

The Composition

Preliminary Remarks

1. What are staging lessons (“Lehrstück”)?

Staging lessons are first of all didactic proposals how a certain learning material can be taught at school or elsewhere. The choice of the learning contents, the forms of their presentation and the history of their staging at schools are well justified, often documented and always open to further development. Staging lessons are medium length teaching units that are self-contained, multi-dimensional or interdisciplinary and equally open to experience, to discoveries and to action. They are composed according to Martin Wagenschein’s methodological triad of "Exemplary - Genetic - Dramaturgical".

2. The teaching or instructional idea: inscribing ourselves by reenacting Walser’s “Walk”

Each tuition is characterized by a teaching idea, which is already expressed in the choice of the material, but then in the didactical presentation of the learning contents. For each staging lesson, therefore, there is a separate teaching idea, that is, a distinctive methodological grasp, which is triggered by the appearance of the teaching object and which then also influences the composition. In the staging lesson "The Walk with Robert Walser" the instructional idea is already expressed in its title.

In order to open up Robert Walser, or the Swiss Kafka, as he has been called, and to make his difficult work accessible for today's pupils as well as to open ourselves up for him, we go for a walk with him. More precisely, on *his* walk, because Walser’s “The Walk” is the core text of his entire work since it contains its poetics, together with its poiesis, i.e. its making mode. So, in "The Walk," we can also gain the teaching idea out of the literary production process. Walser's prose piece "The Walk" is formally described as the report of a walk as a sequence of individual stations and encounters. The title calls the method, as it were, an explanation of the Greek word *meta hodos*. For example, in the beginning: "«One morning, as the desire to take a walk came over me, I put my hat on my head, left my writing room, or room of phantoms, and ran down the stairs to hurry out into the street.», or in the following reflection on the road: «'All this,' so I proposed resolutely, 'I shall soon sketch and write down in a piece or sort of fantasy, which I shall entitle “The Walk.”»'. Walser himself imagines the literary production process: walking in the field, in thought and on paper. The call for reenacting is therefore the only didactic extra that we take on us!

3. The composition

"The form of the teaching plays is strict, but only so that parts of one's own invention and of current kind can be inserted more easily." This sentence was written by Bertolt Brecht in his "Theory of the Teaching Play" with regard to his own (theatre) plays. He wanted to enable and to facilitate the production of his plays in other places and under other conditions. This dialectics of form rigidity and freedom of variation also applies to the staging lessons at school, which were developed by the "Lehrkunst" didactics following Martin Wagenschein. In order to promote the transferability to different schools, school levels and learning groups, we use to note the "strict" form of the staging lesson as a composition, which then allows us to point out possible variations, extensions and connecting fields as well as the "essentials". Like Brecht, we also use other theatrical concepts such as dramaturgy (for the arc of suspense), acts, and sometimes scenes for the single arcs or staging for playing a piece on our (always present) school room stage.

Synopsis of the composition

Prelude

1. How to Bring Literature to Life? Make the Narrator Audible
2. The Genetic Approach: To Grasp the Story in its Genesis

First Act

3. To Perform the Productive Primal Scene: A Visit of Walser's Narrator
4. The Leading Question: To walser – How does that work? (I)
Our Walk with Walser: To Walk Twice

Second Act

6. Overview of the whole: The reading by Fritz Lichtenhahn
7. «Without walking, I would be dead»: The Poetics of Walser's First-Person Narrator
8. To walser – How does that work? (II): Our Texts in the Light of Walser's «The Walk»
9. Who was Walser? Walker, Life Nomad, Art Figure
10. To walser – How does that work? (III): Reflexions on Writing

Third Act

11. To walser – How does that work? (IV): The End of the Staging Lesson
12. Summary on the Lehrkunst Poster

Prelude

1. How to Bring Literature to Life? Make the Narrator Audible

1. How to Bring Literature to Life?

Jeder Text ist zunächst nur
Eine tote Partitur.
Doch ein Text ist zu erleben,
Wenn wir seinen Ton ihm geben:

Die Lyrik will gesungen sein,
Denn es spricht sich ein Ich aus in Rhythmus und Ton.

