

IL TRITTICO

Lesson Plan: REALISM IN ART AND MUSIC

Written by Olga Bezrukova for L.A. Opera

Duration: Two lessons, 50 min each (not counting the fieldtrip or DVD viewing)

Grade Levels: Secondary

Subjects: Arts, Literature, Music

Standards:

California State Board of Education

Language Arts Content

Grades 9/10; 2.0 Reading Comprehension (focus on informational materials): Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.

Grades 9/10; 3.0 Literary response analysis: Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes.

Music

Grade 9-12; 4.3 Explain how people in a particular culture use and respond to specific musical works from that culture.

Theatre (Proficient)

Grades 9-12; 3.1 Identify and compare how film, theatre, television, and electronic media productions influence our values and behaviors.

Grades 9-12; 3.2 Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works as *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Antigone*, and *Mahabharata*.

Grades 9-12; 3.3 Identify key figures, works, and trends in world theatrical history from various cultures and time periods.

Theatre (Advanced)

Grades 9-12; 3.2 Analyze the impact of traditional and nontraditional theatre, film, television, and electronic media on society.

Process:

Class 1

Preparatory:

1) Copies of **Worksheet A** and **B**.

2) Copies of synopsis from *Il Trittico*

Optional: copy of librettos (available: http://www.opera-guide.ch/opern_komponisten.php?uilang=en&first-letter=P)

3) As homework, the students will research the art movement, **REALISM**, before class and bring an article (can be a print out from a website or a personal item) to class as an example of **REALISM**.

4) Suggested websites for students to check/read before class:

Realism: <http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=240>

Verismo (or Realism) in opera:

<http://www.operainfo.org/broadcast/operaBackground.cgi?id=3&language=1>

<http://operaamerica.org/Content/Audiences/Programs/Cornerstones/pagliacci/pagverismo.htm>

Procedure:

- 1) Have students demonstrate and share examples of the articles they brought to class to demonstrate **REALISM**.
- 2) As a class, discuss the meaning of **REALISM** and fill out **Worksheet A**.
- 3) As a class, look at a painting from the time period. For example:
Alphonse Legros
Le Repas des Pauvres
1877
<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=8558>
- 4) Explain to class that **REALISM** extends to many different aspects of art, such as literature and music.
- 5) As a class, fill out **Worksheet B, section 1**.
- 6) As homework, students will write an essay: Do you think some of the ideas and elements of **REALISM** can be found in present day art? What about television and film?

*Suggested: Fieldtrip to a Puccini opera (ex. *Il Trittico*), or a class viewing of a DVD between the two classes.

Class 2**Procedure**

- 1) The teacher will divide the class into three groups and give them synopsis from *Il Trittico*. Group 1 will receive the synopsis of *Il Tabarro*, group 2—*Suor Angelica*, & group 3—*Gianni Schicchi*. In groups, students will read the synopsis of *Il Trittico* provided by LA Opera.
- 2) Students will discuss the similarities and differences between the elements of the painting and the opera. Each group will decide whether the particular synopsis they are reading is a representation of a verismo, or not.
- 3) In groups, students will do a presentation to the rest of the class. Each group will introduce the story as well as argue their point whether they believe that the story is a good representation of **REALISM**/verismo.

Goals:

- 1) To allow students to research a topic.
- 2) To introduce students to the **REALISM** movement.
- 3) To analyze how this movement was present in different art forms.
- 4) To engage students in a class discussion about the elements of **REALISM**.
- 5) To see the parallels within the arts.
- 6) To see how movements in art reflect in our society and culture.

Assessment:

- 1) Students will be able to research the topics presented.
- 2) Students will be able to engage in the class discussion.
- 3) Students will be able to give examples, demonstrating their understanding of the given topic.
- 4) Students will be able to do **Worksheet A & Worksheet B Section 1** as a class.

- 5) Students will be able to discuss the topic in groups and decide whether given synopsis of a story is a good representation of the **REALISM**.
- 6) Students will be able to do **Worksheet B** as a class.
- 7) Students will be able to discuss the topic in groups and fill out **Worksheet B Section 2**.
- 8) Students will be able to write an essay on how ideas of **REALISM** can be seen in our society.

Answers- Worksheet A REALISM IN ART:

Definition:

-Term “**REALISM**” was coined by the Fr. novelist Champfleury in the 1840s

-Subjects include scenes of:

- *Peasant and working class life
- *Cafes and popular entertainments
- *Poverty, brutality, passion, lower classes
- *Portrayals of the way things and people appear every day
- *Photographic representations of subjects
- *Images of the middle and lower classes (very shocking to the upper class!)
- *Everyday situations are portrayed, for ex. people eating

Elements that are important to this movement:

This movement grew out of:

- Reaction against ROMANTICISM (Romanticism was also influenced by the nationalism and urbanization. Romantic music dealt with love, heroism, mother nature. It had darker subjects such as death.)
- Technological advances (photography, train/travel)
- Scientific advances and theories (Darwin)
- Realism in art is impossible, but the appearance of REALISM or “verisimilitude” is an important idea.

