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Poetry as a Way of Teaching Fundamental Values

the Relation Between Textbooks and Curriculum

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Abstract

Research has shown that poetry is a good tool to talk about and teach values. *Skolverket* has during the past 20 years stressed the importance of fundamental values through their documents and guidelines. In the Lgy 11 curriculum for English for Swedish upper secondary school, poetry is for the first time listed as a core content. Therefore this essay asks the critical question: Does teaching of poetry in English 6 textbooks live up to the fundamental values specified by *Skolverket*? In this essay two textbooks in English 6 have been studied along with literature on the topic. The essay uses a modified model presented by Gunnel Colnerud that differentiates the term *fundamental values* to be able answer the research question. The result shows that the two textbooks include poetry that talks about the fundamental values according to all the categories suggested in the model. The most frequent value in this study concerns students' own opinions and their existential and religious questions.

Key words: poetry, fundamental values, values, English, Swedish upper secondary school, Skolverket

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1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation

Poetry has throughout history been a way to express life and feelings, as well for poets as for readers and listeners. Some of our greatest literary pieces are written in poetic form and many of them still influence people. There is a big treasure in poetry; its simplicity and complexity can fascinate and tell stories and elicit feelings in just a few lines. It could open doors to rooms that were closed and give meaning beyond words. Through poetry many poetry lovers have got a tool to reflect upon life and share the experience of others in shorter texts.

Along with the new curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school, Lgy11, there are some interesting paradigm shifts. One of them is that poetry now is listed as a core content of English 6 (former English B). In the former curriculum, Lpo94, poetry was optional and had no specific place in the curriculum. As a result, there are many new textbooks adapted for the new course syllabi that have been published.

In the Act of Education, the fundamental values are set high but very few guidelines are given on how to teach them and stress them in school. Poetry can be a very useful tool to talk about these fundamental values, both for the school and for the individual.

Research shows that students' experience of poetry in the Swedish school is very limited.¹ One reason might be the lack of knowledge among teachers. Therefore it is interesting that the Swedish educational authority, *Skolverket*, has decided that all students *must* include the study of poetry in their English classes. It is a challenge for all teachers, but also a big opportunity to explore new areas of literature and new perspectives of the mission of the school.

2. Background

2.1 Poetry

The poet Robert Frost once said: "Poetry is what kind of thing poets write". His standpoint was that all definitions of poetry limited the creativity. The poet, critic and teacher Dana Gioia and the journalist and poet X. J. Kennedy claim that the nature of poetry eludes simple definitions, if any, because words cannot really explain the beauty of poetry.² Other poets, such as Thomas Hardy, Gwendolyn Brooks and W. H. Auden, try to define poetry in the abstract terms of art and emotions and feelings put in words.

¹ For example Wolf, 12; 24

² Kennedy & Gioia, xxxi; 400

However, there are a great number of definitions, more or less technical, that try to explain the framework of poetry. The word poetry comes from the Greek noun ποιήσις and can be translated with the English word *making*. David Ian Hanauer defines poetry as “a literary text that presents the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the writer through a self-referential use of language that creates for the reader and writer a new understanding of the experience, thought or feeling expressed in the text”.³ He also claims that the language used in poetry is of highest importance for the content and meaning: “the learning process relates directly to the way language is used in poems. The language of poems directs and mediates the process of understanding. In poetry, language is not a transparent medium that merely transfers the author’s message; the language of the poem is the author’s message”.⁴ Kennedy & Gioia compare poetry to prose to give a definition: “A poem differs from most prose in several ways. For one, both writer and reader tend to regard it differently. The poet’s attitude is something like this: I offer this piece of writing to be read not as prose but as a poem – that is, more perceptively, thoughtfully, and considerately, with more attention on sounds and connotations”.⁵ Martin Dodsworth agrees and says that there are important differences between poetry and other forms of literature. Poetry, he says, does not usually contain a plot and it does not imitate life as a novel does. Instead it could be seen as art.⁶ Staffan Bergsten gives a more technical definition by saying that poetry is the art of imagery where the reader creates his or her own images and tries to understand the poet’s imagery.⁷