Fürs Drama richt' die Bühne ein;
Hier verkörpert sich spannend im Spiel die Person.

Und Epik uns nur dort betört,
Wo man meinen und deinen Erzähler auch hört.

But how can we make the narrator audible?

At first, each text is only
A dead score.
But a text is to be experienced,
If we give it its tone:

The verse wants to be sung,
For an ego expresses itself in rhythm and
tone.

For drama, set the stage!
Here a person embodies an exciting role in a
play.

***And epic poetry decoys us only there,
Where you can hear my and your narrator.***

The answer: to generate the Epical Primal Situation in the Classroom, with a Text, an Audience and a Narrator's Chair

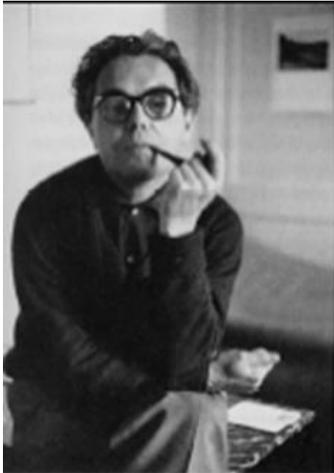


The task: «Tell us about your life. How did you get to this school?»

The result: Exciting stories, told by first-person narrators, but: Do they also correspond to the truth or are they only well-told?

Our Greed for Stories – the Truth Paradox

Are we what is put down in our passport or what we list as facts in a CV: names, places, dates, qualifications, work, number of partners, children etc.? Or rather: is our identity moulded by characteristic experiences, by central encounters with people, by essential words, by narrations, by music, images, ideas, memories, dreams, desires, feelings that we recall?



Max Frisch (1911-1991)
1959 in his Rome
appartement with
Ingeborg Bachmann
(From: Hans Höller:
Ingeborg Bachmann,
Reinbek: Rowohlt 1999,
S. 118)

Max Frisch (1911-1991) and the Truth Paradox

1960 Frisch wrote in a text with the title „Our Greed for Stories“:

„You cannot tell the truth. That's it. The truth is not a story, it has no beginning and no end, it is simply there or not there, it is a crack through the world of our madness, an experience but no story. All the stories are invented, are plays of imagination, designs of experience, images, true only as images. Everyone, not just the poet, invents his stories – only that he holds them, in contrast to the poet, for his life – otherwise we do not see our experience patterns, our personal experience.“

Frisch, Max: *Gesammelte Werke in zeitlicher Folge*, IV, S. 263

In his novel „Mein Name sei Gantenbein“ (from 1964) the formula is even more radical: „Everybody sooner or later invents a story which he considers to be his life.“

Frisch, Max: Gesammelte Werke in zeitlicher Folge, Frankfurt M.: Suhrkamp 1976, Bd. V, S. 49

Frisch's Idea of the 77 Stories

In an interview with an Italian specialist in German studies, looking back at his writing of the “Stiller” novel, his most famous prose work, Frisch said:

«If you tell me your biography honestly, honestly, honestly: where you were born, what you have done, where you lived, how you live now, and I listen to that, in the sense of almost a confession, but without connecting it to guilt. That is one thing. But of that I do not want to know anything, instead I invite you to a villa in Tuscany, and you won't be let out, you'll get everything to eat there and so on, before you have written 77 fictitious stories that can be short, can be long and you will come with these 77 stories, and I think they are good or I don't think they are good, but they will be very different, be funny, be cheerless, and I now just claim a playing thesis: after these 77 stories, I know a lot more about you than what you have told me in your biography, and when I show you the stories, you know a lot more (...).»

From: Albarella, Paola: Roman des Übergangs. Max Frischs „Stiller“ und die Romankunst um die Jahrhundertmitte. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann 2003, S. 167/68)



How to Bring Walser's Text «The Walk» to Life?

