also for my benefit, do you want for the entire project, because for some students in the first seminars, depending on their interests, motivation, and so on. Then they perhaps choke on the first seminar, and to avoid this, and as well of course to benefit the students, I try to be sort of quite attentive, in terms of the seminars as well. I want to make sure, that they show that they have understood the task, and that they can sort of develop their reasoning and all of that.

M: Do you give them feedback in between the seminars?

T: If they want to, and if there's time, that is basically of course, as always, that is what interferes with digging deeper into this, and as we only have two hours of lesson time each week, I find that it's quite difficult to squeeze in. Of course, as I mentioned before, when they work independently, I give them the opportunity, because I am of course always here when they work independently still, they get the opportunity to come by, and if they want to have some feedback on the previous seminar, that is ok with me. But if the entire class shows up, it will be a bit more difficult, but then, normally, they don't. But there is one area, or one hour each week, where they could get the opportunity to receive feedback, even though that sometimes it works perfectly, sometimes I need to spend 20 minutes for one student. Of course, if there is a student, who, for example, I generally tend to see in, let's say when two or three weeks have passed with this particularly project, or this way, I take them aside and talk to them about this, or I tell them that they should come by after class and talk to me about their experience; how they approach the texts, how they approach this way of working. I give them opportunities, but then, not always do they use them.

M: The rubric, are you able to provide me with that later on?

T: Do you mean, the one that I use, or do you mean the ones that they get?

M: Well, both, it would be very good for me to see.

T: Yes, of course, I will prepare that, I have a course... a lot of them, but I will make sure that you will get them.

M: And it's also very interesting for me to see what parts you're looking at, everything from critical literacy, to grammar and everything else.

T: Yes, of course.

M: Perfect, I think I am very satisfied, do you think that you have anything more to add to the interview?

T: I don't really know, since I only work with a few chapters from *Harry Potter*, I am not quite sure what to add. I could, for example, add that when we for example, work with different kind of, if I were to work with *Harry Potter*, as a... the full novel, the full book, I

would, I generally have a different way of working, which is, for example as how we did with *the Handmaid's Tale*; they get to read the book, and then for each week, they get quite specific study questions based on so and so many chapters that they are required to read. That is basically, quite standard way of working with a novel, in this sense, and then I end that particular area with perhaps an essay or something. But then they get some opportunities in class to discuss what they have read, what the various chapters dealt with, and so on. I think that in this case, I would work similarly with *Harry Potter*, if it was a different kind of project.

M: Why you chose to only use some chapters, is it because of time?

T: Yes, it's basically because I want them to, in this particular area, I want them to get, or be familiar with a lot of different texts. I also find that when they have for example one week or two lessons to read a few chapters of *Harry Potter*, and then a few chapters of *Game of Thrones*, the discussions are quite interesting, because they have not dug deeper into the series is about, or what they have seen in the films, but they only get to focus on these particular chapters, and what they can tell from these, which of course makes the analysis of these a lot more useful in the sense that they can dig much deeper into this, because it's not that much to cover, and they don't get confused in terms of that, for example: 'I don't remember what I read in the two first chapters, I only remember the two final chapters'. In this way I found that it's quite interesting.

M: Okay, good. Thank you very much for your time and for participating.

T: Thank you!

Appendix B

Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3

What to do: Literature Project

- × You are acquired to study 1–2 texts each week.

These texts will be presented to you on Wednesday's lesson, and the discussion will be held on Wednesday the following week (in half-class).

- × You will be assessed on your ability to be active during group discussions and during our halftime seminar, as well as on your ability to understand and discuss the texts, both orally and in written form.

Slide 4

Work plan (in detail) w. 46	Monday: Introduction to Literature Homework: Read - Fantasy (Texts; Harry Potter, A Game of Thrones) Thursday: work independently
w. 47	Monday: Read (work independently) Thursday: Seminar (Harry Potter, GoT) New texts: Thriller/Horror (Carrie, The ones who walk away from Omelas)
w. 48	Monday: Read Thursday: Seminar: Thriller/Horror New texts: History/Autobiography (Ken Follet, Anne Frank)
w. 49	Monday: Read Thursday: Seminar: History/Autobiography Prepare for next week's examination!
w. 50	11: Prepare for the seminar 12: Halftime Seminar (Examination) Next text: Satirical Novel
w. 51	Monday: Halftime Seminar Thursday: Christmas break!
w. 2	Monday: Seminar Satirical novel Thursday: Preparation + Grammar lesson
w. 3	Monday: Prepare individually for the essay Thursday: Essay

Slide 5

Discuss...