A poem can differ immensely in form and style. Kennedy & Gioia say that a poem should not be seen as a confederation of form, rime, image, metaphor, tone or theme, but as a whole. It can therefore be written in free verse, strict rhyming form and of any length. Thus Kennedy & Gioia include lyrics in the genre of poetry.⁸ There are, nevertheless, people that focus more on the technical elements. Bill Overton claims that poetry is different to other types of text mainly because of its focus on metre, prosody, different enunciation of words, and its emphasis on rhymes and the way language is perceived.⁹

2.1.1 Poetry in the Swedish syllabus

In a study of curricula, methodology books and textbooks, professor Lars Wolf gives an account of how poetry has been given different emphasis in Swedish school through history. In the first official curriculum for “små- och folkskolan” (year 1-6) from 1878, the emphasis was put on mechanical

³ Hanauer, 10

⁴ Hanauer, 10

⁵ Kennedy & Gioia, 398

⁶ Dodsworth, 85

⁷ Bergsten, 9

⁸ Kennedy & Gioia, 399

⁹ Overton, 266

skills. Students had to learn some Swedish poems by heart, but little focus was put on the content. In the curriculum from 1925, there is a romantic focus where the students practiced to read poems to find the tones and feelings. The same focus was given in a methodology book from 1949, although form and style get more room. Poems were not only to be read, they were also supposed to be studied in depth so the students could analyse phrasing, tempo and composition. Not until 1955 was it possible to see any connection between poetry and fundamental values. In the 1955 curriculum it says that poetry should be enjoyable and present values to the students through putting the spirit in motion. In 1962, a curriculum for the new elementary school was introduced. In the section concerning reading, a new view of poetry was presented. It explicitly said that poetry should be connected to actual happenings; it could be changes in nature or a collective experience. Furthermore, it was encouraged to integrate poetry with other forms of art, such as music and painting. In 1969, poetry got a more limited role in the curriculum. The main reason to this was the shift in the language education in Sweden from a form of art to a more strict linguistic study. Hence, literature in general and poetry in specific was, along with the 1969 curriculum, replaced by vocabulary, grammar and spelling. In 1980, there was a backdrop to the earlier view of poetry. In the Lgr 80 curriculum, it says that poetry in the form of rhymes and association exercises can be used to stimulate and develop vocabulary. Students were also encouraged to read and write poetry to develop skills such as expressing, with a varied and precise language, experiences of words and reality. In 1995, the Lpo 94 curriculum was introduced. Poetry was not mentioned at all, but it said that pictures, literature and drama are positive ways to develop language skills.¹⁰ The same goes for the Lgy 11 curriculum. Poetry is not mentioned at all in Swedish 1, 2 or 3 as core content. However, they all list the importance of reading different kinds of texts. In Swedish 3 students should develop skills to analyse literature and other types of media to gain self-awareness and understanding of other people's experiences, life conditions, thoughts and imaginary worlds.

2.1.2 Poetry in the English syllabus

English was introduced as the first foreign language in Swedish school in 1807 although it was not compulsory until 1950. In the Lpo 94 and Lpf 94 curricula, nothing is mentioned about poetry for the study of English. It mentions the importance of reading different types of text, but nothing specifically about poetry. In the Lgy 11 curriculum, however, poetry is mentioned as a core content, which means that all students must study poetry to fulfil the aim of the subject. It does not say how poetry should be taught, but it says that poetry should be included.

¹⁰ Wolf, 14-16

2.1.3 Poetry as a way to teach values

Poetry is a good way to develop language; not only grammatically, but also cognitively. Poetry has through history been a way to express feelings, contemplate moral and social issues and to give words to a situation, real or surreal. Poetry is different from prose and other literary genres; it can express feelings and situations without explicit explanations. It demands and develops creativity which leads to a confrontation with emotions and values.¹¹ Thus, poetry is a good tool to talk about life, society and our own values. The History professor and director of Centrum för värdegrundsstudier Bo Andersson argues that poetry in itself encourages discussion about values. He says that poetry always has to be read as a dialogue between poet and reader where values and background are to be discussed.¹² Wolf also argues that poetry is an excellent way to teach values. He gives several reasons. Firstly, poetry helps students to understand other contexts and the lives of other people. Secondly, poetry opens doors to the emotional life and can therefore help students to handle feelings. Thirdly, poetry can help students to handle difficult situations and put words on their own lives and life stories.¹³ Poetry has the advantage that much can be said in very few words. Reading a poem can pose questions about life or a situation that confront the reader. Writing poetry can also help a person to express inner feelings without putting it in exact words or long sentences. Thus, poetry can serve many perspectives of teaching values; it is a way to confront values, but also a useful tool to discuss the fundamental values of individuals, institutions or societies.