How do we make alive Walser's narrative in the light of Frisch's insights?

How shall we proceed to make the narrator hearable?

Is "The Walk" also a part of the author's life story?

What does Walser's narrative contribute to illuminating our own life story?

Can we make that story so vivid

- that it remains in our realm,
- that it becomes one of the 77 life stories that accompany us hence,
- that we are others after having dealt with this story,
- that we have gained literacy (in German: Bildung) with it?

2. The general Teaching Idea: To Grasp the Story in its Genesis

Gaining the Teaching Idea out of the Production Process

To teach literature in a literary way means to gain the didactics of the current teaching from the production of the literary piece in order to replicate the original learning process as authentically as possible in the current reproduction and to save it for us. This is best done if we already find an instructional idea by the author, that is, an explicit or implicit reference, such as in the chosen genre or form of a piece, as how best to convey the respective piece of literature.

Exploring the Place of Origin

The general recourse to the epoch in which an author has written is often made, but rarely with regard to the concrete conditions of a given work. The historically determined circumstances of the place of production, the time of production and the biographical situation often have a decisive influence on the specific form and qualities of a piece of art.

The least attention is given to the place of work, the workshop of the artist, although it can usually be reconstructed and often appears in the work itself. Starting from the specific place of reception or literary re-production when teaching literature (the classroom), it is therefore recommended to visit the specific place of production of a literary work as a counterpart.

3. To Perform the Productive Primal Scene: A Visit of Walser's Narrator



The genesis of the prose piece «The Walk» is depicted in detail by Walser's first-person narrator. Let us invite him to our classroom so that he can explain himself.

4. The Leading Question: To walser – How does that work? (I)

«One morning, as the desire to take a walk came over me, I put my hat on my head, left my writing room, or room of phantoms, and ran down the stairs to hurry out into the street.»

This is how Robert Walser (1878-1956) – also called the Swiss «Kafka» – begins his prose piece «The Walk» in 1917. Everything that the walking first-person narrator experiences during his walk, turns into text afterwards:

«'All this,' so I proposed resolutely, 'I shall soon sketch and write down in a piece or sort of fantasy, which I shall entitle "The Walk."»

are his words some 20 pages later in an exemplary text which also contains his entire poetics.

Which are the two moves that Walser's «Walk» text presents to us?

1. A walk outside in the real world
2. A walk across the paper inside after returning from the outside world.

If we call this literary procedure «to walser» (in German: Walsern) after his author, we can gain a leading question out of it since it will lead us through the whole of the Staging Lessons:

«To walser – how does that work?»

This question is now written on our blackboard every lesson in order to guide us methodically.

5. Our Walk with Walser: To Walk Twice

Through the outside world



Across our paper sheets



Two examples of our attempts to inscribe ourselves:

1.

«The mission: a walk. I leave the schoolroom over the stone steps of the BME school house with a few other classmates. During the descent of the steps, I was accompanied by a cheerful and amused chatter, as the consequence of the previous visit of the resurrected Robert Walser. The task is as simple as it is complex: following the reading to be observing, absorbing experiences, interweaving them and, as Walser so beautifully did, to put them on paper.

Leaving the school building, I notice the cloud-gray-shrouded sky, no bit of clear sky blue. Contours become milder, the wet veils filter out void and make it disappear. But what is important? Which are the impressions that will stay, which are consciously or unconsciously blanked? And which are those able to be individually transformed after the recording, in order to be reproduced on patient paper?

It's not quite raining straight. But nevertheless with partly quite big drops, which are clapping directly in my face. An umbrella? I have none. I could put a hood, but what for? I like the rain.
(...) »

(Michelle)

2.

«Passing the Coop store in the direction of the initially already mentioned junk store, I can already see from a distance something indefinable gray on the worn, dirty sofa that still seems to be for sale.