- ❖ What literature means (any previous experience) School/Spare time etc.
- ❖ Why literature is important

LITERATURE CLASS IN A NUTSHELL
WHAT THE AUTHOR HEARS
WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A LITERATURE DEGREE?
Liberal Arts
BECOME PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Slide 6

According to About Education;

Literature;

"... is a term used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, "literature" is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction".
<http://classical.about.com/od/literaryterms/a/wholiter.htm>

"... represents a language or a people: culture and tradition. But, literature is more important than just a historical or cultural artifact. Literature introduces us to new worlds of experience. We learn about books and literature; we enjoy the comedies and the tragedies of poems, stories, and plays; and we may even grow and evolve through our literary journey with books."
<http://classical.about.com/od/literaryterms/a/wholiter.htm>

Slide 7

Study Questions

How to approach the texts?

- **PLOT** – what is the story about?
- **SETTING** – where does the story take place? How would you describe it, think both time and place?
- **CHARACTERS** – Who are they? What is their background? Main or Minor? Protagonist/Antagonist?
- **TYPE OF WORK** – How would you characterize this text?
- **THEMES**: i.e Does the text concern levels of honesty? Love? War? Class?
- **The style of NARRATIVE** – How is the story narrated?
- **SYMBOLS** – Are there any symbols in the story?
- **COMMON DENOMINATORS?** Of the different texts?
- **LANGUAGE STYLE/VOCABULARY** – Why do you think they use the language, special words etc that they do? Examples?
- **MESSAGE** – what do you think that the author wants to convey by this text?

Slide 8

Terminology

Are you familiar with any important terms that you need to know about when you study literature?

Discuss for 2 minutes

Slide 9

Terminology:

I am now going to give you a brief explanation of a few key literary terms. You will find more in the attached document "Introduction to Literature" (Class room & Schoolsoft).

Literal Language: means exactly what it says, i.e a rose is a physical flower.

Figurative Language: is using the choice of words to create figurative imagery. It changes the literal meaning to make it fresh or clearer - to express complexity, to capture a physical or sensory effect or extended meaning.
i.e. "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!"

Figure of Speech: is a word or phrase which means something different than its literal meaning. It can be a metaphor or a simile that is designed to further explain a concept. Or, it can be a different way of pronouncing a word or phrase such as with alliteration to give further meaning or a different sound (next slide).

Slide 10

Alliteration: is the repetition of beginning sounds. Examples are:

- Sandra sells seashells.
- Lars loves languages.
- "It was dreadful. Devastating. Disastrous"...

Onomatopoeia: is a word that sounds like what it is describing.
Ex: Whoosh, Splat, Buzz, Oink Oink, Click

Oxymoron: is two contradictory words used together:
Ex: Peace force, Jumbo shrimp, Small crowd, Free market, Wise Fool

Personification: is giving human qualities to non-living things or ideas.
Ex: The Flowers nodded, Snowflakes danced, The Wind howled

Slide 11

Metaphor

= a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another; All figures of speech that achieve their effect through association, comparison, and resemblance.

- **Simile** is a comparison between two unlike things.
Ex; As slippery as an eel, like peas in a pod, eats like a pig, Heart of stone, Time is money, The world is a stage, She is a night owl.
- **Analogy:** similarity in some aspects between things otherwise unlike or dissimilar in origin and structure (partial resemblance).
Ex; as the wing of a bird and that of an insect. Sentence:
There are plenty of fish in the sea.

Slide 12

Metaphor

- **Metonymy:**
A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, as in the use of: Washington for the United States government
The White house for the presidential administration

or as in the saying:
"The Pen is mightier than the Sword".
What does the Pen and the Sword represent?
(Pen - Written word, The Sword - military power)

Slide 13

Symbolism

The use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another to give it an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant.

For instance; A red rose or red color stands for love or romance.

However, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. For instance, "smile" is a symbol of friendship. Similarly, the action of someone smiling at you may stand as a symbol of the feeling of affection which that person has for you.

Symbolism gives a writer freedom to add double levels of meaning to their work: a literal one that is self-evident and the symbolic one whose meaning is far more profound than the literal one.

Symbolism in literature evokes interest in readers as they find an opportunity to get an insight of the writer's mind on how they view the world and how they think of common objects and actions, having broader implications.

Slide 14

... As mentioned; You will find further useful terms in your Classroom (the attached file "**Introduction to Literature**").

Make sure that you are familiar with (at least) the various terms and concepts in this presentation and are able to use them when discussing the texts in class.