2.2 Fundamental values

2.2.1 History of fundamental values

Fundamental values are always changing. School and society are not two separate institutions, but interact all the time. That is, what happens and is taught in school influences society and what happens in society should be taught in school. Thus fundamental values are changing, more or less rapidly, in a changing world.

Psychologist and professor Gunnel Colnerud says that fundamental values have always been taught in school, yet in very different ways. Earlier the fundamental values of the Swedish school were tightly connected to the values of the Swedish Lutheran Church and a national identity. Along with secularisation, globalisation and the separation between state and church, the

¹¹ Erixon, 40

¹² Andersson, 492-493

¹³ Wolf, 25-26; Wolf 23

Swedish school had to re-work and re-structure its fundamental values. As a result of moral insecurity and religious breakdown, and a society greatly influenced by plurality and individualism, it was necessary to form a national document on the shared values.¹⁴ The term “fundamental values” was introduced in the curriculum preparations of Lpo 94. The fundamental values had some focus areas: democracy and respect. Furthermore, it was built on five pillars

- i) the intrinsic value of every human being
- ii) freedom and integrity of the individual
- iii) equal value of human being
- iv) equality between men and women
- v) solidarity between people

These values have persisted intact through Lpo94 to Lgr/Lgy 11. However, the construction has met much resistance and criticism for being too vague and too fluent.¹⁵ Andersson claims it is a paradox to legislate democratic values since they may hinder and manipulate freedom of speech and individual freedom. He refers to Christer Hedin and Pirjo Lahdenperä that say that

Democracy is constructed on a continuous discussion about what values that should be implemented and how these should be conveyed, be established and appear by the school. Such discussions must be held both within and outside the school. This is the only way the fundamental values can be kept alive and real.¹⁶

He also argues that many of the terms that are used never get a definition. Instead many of the value-based words have become mantras.¹⁷ Colnerud even says that this issue causes severe problems for schools and society. When a term, such as *fundamental values*, is used without definition it becomes non-significant, or at least less significant. Her research shows that people active in the school use *fundamental values* very freely to fill a linguistic and terminological vacuum. This results from a lack of moral language in the secularised world after the religious domination. As a result, it is difficult to make distinctions between religious and secular principles.¹⁸

¹⁴ Colnerud, 81

¹⁵ For example, Andersson 78; Colnerud 81; Larsson 51

¹⁶ Andersson, 77 (own translation)

¹⁷ Andersson, 79-81

¹⁸ Colnerud, 81-82

2.2.2 Fundamental values expressed in Swedish acts and curricula

Some norms and values are expressed through laws and national documents, for example in Sweden where freedom of speech and freedom of religion are legislated rights. The Swedish school also has documents describing norms and values. According to the §5 of the Education Act

School activities shall be structured in accordance with fundamental democratic values and the human rights such as promotion of respect for the intrinsic value of every human being, freedom and integrity for the individual, equal value of human being, equality and solidarity between individuals. Each and every person active in the school system shall promote the human values and actively counteract all types of insulting treatment.¹⁹

In the national curriculum, Lgr 11 and Lgy 11, it is also specified what fundamental values all subjects should be taught after.