It was only when I approached that I recognized an old dog who was looking around uncertainly when I whistled. He feels discovered, so he hurriedly jumps from the sofa directly behind the legs of a lady, where he thinks to be safe. The lady is the mistress, middle fifty, the long gray hair tied together with a colorful cloth – something between old hippie and some Bern City mix. I assure the woman that it is not my intention to frighten her dog. Since I myself had a dog, nothing could be further from me than to frighten him.

The woman replies with a deep, old, smoky voice; which is sympathetic as well as irritating, the dog peeking out slowly between her legs. She explains that the dog is already old and that she had saved him in Spain a few years ago to offer him a more beautiful life in Berne, Switzerland, far from any killing station. And now he sits or lies outside on the couch, silently observing passers-by, hoping not to be discovered himself, becoming one with the couch, quite passively. (...) »

(Melanie)

6. Overview of the whole: The reading by Fritz Lichtenhahn



Lichtenhahn speaks this text like a piece of music and thus voices the «earality» of Walser's language, its lyrical qualities. The task for the class while listening: Find titles for the 20 'chapters'!

Nr.	Stages	Nr.	Stages
1.	One Forenoon	11.	Lunch with Mrs. Aebi
2.	At the Bookseller	12.	Post – a Bushranger's Letter
3.	The Bank Institute	13.	Master Tailor Dünn
4.	The Boasting Golden Letters of the Bakery	14.	At the Tax Office
5.	On the Road	15.	At the Railroad Crossing
6.	A Friendly Woman	16.	Speech about a Tree
7.	Finery Store, Butchery, Spice Store and new Orientation	17.	Mansion, Dog, Dandified Gentleman and Working Woman
8.	The Giant Tomzack	18.	Brentano Chapel, „Villa Terrasse“ and More
9.	Inside the Woods	19.	Boarder Existence
10.	The Singing Girl at the Suburban Window	20.	In the Alder Copse at the Edge of the Water

7. «Without walking, I would be dead», The Poetics of Walser's First-Person Narrator

During all his life, Robert Walser did not make the public breakthrough and so fell silent. In 1917, however, in the half-time of his life, he stood creatively at the zenith of his work. 1913, after the failure of his novelist career in Berlin, he returned to Biel, his native town, and started a new attempt to be recognized as a writer. With the making of his "Stückli" short prose, he had found his form at that time, and in "The Walk" he formulated his poetic method, which immediately becomes clear as a learning, exploration and world-shaping process, as Walser's narrator here explains to a tax officer (Scene 14):

"The superintendent or inspector of taxes said: "But you're always to be seen out for a walk!"

"Walk," was my answer, "I definitely must, to invigorate myself and to maintain contact with the living world, without perceiving which I could neither write the half of one more single word, nor produce a poem in verse or prose. Without walking, I would be dead, and would have long since been forced to abandon my profession, which I love passionately.

8. To walser – How does that work? (II): Our Texts in the Light of Walser’s «The Walk»



«To walser» thus means essentially to walk «outside». However, what is not revealed in the poetics speech to the tax man is the nature of the following second walk across the paper. Is that a kind of «écriture automatique»?

For clarification, we get an overview of Walser's text, discover its high organization, its refined construction, the exterior and the interior, but in the close analysis also its historic relevance. It is clear now: before we can start our walk across the paper, another move is necessary: the memory walk.

Now we are prepared to reinforce this aspect and all the others in our own walk texts. These revisions are presented to the others in the class and we expose them to mutual criticism. And discover: to walser means anything but automatic writing. It takes a lot of editorial work until our text seems as spontaneously alive as Walser's «The Walk ».