Slide 15

Any Questions?

If not; then you will find the two texts for next week in your Classroom.

Notes from 4th and 7th slide:

Due to a request from some of the students in my group, Tuesdays will also be available to discuss your grades etc.

How are we going to approach the texts? Start? Cover/Title?

PROTAGONIST - main character, antagonist; opponent, rival, enemy, contrary to popular belief, the antagonist is not always the villain, but simply those who oppose the main character.

EX: How is the characters represented in each story? Who are they, how do they express themselves and why? Can you find any clues of their personality/background based on their conversations? Do you see any differences in how male and female characters are represented in the story? Etc.

Introduction to Literature

English 7

Over the next few weeks we are going to work with literature. You are going to get the opportunity to read and study texts from different genres, from Harry Potter to Sense and Sensibility.

You are going to be graded on your ability to be active during group discussions and during our halftime seminar, as well as your ability to understand and discuss the texts, both orally and in written form. This area will end with an essay, more information about the various examinations will be presented in class.

Literature is, according to AboutEducation:

"... is a term used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, "literature" is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction". (http://classclit.about.com/od/literaryterms/g/aa_whatisliter.htm).

Why do we read literature then? Why is Literature important?

"Literature represents a language or a people: culture and tradition. But, literature is more important than just a historical or cultural artifact. Literature introduces us to new worlds of experience. We learn about books and literature; we enjoy the comedies and the tragedies of poems, stories, and plays; and we may even grow and evolve through our literary journey with books."
(http://classclit.about.com/od/literaryterms/g/aa_whatisliter.htm)

Before you start devouring the extracts/texts and enter the amazing world of literature, we need you to be familiar with a few terms which will be useful when you read as well as when you discuss these texts.

Terminology

Anachronism: an error in chronology, as the placing of an event or figure in a period or scene in which it did not or could not belong.

Symbolism: the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense. Symbolism can take different forms. Generally, it is an object representing another to give it an entirely different meaning that is much deeper and more significant.

However, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. *For instance, "smile" is a symbol of friendship.* Similarly, the action of someone

smiling at you may stand as a symbol of the feeling of affection which that person has for you.

Symbols do shift their meanings depending on the context they are used in. "A chain", for example, may stand for "union" as well as "imprisonment". Thus, symbolic meaning of an object or an action is understood by when, where and how it is used. It also depends on who reads them.

Literal Language: means exactly what it says, i.e a rose is a physical flower.

Figurative Language: is using the choice of words to create figurative imagery. It changes the literal meaning to make it fresh or clearer - to express complexity, to capture a physical or sensory effect or extended meaning. i.e. "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!".

Figure of Speech: is a word or phrase which means something different than its literal meaning. It can be a metaphor or a simile that is designed to further explain a concept. Or, it can be a different way of pronouncing a word or phrase such as with alliteration to give further meaning or a different sound.

- **Alliteration:** is the repetition of beginning sounds. Examples are:
 - Sandra sells seashells.
 - Lars loves languages.
 - Walter wondered where Winnie was.
- **Onomatopoeia:** is a word that sounds like what it is describing.
Ex: Whoosh, Splat, Buzz, Oink Oink, Click
- **Oxymoron:** is two contradictory words used together:
Ex; Peace force, Jumbo shrimp, Small crowd, Free market, Wise Fool
- **Personification:** is giving human qualities to non-living things or ideas.
Ex: The Flowers nodded, Snowflakes danced, The Wind howled

Metaphor: a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another.

- **Simile:** is a comparison between two unlike things.
Ex; As slippery as an eel, like peas in a pod, eats like a pig,
Heart of stone, Time is money, The world is a stage, She is a night owl.
- **Analogy:** similarity in some aspects between things otherwise unlike or dissimilar in origin and structure (partial resemblance). Ex; as the wing of a bird and that of an insect. *Sentence: There are plenty of fish in the sea.*

Paradox: from the Greek word "*paradoxon*" that means *contrary to expectations, existing belief or perceived opinion*. It is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory or silly but may include a latent truth. It is also used to illustrate an opinion or statement contrary to accepted traditional ideas.

A paradox is often used to make a reader think over an idea in innovative way.

Ex;

- "What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young." – George Bernard Shaw
- "I can resist anything but temptation." Oscar Wilde

Study Questions

When discussing any literary work you always focus on the following; Plot, Setting, Characters etc. These are to be answered and discussed for each text. As you might have guessed, we despise short answers and want you to be as elaborate as possible! Discuss, Reflect, Analyze and Comment on each and every question you answer.

