

|| Self Study Tasks || British and Irish Poetry after the Second World War | Technology and Literature from Late Victorianism to Early Modern Literature || Sommersemester 2008 | Universität Bayreuth | Heiko Zimmermann ||

British and Irish Poetry after the Second World War

Read Simon Armitage's poems and have the usual look at stylistic devices, at the connection of form and content. Then try to answer the following study questions.

What is "The Bears in Yosemite Park," about? Why is it not so much about the mentioned animals at all? Why is it set, where it is set? Why is the behaviour of animals paralleled with the life of the lyrical I? Who is "we" in the poem? How is nature and natural beauty contrasted with a modern way of life?

Who is the lyrical I in the "Ten Pence Story"? Why is this a problem? What does the lyrical I experience? Could one read this

metaphorically? Who else could the lyrical I then be? What opera does the title refer to? Are there parallels between the opera's and the poem's plot? What is the *V-Effekt*? Is the technique traceable in the poem (have a look at the used words)?

What is "Not the Furniture Game" all about? How are he and she described? How does the form support the depiction of the obvious problem in the relationship and with his personality?

Can you find a general topic in all of the four poems? What do the texts not deal with? Why?

Technology and Literature from Late Victorianism to Early Modern Literature

Make a list of what happens in the chapters of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. Then try to collect a chronological list of all events in the book putting a special emphasis on the day of the bomb. Compare both lists. What is the point of structuring the book this way? Have a look at the meeting of the anarchists when Stevie is next door (ch. 3): "Stevie, seated very good and quiet at a deal table, drawing circles, circles, circles; innumerable circles, con centric, eccentric; a coruscating whirl of circles that by their tangled multitude of repeated curves, uniformity of form, and confusion of intersecting lines suggested a rendering of

cosmic chaos, the symbolism of a mad art attempting the inconceivable." What do the circles signify? Is Stevie's mental condition reflected in the structure of the novel? Why do the anarchists attack the observatory? Why is time especially important for the British Empire? What industries and trades need to have a common reliable time? Why? Does the form of the novel support this topic of time? What are the two most important machines then (the machines that almost receive the quality of a character)? Why is their state of being adversaries entirely implausible? Is this idea reflected in the novel?