9. Who was Robert Walser? A Walker, a Life Nomad, an Art Figure



Robert Walser (1878–1956) is considered one of the most mysterious writers of his time. Born in Biel, Switzerland, he left school at the age of fourteen to serve an apprenticeship at a local bank. Walser's early poems were first published in 1898, and his success allowed him access to Munich's literary circles. Although Walser achieved some success with his first three novels – *Geschwister Tanner* (The Tanners) (1907), *Der Gehülfe* (The Assistant) (1908) and *Jakob von Gunten* (1909) – he was unable to establish himself in the literary life of Berlin, where he had lived since 1905. In 1913, feeling he

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Prosastücke (Prose Pieces) (1916/17), *Poetenleben* (A Poet's Life) (1917/18) and *Seeland* (Lake District) (1920) were all published by Swiss publishing houses.

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After a mental breakdown in 1929, Walser first entered the asylum Waldau, Bern, and then the Herisau sanitarium (Appenzell) in 1933, where he ceased to write and spent the last twenty-three years of his life in almost complete anonymity.

Walser died on a solitary walk in the snow on Christmas Day, 1956. Although Walser was greatly admired by such writers as Hermann Hesse, Kurt Tucholsky, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka and Walter Benjamin, he remained unappreciated by a wider audience. Today, however, he is considered one of the most important writers of the 20th century.

Source:

<http://www.robertwalser.ch/en/about-robert-walser/>

Walser's Life Nomadisme – His Beginning and his Death in the Snow

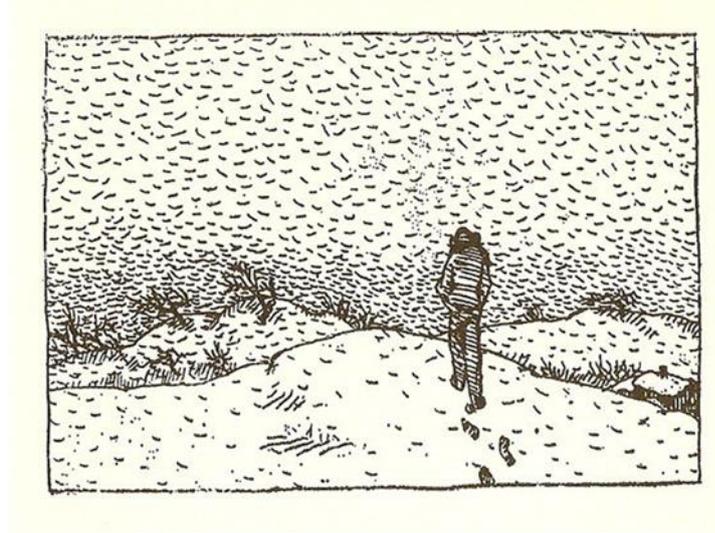


Illustration: Karl Walser

Es schneit, es schneit, bedeckt die Erde
Mit weißer Beschwerde, so weit, so weit.

Es taumelt so weh hinunter vom Himmel
Das Flockengewimmel, der Schnee, der Schnee.

Das gibt dir, ach, eine Ruh', eine Weite,
die weißverschneite Welt macht mich schwach.

So daß erst klein, dann groß mein Sehnen
Sich drängt zu Tränen in mich hinein.

Robert Walser, 1899



Walser’s Life Nomadisme – Changing his Residence all the Time

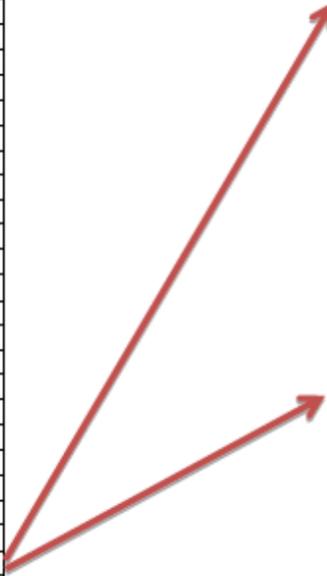
Robert Walser was a nomad also in the light of his residences. During his life, he lived in 25 different places, often returning to places he had been before. If we look at a short period of his life, the years in Bern from 1921-1929, we see him at 16 different addresses during that time. When self-determined in his life, he never settled permanently anywhere.