- **PLOT** – what is the story about?
- **SETTING/TIMEFRAME** – where does the story take place? How would you describe it, think both time and place?
- **CHARACTERS** – Who are they? What is their background? Main or Minor? Protagonist/Antagonist?
- **TYPE OF WORK** – How would you characterize this text?
- **THEMES**: i.e Does the text concern levels of honesty? Love? War? Class?
- **The style of NARRATIVE** – How is the story narrated?
- **SYMBOLS** – Are there any symbols in the story?
- **LANGUAGE/VOCABULARY** – Why do you think they use the language, special words etc that they do? Examples?
- **MESSAGE** – what do you think that the author wants to convey by this text?

Key Concepts and Literary Terms:

narrator	the person who tells the story
third person narrator	a narrator who sees the story from outside and who can see into the minds and hearts of all the characters, as well as see all the action that takes place
first person narrator	a narrator who tells the story in the first person i.e. using <i>I</i> and <i>me</i> not <i>he</i> or <i>she</i> , to talk about the main character.
limited third person narrator	a narrator who uses the third person, <i>he</i> or <i>she</i> to talk about the main character, but whose view of the action and the other people involved in the plot is limited to the main character.
third person narrator	a narrator who speaks in the third person using <i>he</i> or <i>she</i> or <i>they</i> to talk about all the characters.

reverse chronology	starting at the end and going backwards in time
saga	a story told about two or more generations of the same family
satire	a style which criticises a person, event or part of society by making it look funny or stupid
shift (n)	a change in <i>style</i> or in <i>pace</i>
simile	an expression which describes someone or something by comparing it to someone or something else using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> (eg, <i>he was as hungry as a wolf</i>)
story-teller	a person who tells a story
style	the way the novel is written
sub plots	see <i>plot</i>
main characters	see <i>characters</i>
mechanics	the mechanics of the plot are the small details of the events and actions
metaphor	an expression which describes one thing as if it was another thing (i.e. he was a hungry wolf) see also <i>simile</i>
minor characters	see <i>characters</i>
motivation	the reason why someone does something
narrator	the person who tells the story
third person narrator	a narrator who sees the story from outside and who can see into the minds and hearts of all the characters, as well as see all the action that takes place

pace	the speed at which the story is told
personality traits	details about a person's personality eg, proud, intelligent, silly, obsessed by revenge.
physical features	details about a person's body and face, for example, dark hair, blue eyes, a scar on his face or a wooden leg.
plot	the story told by the novel
main plot	the most important story told in the novel
sub plots	stories in the novel that are
point of view	the position from which a story is told, the 'eyes' through which we see and understand the story
protagonist	see <i>main character</i>
psychological development	the way a character's personality changes
race ahead	move forward very quickly.
realistic	describing things as they are in real life
recurring themes	see <i>theme</i>
reliable	someone you can trust
resolution	the end of a conflict (see <i>conflict</i>), often comes at the end of the novel retell to tell a story another person has told you

genre	a particular style or type of novel
heroine	a woman who is the most important person in the novel
hero	a man who is the most important person in the novel
imagery	the use of the five senses in describing a scene
internal conflict	see <i>conflict</i>
irony	a device that shows the contrast between reality and appearance
key events	the most important events
limited third person narrator	see <i>narrator</i>
linear	in a straight line, starting at the beginning and working through the events in sequence
main plot	see <i>plot</i>

characterisation	how the novelist describes the characters
chronologically	in the order they happened
colour (v)	to influence a description
common themes	see <i>theme</i>
complex	not following a simple, straight line
conflict	a problem that faces the main character/s
external conflict	a problem which involves the character and someone or something else
internal conflict	a problem that is a part of the character's personality
counterpart	a character who has a similar and an equally important role
develop	used to describe progress in the <i>plot</i> , in the description of a <i>character</i> or in the exploration of a <i>theme</i> .