The national school system is based on democratic foundations. The Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that education in the school system aims at students acquiring and developing knowledge and values. It should promote the development and learning of students, and a lifelong desire to learn. Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based. The education should be based on scientific grounds and proven experience. Each and everyone working in the school should also encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person and the environment we all share. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity between people are the values that the education should represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is to be achieved by nurturing in the individual a sense of justice, generosity, tolerance and responsibility. Teaching should be non-denominational. The task of the school is to encourage all students to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby actively participate in the life of society by giving of their best in responsible freedom.²⁰

¹⁹ Swedish Education Act § 5, own translation

²⁰ Curriculum for the Swedish upper secondary school, 4

Furthermore, the national curriculum states that every school should promote understanding and respect of other people and ideas. All tendencies of discrimination and degrading treatment should be combated actively. At the same time, schools should emphasise the importance of forming personal views. All teaching should be objective and encompass a range of different approaches. When values are, their source and status should always be made explicit. All who work in the school should always uphold the fundamental values that are set out in the Education Act and in the national curriculum, and clearly dissociate themselves from anything that conflicts with these values.²¹

In 1999, the Department of Education introduced a year of fundamental values. The goal was to stress the importance of fundamental values in school on a national level. In a fact sheet about the year, it says

Fundamental values should permeate activities in the pre-school, school and adult education. Fundamental values deal with relations between people and how we treat and value each other as children and adults. Fundamental values are thus a pedagogical issue, requiring knowledge and competence, and concern the activity of the school as a whole. The tasks of the school in promoting learning and personal development are not two distinct activities that can be handled separately. The work on fundamental values is a permanent ongoing process involving everyone in the school and it requires the school to co-operate with other part of society. Fundamental values must be focus on in order to strengthen democracy in school and society. Only by doing this can we prevent and counteract bullying, sexual harassment, violence and other crimes, xenophobia and other ways of expressing a lack of respect for the equal value of human being.²²

2.2.3 Syllabus for English 6

In the English 6 syllabus there are several core contents that refer to values. Teaching in the course should cover

- Concrete and abstract subject areas related to students' education and societal and working life; current issues, thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; ethical and existential issues.

²¹ Curriculum for the Swedish upper secondary school, 4-5

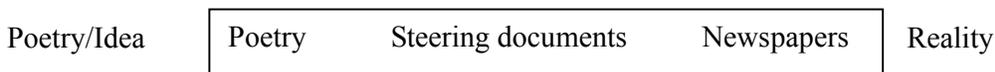
²² Andersson, 75 (own translation)

- Living conditions, attitudes, values, traditions, social issues as well as cultural, historical, political and cultural conditions in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used.
- How structure and context are built up and how attitudes, perspectives and style are expressed in spoken and written language in various genres.
- Oral and written production and interaction in different situations and for different purposes where students argue, report, apply reason, summarise, comment on, assess and give reasons for their views.

2.2.4 Models of fundamental values

There are several researchers that argue that the terms *values* and *fundamental values* are too vague and need to be specified.²³ The critique concerns how they change over time and culture and thus are difficult to use in a modern context.

Andersson claims that poetry, curriculum and media are interconnected and all say something about the fundamental values of our society. His approach is to look at the content of poetry, curriculum and media and see *what* they include and *how* they are written.



Gunnel Colnerud suggests the importance of clear definitions to be able to speak about values in general and the fundamental values of school specifically. She says that the biggest risk of letting terminology be general is that the effects also become very general. As a result, it becomes difficult to make distinctions between different qualities.

She refers to studies by Langdon Winner that criticises the term *values*. He says that the content of the term *values* has changed and now describes more subjective phenomena. To talk about values has today the general meaning of talking about feelings, rather than the qualities in us and outside of us.

Previously people saw themselves pursuing certain kinds of activities because these activities had value. Now we are more apt to conclude that persons have values that

²³ See for example Andersson, 77-84; Colnerud, 95-96

lead them to behave in certain ways.²⁴

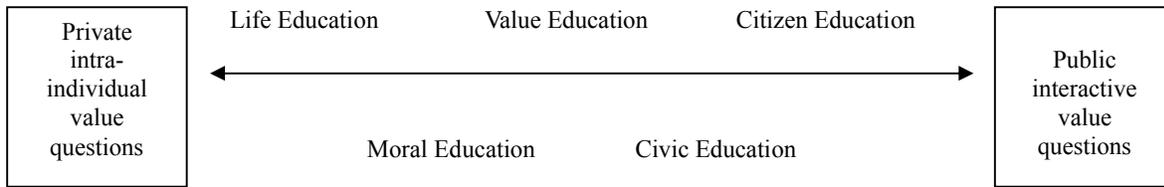
Winner also argues that earlier language offered several distinctions to express the term *values*. Words such as good, worthy, virtuous and desirable were terms equivalent to today's use of the term *value*.