Walser’s Life Nomadisme

Number of residences	Where?	When?
1	Biel	1878-1895
2	Basel	1895
3	Stuttgart	1895-1896
4	Zürich	1896-1898
5	Thun	1899
6	Solothurn	1899-1900
7	München	1900-1901
8	Würzburg	1901
9	Berlin	1901
10	Zürich	1901
11	Berlin	1901-1902
12	Täuffelen	1902
13	Zürich	1902-1903
14	Winterthur	1903
15	Wädenswil	1903
16	Zürich	1904-1905
17	Biel	1905
18	Berlin	1905
19	Schloss Dambrau	1905
20	Berlin	1906-1913
21	Bellelay	1913
22	Biel	1913-1920
23	Bern	1921-1929
24	Waldau	1929-1933
25	Herisau	1933-1956

Walser’s Bern Nomadisme

Number of residences	Where?	When?
1	Murfeldweg 14	4. 1. 1921
2	Manuelstrasse 72	3. 11. 1921
3	Murfeldweg 3	1. 2. 1922
4	Kramgasse 19	1. 4. 1922
5	Fellenbergstrasse 10	3. 5. 1924
6	Gerechtigkeitsgasse 51	3. 11. 1924
7	Junkerngasse 29	2. 12. 1924
8	Thunstrasse 21	2. 2. 1925
9	Gerechtigkeitsgasse 29	1. 4. 1925
10	Thunstrasse 20	1. 9. 1925
11	Eifenauweg 41	2. 12. 1925
12	Junkerngasse 26	1. 5. 1926
13	Gerechtigkeitsgasse 50	1. 6. 1926
14	Kramgasse 32	2. 8. 1926
15	Luisenstrasse 14	17. 8. 1926
16	Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Waldau	24. 1. 1929



10. To Walser – How does that work? (III): Reflections on Writing

The Micrograms

Robert Walser wrote his texts with his pen, and in "The Walk" his narrator also said that he wrote "all these hopefully graceful sentences, letters, and lines with the German Supreme Court pen." Walser was a real calligraphist, as show the manuscripts and letters preserved. However, he has also left quite a few works in his pencil handwriting – today known as the so-called micrograms:



Robert Walser's novel "The Robber" in microgram form. Walser handed down 526 sheets of different types and sizes, which, when deciphered, result in almost four thousand pages of print, containing, besides prose pieces, poems, and dramatic scenes, also this novel.

Picture from the Robert Walser Center, Bern.

Precise Genesis: Pencil Work of Importance

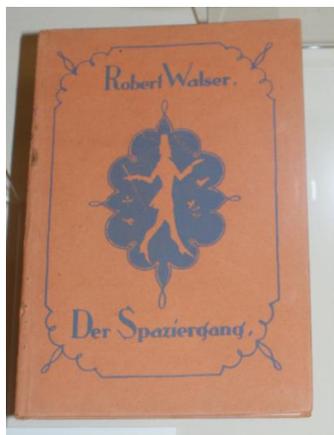
There exists an informative comment about the connection between Walser's pencil work and the "fair copying" with the pen. Walser wrote this confession a letter to the journalist, writer and editor of the magazine "Neue Schweizer Rundschau", Max Rychner (1897-1965) on June 20, 1927:

*«I mentioned the term brouillon with which I have told you a whole story of creation and life, for you are to know, sir, that about ten years ago I began to sketch everything that I produce, shyly and devoutly, with my pencil, as a result of which the process of writing naturally experienced a sluggishness going almost into the colossal. I owe the pencil system, which is entangled with a subsequent office-like copying system, true torment, but this torment taught me patience, so that I have become an artist in patience ... You might perhaps find ridiculous to be so precise about the origination of an essay. For me, however, the pencillery has a significance. For, for the author of these lines there was a time when he horribly, terribly hated the feather.... And in order to rid himself of this nibbing weariness, he began to play around with his pencil, drawing, fiddling. For me the pencil helped to get better playing, versing; it seemed to me that the writer's passion revived anew. I can assure you that I have experienced a real collapse of my hand with the feather (this started in Berlin already), a kind of spasm from whose clamps I slowly and painfully freed myself on the pencil path. An impotence, a spasm, a dullness are always something bodily and at the same time of the soul. So there was for me a time of disruption, which reflected, as it were, in the handwriting, in its dissolution, **and when I was copying from the pencil area, I learned to write again – like a boy.**»*