How was REALISM apparent in different art forms of the period?

Art- Everyday life depicted with a variety of subjects that included lower classes and at times a photographic perception of the scene.

Literature- Included subject matter and scenes which could be observed in every day life

Drama- The actors as well as staging depict real life as well as suggest scenes that are more believable.

Opera- The ideas of real characters dealing with everyday problems are explored. Opera that uses a verismo text, where characters are drawn from the ordinary social classes.

Examples of REALISM brought to class:

This will vary depending on what students brought!!!

Name important artists, writers, musicians who made contributions to this movement:

Art- Gustave Courbet, Honoré Daumier (painting and sculpture) and Jean-François Millet

Literature- The actual term was coined by the Fr. novelist Champfleury in the 1840s; Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Émile Zola's *Germinal*, and Proust's *Du côté de Chez Swann*

Drama- David Belasco's *Madame Butterfly* and *The Girl of the Golden West*; Mark Twain's *Is He Dead?*

Opera- Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Ruggero's *Ruggiero*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Giacomo Puccini's *Il Trittico*, *La Rondine* and *La Bohème*, Bizet's *Carmen*

How do you think this movement continues to influence our society?

This is an open ended question meant for classroom discussion. Ideas to discuss: realism in television and film, realism in commercials, radio, pod casts, “reality TV shows,”etc...

How do you think this movement continues to influence our society? Do you think that some of the works previously studied in class were influenced by REALISM?

This is an open ended question meant to engage students in class discussion. Discuss how some of the previous works studied in class might have been influenced by realism.

Ideas for Discussion:

How did technologic innovations influence this movement?

How did scientific ideas influence this movement?

There is no question that **REALISM** is artful. What elements make something “real?”

Question for discussion: Considering that art is an interpretation by an artist, can art be “real?”

Name: _____

Teachers Guide- Worksheet A

REALISM IN ART:

Definition:

Elements that are important to this movement:

How was REALISM apparent in different art forms of the period? (art, literature, opera, drama)

Examples of realism:

Name important artists, writers, musicians who made contributions to this movement:

How do you think this movement continues to influence our society? Do you think that some of the works previously studied in class were influenced by REALISM?

Name: _____

Answers- Worksheet B- Elements of REALISM

After learning what REALISM means, list some of the elements that reflect REALISM in art. In the MUSIC- Verismo column, include the elements that transferred from the REALISM movement into this style of opera.

Section 1- ART	Section 2 MUSIC- Verismo
Depending on the painting chosen, the answers will vary...	-Opera that uses a verismo text, where characters are drawn from the ordinary social classes.
Generally the painting will have representations of landscapes or settings of people depicted in real life situations	-different social classes represented: <i>bourgeoisie, students, painters, elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen, nuns, girls and dancing girls, waiters.</i>
The subjects will mostly be lower classes or middle classes, something that probably was shocking to the higher class	-The story has an accurate description of life during the period depicted.
The paintings are usually very detailed, some of them almost of photographic quality	-Everyday low social class people are depicted in bright colors.
Paintings of people at work	-The shape of the story is based on changing demands of the unfolding text. -The story line may explore love, lust, hatred, murder.
Some paintings have a rugged quality	- All characters are everyday individuals with problems regular people have. They are not demigods or gods.
Subjects do not tend to sit and pose, they are usually painted in action	-The protagonist often questions if love is more important than wealth as well as wonders what is the purpose in life.
Subjects will wear the clothes of the period	-The characters are not perfect, they have flaws.
	- The purpose of one's life may be questioned.
	-Betrayal, murder, lust, and hatred are portrayed vividly.

Essay: Do you think some of the ideas and elements of **REALISM** can be found in present day art? What about television and film?

In groups, do a class presentation on the opera synopsis your group got. Many people argue that Puccini was a composer writing in the romantic style, not verismo style. Some believe that his works are sentimental, often having a romanticized, rather than a real notion, of poor people. In your presentation, give your opinion and support it with the information discussed in class as well as your own research.

Assignment: Write an essay explaining the ideas of **REALISM** and give some of the examples on how some of the ideas of this movement are present in our society in visual art, film, television, literature, etc...*Extra Credit: Research **ROMANTICISM** and in your essay contrast it to **REALISM**.