common themes	themes that are often discussed in literature
recurring themes	themes that are repeatedly discussed by the same novelist
third person narrator	see <i>narrator</i>
timeframe	the length of time the story takes
two-dimensional	not described in detail
vivid	very clear and detailed

action	the events in the novel	device	a literary technique which is used to create a certain effect
allegory	the use of events and characters as <i>symbols</i> i.e. to represent ideas and qualities	dramatic	exciting and impressive
antagonist	a character who blocks the progress of the <i>main character</i>	explore	to describe and discuss
author	the person who wrote the novel	external conflict	see <i>conflict</i>
cast	a cast is the group of people who act together in a theatre play. <i>Cast</i> is often used to describe the group of characters in a novel too.	figures of speech	expressions which are used to add detail to a description through comparison (see <i>simile</i> and <i>metaphor</i>)
central features	(see also <i>physical features</i>) the most important details about a person's body or face	filter (v)	to describe the facts from a certain <i>point of view</i> .
central theme	see <i>theme</i>	first person	using the pronouns <i>I</i> and <i>me</i>
characters	the people in a novel	first person narrator	see <i>narrator</i>
main/key characters	the most important people in the novel	flashback	a device used to describe an event that happened before the main story
minor characters	characters who are not	flashforward	a device used to describe an event that will happen in the future

story-teller	a person who tells a story
style	the way the novel is written
sub plots	see <i>plot</i>
symbol	a person or an object that represents a particular quality or idea
symbolise	to be a symbol of something
symbolism	the use of <i>symbols</i>
theme	a topic that is discussed in literature
central theme	the most important theme

The core content for this project is:

Content of communication

- Theoretical and complex subject areas, also of a more scientific nature, related to students' education, chosen specialisation area, societal issues and working life ; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; cultural expressions in modern times and historically, such as literary periods.
- Societal issues, cultural, historical, political and social conditions, and also ethical and existential issues in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used.

Reception

- Contemporary and older literature and other fiction in various genres such as drama.
- Strategies to take in and structure information in larger amounts of text or longer sequences of spoken language.
- Strategies for drawing conclusions about the spoken language and texts in terms of attitudes, perspectives, purposes and values, and to understand implied meaning.

Production and interaction

- Oral and written production and interaction in different situations and for different purposes where students argue from different perspectives, apply, reason, assess, investigate, negotiate and give reasons for their views.
- Strategies for using different types of sources, with source-critical awareness and established ways of citing sources within the chosen specialisation area and in other areas.

Grading Criteria

Grade E

Students can understand the main content and essential details, and with some certainty, also implied meaning, of English spoken at a relatively rapid pace, and in written English in various genres of an advanced nature. Students show their understanding by in basic terms giving an account of, discussing, commenting, and drawing conclusions on content and details, and with acceptable results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.

In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in ways that are varied, clear and **structured**. Students can also express themselves with fluency and **some** adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. Students work on and make **well grounded** improvements to their own communications.

In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts, students can express themselves clearly, **relative** freely and with fluency, and with adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use **essentially functional** strategies which **to some extent** solve problems and improve their interaction.

Grade D

Grade D means that the knowledge requirements for grade E and most of C are satisfied.

Grade C

Students can understand the **main content and essential details**, and **with some certainty**, also implied meaning, of English spoken at a relatively rapid pace, and in written English in various genres of an advanced nature. Students show their understanding by **in a well grounded way** giving an account of, discussing, commenting and drawing conclusions on content and details, and also with **satisfactory** results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.

In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in ways that are varied, **balanced**, clear and **structured**. Students can also express themselves with fluency and adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. Students work on and make **well grounded and balanced** improvements to their own communications.

In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts, students can express themselves clearly, freely and with fluency, and with adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use **functional** strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction.

Grade B

Grade B means that the knowledge requirements for grade C and most of A are satisfied.

Grade A

Students can understand **both the whole and details**, and also implied meaning of English spoken at a rapid pace, and written English in various genres of an advanced nature. Students show their understanding by **in a well grounded and balanced way** giving an account of, discussing, commenting and drawing conclusions on content and details, and with **good** results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.

In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves with **good precision**, in ways that are varied, **balanced**, clear and **well structured**. Students can also express themselves with fluency and **good** adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. Students work on and make **well grounded and balanced** improvements to their own communications.

In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts, students can express themselves clearly, freely and with fluency, and **with flexible and effective** adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use **well functioning** strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction, **and take it forward in a constructive way**.

Half time Seminar w.50

Welcome to the first examination in our Literature Project.

By now, you have read six various texts from different genres, from Harry Potter by JK

Rowling to Carrie by Stephen King, and you have taken part in three classroom discussions.

Your task for this seminar is to choose 1 discussion topic below and choose 2-3 texts to support your discussion. Your presentation should be around 3-5 minutes. You will be assessed on your ability to analyze, reflect, discuss and present your topic as well as how active you are during the seminar.