Bernhard Echte (Hg.): Robert Walser. Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2008, S. 384-85

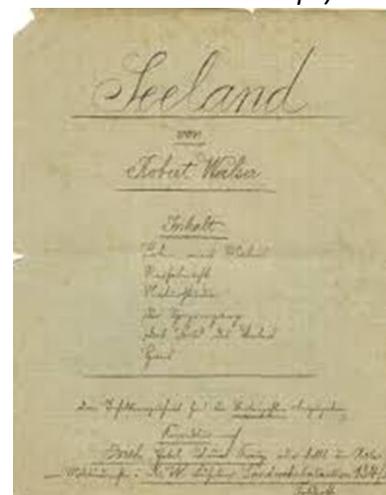
Walser as His Own Editor: Reversing Each Sentence

The Walk 1917
(single print, book)



Immediately after the publication of the single edition in 1917, Walser went about revising the entire text of "The Walk" checking each word in every sentence. A text comparison of the two versions is very revealing, because we can follow Walser's editorial work in detail. The authorized final version of the text, published in the anthology "Lake District" in 1920, shows thousands of single changes. On the other hand, Walser left entire passages unaltered, such as the poetics speech of the narrator before the tax official.

The Walk 1920
(in the anthology «Lake District»,
manuscript)



The Consequences for our Inscription Texts

To «walser» also means to pay special attention to the method of production of a text and to reflect our own writing process.

Maturaarbeit

Die Wanderung auf der Suche nach den
Spuren von Robert Walser –
Die literarische Produktionsweise Robert
Walters anhand der Erzählung „Der
Spaziergang“



Imma Spring
Altmendstrasse 51
3014 Bern
Tel. 031 333 88 03

Betreuer: Stephan Schmidlin
BME – Gymnasium Neufeld
Bern, 02.11.2013

In a «Matura-Arbeit» a student analysed this text revision in detail and found two main tendencies: first an increase of the poetic quality of the text and secondly more fictionalization of first-person narrator.

And these considerations on the exact production of our texts (e.g draft by hand with ball-pen, revision on computers) may even be put in our texts – this was what Walser did, too.

Best of all, we collect the different versions of our own walk texts in a portfolio and, together with further material collected by us, document the genesis of our inscription texts.

Third Act

11. To walser – How does that work? (IV): The End of the Staging Lesson

There are many variations for completing the Staging Lessons in their third act. All of them have been successfully tested already. For example the literary walk following Walser's traces on the very spot in Biel/Bienne.



Walking 5 Times

A school class on their literary walk in the old town of Biel in front of the former House of the City Administration, where Walser's first-person narrator holds his poetics speech.

With this conclusion, we will complete all five walks:

1. The real walk(s) of Walser in Biel,
 2. Walser's memory walk,
 3. The text walk of Walser's narrator
 4. Our own "inscription" walk
 5. The literary walk
- Literary walks with Walser are, of course, possible in the many places where Walser himself lived and worked – from Bern to Berlin and elsewhere.

A Reading of our own «walk» texts

This as a public school event or as an evening where the parents are invited to school.



Sometimes you need some courage to present your own texts in front of an audience – courage which Walser lacked as well.



The invitation card for the closing presentation of the Staging Lessons about Walser's «The Walk» at the Gymnasium in Trogen (Switzerland)

The Walk «Harvest» either as Portfolios or Books

In addition to their own “walk” texts, the portfolios contain all the material that the students have collected for themselves in their research studies.