If there are any distinctions between opinion and principle, bias and belief, desire and need, one's individual interest and what one wishes for the community at large, people are less and less able to make them.²⁵

Colnerud suggests that the same phenomenon goes for Sweden and Swedish terminology. She claims, though, that English terminology still is richer than the Swedish terminology presented along with the fundamental values of the Swedish school. In the English language there are several terms to discuss moral norms and democratic values related to school: value education, moral education, character education, civic education and citizen education. Moral education and value education originate from ethics and educational philosophy; civic education and citizen education originate from political philosophy and political science. These terms are sometimes overlapping each other but still they show different perspectives of values in school. Thus, they can assist when talking about the fundamental values of the Swedish school. Colnerud also claims that teachers have different objectives when they teach fundamental values. Therefore, she suggests a model built where values are categorised from public to private. The public values are strict through their basic and inevitable character. They are embedded in laws and democratic principles, for example the freedom of speech. The private values, on the other hand, are values that are not shared by the majority of society, for example religious values and sexual and political opinions. The fundamental values of the Swedish school embrace this spectrum of values. However, this model does not represent different systems of values, but one continuum of the same value system. The aim of making a model is not to find distinct terms and categories, but to be able to make temporary differences between pedagogical ideas, objects and models. The model shows that the terms are sometimes overlapping but still separate. Her studies show that there are many different areas which are included in the term *fundamental values*.

²⁴ Colnerud, 82

²⁵ Colnerud, 82



Life education

In this category, Colnerud includes those questions that students ponder; what they believe in and what they doubt. She refers to David N Aspin that says: “Beliefs relate to the psychological and subjective elements in our grasp of reality and the ways in which we interpret what we take to be our world”²⁶. Thus, Colnerud states, life philosophy questions are important and concern an emotional engagement that not necessarily has to be communicated. Furthermore, these values do not have to be shared; religious and existential experiences do not necessarily involve other individuals.

Moral education

The objective is how the individual acts and meets other people in personal interactions and communication, now as well as in future relationships. This category can be compared with the earlier nurturing terms as well as the development of virtues and good social characteristics. Nurturing, impact and transmission still exist in Swedish school, but as terms they are difficult to speak about since they refer to authoritarian attitudes. Moral values are also taught through character education which means that the student is taught and formed to some culturally decided social patterns of behaviour without letting the underlying values be said or stressed. The aim is thus to reproduce socially desirable characteristics in the behaviour of the students.

It is also important to consider how students develop critical thinking concerning moral rules. Therefore it is vital that students learn to be independent to be able to reflect upon moral norms that they meet everywhere, including school. Colnerud refers to a number of researchers that contribute with different approaches. Randall R. Curren says that it is important that students learn from an early age how to reason in moral issues to be able to become autonomous moral individuals that know how to identify and use moral principles. Lawrence Kohlberg, on the other hand, believes that all individuals had a similar moral development and that the school thus had to support that development. A third approach is to stress the development of deeds that society (school) decides and to award those with that behaviour. There is also a teacher perspective on the reproduction of moral rules. Nel Noddings means that students reproduce the values of their

²⁶ Colnerud, 85

teachers. If teachers are positive they will also reproduce positive students, if teachers are negative they will reproduce students that are negative. The implicit moral education is continuous and often unconscious. John Dewey said:

It may be laid down that the influence of direct moral instruction, even at its very best is comparatively small in amount and slight in influence, when the whole field of moral growth through education is taken into account. This larger field of indirect and vital moral education, is the development of character through all the agencies, instrumentalities and materials of school life.²⁷

A fifth approach is the liberal approach where neither school nor teacher should try to effect the moral development of students. Instead the moral development should be spontaneous and natural. According to this theory, teachers, textbooks and school documents disturb the moral development of individuals.

Value education

These values focus on the socially accepted values. Colnerud refers to Aspin who writes

The presence, function and direction of values and regulative principles lie at the heart of the norms and conventions of the various institutions into which human beings in all our various communities and cultures are progressively initiated and of which we become bearers and beneficiaries.²⁸

In Swedish schools, value education has mainly concerned tolerance for people of other ethnicities, religions or other cultural norms. Value education also concerns equality between gender and human rights. To talk about value education is thus very central in a plural society and an important mission for the school.