Name: _____

Worksheet B- Elements of REALISM

After learning what REALISM means, list some of the elements that in your opinion reflect the movement in ART. After in-class discussion, In the MUSIC- Verismo column, include the elements that transferred from the REALISM movement into this style of opera.

Section 1-ART	Section 2- Music/Verismo

Discussion: Do you think some of the ideas and elements of REALISM can be found in present day art? What about television and film?

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*Extra Credit: Research ROMANTICISM and in your essay contrast it to REALISM.

Il Trittico

Synopsis Page

Group 1

Il Tabarro

Paris, 1910. As the sun sets, the stevedores Luigi, Tinca and Talpa, are finishing their work unloading Michele's barge docked on the Seine. Michele's younger wife, Giorgetta, serves wine to the workers, and they dance to the music of an organ grinder. Michele notices how Giorgetta looks at Luigi and dances with him. He wonders if she is still faithful to him. While a song-seller peddles his ballads, Talpa's wife Frugola enters, looking for her husband. Giorgetta shows the fruits her scavenging in the streets of Paris. Luigi laments his lot in life. Before he leaves, Luigi promise to meet Giorgetta at night. Giorgetta will light a match as a signal that it is safe to come. Michele reminisces with Giorgetta of the days before their child died, how all three would fit under his cloak. Although he knows she is straying, he wants to win her back. Darkness has fallen. Luigi, thinking that Michele's lit pipe is Giorgetta's signal, returns to the barge and is confronted by Michele. Michele forces Luigi to confess his affair. Alarmed, Giorgetta returns to the deck, but is somewhat reassured when she sees Michele sitting alone, quietly smoking. Still somewhat nervous, however, she endeavors to atone for her frigidity toward him, telling him that she recalls their early love and wishes she could again find shelter in the folds of his big cloak. For reply, Michele opens wide the cloak.

Group 2

Suor Angelica

A convent near Siena in the late 17th-century. Seven years before the story begins, a young noblewoman gave birth to an illegitimate son. To cover up the scandal, her family forced her to enter a convent and take the veil. Now known as Sister Angelica, she has lived within the peace of the convent walls. She spends her days in prayer and atonement for her sin, waiting for word about her family and her beloved child. The Abbess announces that Sister Angelica has a visitor, her first contact with the outside world since entering the convent. It is her aunt, the Princess. The old woman explains that Angelica's sister is to be married, and Angelica must sign a document renouncing her claim to her dead parents' estate in favor of her younger sister. Angelica pleads for some word about her little boy and finally learns that he had died from fever a few years earlier. The news is more than Sister Angelica can bear. She drinks a deadly poison. Suddenly realizing the full implication of what she has done, she begs the Virgin Mary to forgive her mortal sin. Seemingly in answer to her prayer, the Virgin Mary appears in a vision, bringing Angelica's son to lead her into heaven.

Group 3

Gianni Schicchi

In Buoso Donati's bedroom, his family pretends to be sorry that he has just died. Betto has overheard someone say that Buoso, head of one of Florence's richest and most distinguished families, left his fortune to a monastery, which sends the family into a frenzied search for the dead man's last will and testament. Rinuccio finds it and asks his aunt Zita for permission to marry Lauretta, Gianni Schicchi's daughter, if Buoso has left him well-off. His aunt agrees, and

Rinuccio sends for Schicchi, a *nouveau riche* man from the country, and his daughter. But everyone's hopes are dashed when they open the will and discover that, indeed, the old man left everything to the monks. Rinuccio suggests that Schicchi is the only person clever enough to save them, but his family will have none of it. To them, he's a low-born country bumpkin, but Rinuccio tries to convince them that just as Florence draws strength from the country, so can they rely on Schicchi to help them.

Schicchi and Lauretta arrive. Zita refuses to give her nephew to a girl without a dowry, and Schicchi tries to persuade his daughter that greedy relatives will do her no good, but she only wants Rinuccio. Rinuccio asks Schicchi to take a look at the will; when he refuses, his daughter's pleas change his mind. Schicchi weighs the situation and hatches a plan: the Donatis must keep Buoso's death a secret long enough for Schicchi, disguised as the old man, to draw up a new will. The family eagerly agrees and each member tells Schicchi what they want, even offering him money for certain properties. The women put him into nightclothes and tuck him into Buoso's bed. When the notary arrives, Schicchi dictates the will: five florins to the monks, some pastures and country houses to the family, but the bulk of the estate, including the Donati house in Florence, to Buoso's good friend Gianni Schicchi. When the notary and the witnesses leave, Schicchi drives the Donatis out of his house. Rinuccio and Lauretta remain on the balcony, looking into each other's eyes, and Schicchi knows the money has been put to good use.