The harvest of the Staging Lessons: «Walk» books as products from staging the Walser Lessons in the Gymnasium in Trogen (Appenzell, Switzerland)

The harvest products of staging the Walser «Lehrstück» in the Bern Gymnasium of Neufeld – at the very bottom the teacher's portfolio

A Visit to the Robert Walser Center in Bern

The first address for Robert Walser in Bern: The Robert Walser Center in the middle of the old town. It hosts the world's largest collection of printed and unpublished documents on Robert Walser's life and work.



To complete the Staging Lessons in a combination of a Walser literary walk through the old town center of Bern and a visit to the Robert Walser Center – including a little workshop with its director.

Summary on the Lehrkunst Poster

Staging Lesson „The Walk with Robert Walser“

„To walser“ means to go on a walk through reality as a self endowed person with waking senses and then transform that walk into a walk over the paper after returning.

 <p><i>The Walker. Robert Walser? Detail of a photograph from his time.</i></p> <p>«One morning, as the desire to take a walk came over me, I put my hat on my head, left my writing room, or room of phantoms, and ran down the stairs to hurry out into the street.»</p> <p>This is how Robert Walser (1878-1956) – also called the Swiss «Kafka» – begins his prose piece «The Walk» in 1917.</p>	 <p><i>A student on his outside walk</i></p> <p>«'All this,' so I proposed resolutely, 'I shall soon sketch and write down in a piece or sort of fantasy, which I shall entitle "The Walk."»</p> <p>These are his words some 20 pages later in an exemplary text which also contains his entire poetics.</p>	 <p><i>The class, back from their outside walk while writing their "walk" texts following Walser's method</i></p> <p>If we want to make Walser's story to come to life again in our staging lesson, we should best follow his instructions. Can we "walser" as well? The proof of the pudding is in the eating! After a brief introduction by the author, who demonstrates the initial scene and the return with his hat and umbrella, played by the teacher, we all become attentive walkers and collect on our impressions Walser's traces – almost a hundred years after him. After an hour of attentive recording outside we return to our "writing room" or "room of phantoms", i.e. back to the classroom and begin our walk again with the pen over the paper. (Because we are not all calligraphs like Walser and since we want to edit our text, we can also use our laptops.)</p>
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Biel, 1917 and 2009

<p>Now we get an overview of Walser's text, discover its construction, the outside and the inside, we listen to his lyrical "earality" in the reading by an actor, but also detect in a detailed analysis its historic relevance.</p> <p>Finally, we have a look at the sceneries and compare them now and then. We are now strengthening all of these aspects in our walk texts, and present our revisions to the others in the class and expose them to mutual criticism (important: the text attempts of the teacher are handled in the same way as those of the students.)</p>	<p>Without walking, I would be dead!</p> <p>During all his life, Robert Walser did not make the public breakthrough and so fell silent. In 1917, however, in the half-time of his life, he stood creatively at the zenith of his work. 1913, after the failure of his novelist career in Berlin, he returned to Biel, his native town, and started a new attempt to be recognized as a writer.</p> <p>With the making of his "Stückli" short prose, he had found his form at that time, and in "The Walk" he formulated his poetic method, which immediately becomes clear as a learning, exploration and world-shaping process, as Walser's narrator here explains to a tax officer:</p>	<p>"The superintendent or inspector of taxes said: "But you're always to be seen out for a walk!"</p> <p>"Walk," was my answer, "I definitely must, to invigorate myself and to maintain contact with the living world, without perceiving which I could neither write the half of one more single word, nor produce a poem in verse or prose. Without walking, I would be dead, and would have long since been forced to abandon my profession, which I love passionately."</p>  <p><i>The class on the literary walk in the Old Town of Biel before the former house of the city administration, where the above scene plays.</i></p> <p>On the tour, which is marked with signs in Biel, we learn how Walser grew up here as a child and adolescent, and we follow his "walk" in here and now.</p>
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