Discussion Topics:

- Discuss how Female and/or Male characters are portrayed in the texts. Discuss similarities/differences in language, appearance, character traits, genre etc.
- How does the language differ in the texts and how does it affect the story? Have the terminology in mind when you analyze the language (figure of speech, metaphors, figurative language, symbolism etc). Do you find any similarities/differences in any of the texts?
- Compare and contrast one of the text's main character with a main character from the other texts you have read. Discuss similarities/differences; think about genre, setting, metaphors, timeframe etc.
- Discuss the setting/timeframe and how this affects the story of the texts. (Think about; Genre - how the setting helps to create a convincing atmosphere, Characters - appearance. Language - figurative language, symbolism etc.)
- Pretend that you are one of the authors and that you are here to present your masterpiece/new novel. Present the text as if your group is unfamiliar with your work; Discuss the essential meaning, what you (as the author) want to convey/the message/theme of the novel, personality traits of your characters, genre, symbolism, metaphoric language, plot etc. Obs; Don't forget that you might get questions on WHY/HOW by your peers. **(OBS: Here, you only choose 1 text).**

This is a formal seminar - which means that you are required to behave accordingly. Do not forget that mutual respect is key to successful seminars:

- Be on time.
- You are free to bring notes (not entire texts) – make sure that you don't read off your screen (interaction and eye contact is very important!).
- Do not interrupt another person. Begin speaking when he or she has finished.
- Be respectful of all participants' opinions. Disagreement is fine. Do so in a respectful manner.
- Don't direct your comments to the teacher, direct them to everyone.
- Support your opinions with evidence from the text.
- Be concise, we have 30 minutes per seminar - make sure that everyone gets the opportunity to present their topics.

Good Luck!

Grading Criteria

Grade E

Students can understand the main content and essential details, and with some certainty, also implied meaning, of English spoken at a relatively rapid pace, and in written English in various genres of an advanced nature.

Students show their understanding by **in basic terms** giving an **account of, discussing, commenting, and drawing conclusions on content and details, and with acceptable results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.**

In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in ways that are varied, clear and structured. Students can also **express themselves with fluency and some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation.**

Students work on and make **well grounded improvements** to their own communications.

In oral interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts, **students can express themselves clearly, relative freely and with fluency, and with adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation.** In addition, students can choose and use essentially functional strategies which to some extent solve problems and **improve their interaction.**

Grade C

Students can understand the main content and essential details, and with some certainty, also implied meaning, of English spoken at a relatively rapid pace, and in written English in various genres of an advanced nature.

Students show their understanding by in a **well grounded way** giving an **account of, discussing, commenting and drawing conclusions on content and details, and also with satisfactory results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.**

In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in ways that are varied, balanced, clear and structured. Students can also **express themselves with fluency and adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation.**

Students work on and make **well grounded and balanced** improvements to their own communications. In oral interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts,

students can express themselves clearly, freely and with fluency, and with adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use functional strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction.

Grade A

Students can understand both the whole and details, and also implied meaning of English spoken at a rapid pace, and written English in various genres of an advanced nature. Students show their understanding by in a **well grounded and balanced** way giving an **account of, discussing, commenting and drawing conclusions on content and details, and with good results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content.** In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves with good precision, in ways that are varied, balanced, clear and well structured.

Students can also express themselves with fluency and good adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation.

Students work on and make **well grounded and balanced improvements** to their own communications. In oral interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts,

students can express themselves clearly, freely and with fluency, and with flexible and effective adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use well functioning strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction, **and take it forward in a constructive way.**

Essay: English 7 (week 4)

*Your task is to write an analysis by using the various texts you have been reading up until this point. In the essay you will focus on analysing **one** of five given topics (you choose your thesis statement/headline).*

*You will do so by presenting examples from the texts (**2 texts minimum**). Remember to compare and contrast when you compose your essay. In addition, place the texts in a context, use literary terms and do not forget to write proper references.*

The headlines (topics) you can choose between are:

1. Female and Male Characters
2. The Essential meaning (Main message)
3. Man is Evil
4. Language and Terminology
5. Heroes vs Villains

General Guidelines (you find more in the preparation presentation)

- Your essay is to be 4 pages (**maximum**)
- Spacing 1.5, font size 12 (Times New Roman, Average, Cambria or Georgia).
- You need to include:

Title, Introduction, Thesis Statement, Body and Conclusion (OBS: No subheadings, your text should be free-flowing).

- Due the 26th of January 23:59.**
- Referencing: Harvard (Thus - no footnotes).
- Note that you need to work in the document in your classroom - I will then be able to see your progress.

Good luck!