Civic education

Colnerud claims that civic education is very similar to value education. However, civic education adds a citizen perspective to the values discussed, that is, a focus on the citizen rather than the human being in general. These values give knowledge about one's own society and values connected to a common, sometimes national, identity.

²⁷ Colnerud, 88

²⁸ Colnerud, 89

Citizen education

Citizen education includes knowledge about politics and how to use the democratic values to be a responsible citizen. It includes legal rights and responsibilities and how to be a carrier of society. These values are never voluntary, but have to be followed by every citizen. In Swedish schools, citizen education has become more and more important, for example by class councils and the focus on the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

3. Aim and research question

The aim of this essay is to investigate two textbooks in English 6 in the Swedish upper secondary school system and analyse how they use poetry to teach fundamental values. I will therefore ask the critical question: **Does teaching of poetry in English 6 textbooks live up to the fundamental values specified by Skolverket?**

4. Method

4.1 Different approaches of interpretation

The poetry studied in this essay is written text. Therefore it is vital to discuss how a text can be interpreted. In this section four different ways of interpreting will be presented.

First, Kennedy & Gioia contribute with a number of critical approaches to literature and how to analyse a poem. Poetry, they say, can be interpreted from several perspectives and with different aims. Literary criticism borrows concepts from other disciplines, such as history, linguistics, psychology, and philosophy, to be able to make a precise and disciplined analysis. Literary criticism is not primarily evaluative, instead it tries to help us better understand a literary work.²⁹ Formalist criticism tries to interpret the text on its own terms; and not primarily on the social, historical or biographical contexts. It regards literature as a unique form of human knowledge and explores the intense relationships within the text. Thus, it looks specifically at the formal features of a text, such as style, structure, imagery, genre and tone. These features, however, are usually not examined in isolation. The status of art rests on how all elements work together to create the reader's total experience.³⁰ Biographical criticism, on the other hand, interprets the text in the light of the life of the author.³¹ Historical criticism is a way of interpreting a text with regards to

²⁹ Kennedy & Gioia, 658

³⁰ Kennedy & Gioia, 659

³¹ Kennedy & Gioia, 663

the social, cultural and intellectual context where the text was written. The focus of this critical approach is to understand what the text wanted to communicate at the time it was written and how the meaning has changed over time.³²

Second, the sociologist and gender researcher Anna Johansson suggests a narrative perspective on texts. She believes that texts express what humans perceive, both to ourselves and to others. A narrative analysis focuses on these expressions, their content and their structure.³³ Johansson also claims that all texts have a methodological and an ontological perspective. Some researchers claim one perspective, but Johansson claims that the two perspectives counteract and, to some extent, are dependent on each other. With only one perspective, she says, the analysis becomes very narrow. A mixture of the two perspectives is therefore the most convenient way of analysing a text.³⁴ However, the sociology professor Catherine Kohler-Riessman claims that it is impossible to achieve perfect understanding of someone else's experience. Hence it is important to be humble in what research claims to be true about someone else's piece of work.³⁵ Narrative analysis can thus be a help in understanding the message of the poetry studied.

Third, the media professor Arthur Asa Berger suggests a cultural analysis and a cultural criticism on texts. His standpoint is that texts have great effects on society. Therefore texts need to be studied from a social as well as a cultural perspective, and not only from a linguistic or narrative perspective. He refers to the American literary critic M. H Abrams who says that art (including texts) is functional; art works on humans with the goal to teach about life, convey moral values and convince us.³⁶ Berger suggests that literary texts should not be analysed. Instead they should be interpreted by a critic that enters the world of the author. However, interpreting a text is never neutral. Texts are complex and very often complicated. Texts have very seldom only one possible interpretation. To interpret a text is thus always subjective to its nature.³⁷ To be able to make an interpretation, it seems to be necessary to have some kind of understanding of the text. Through the process of interpretation, the understanding of the text should increase rather than decrease.³⁸

Four, reception theory puts most focus on the reader, rather than on the text. Spokesmen for this theory, for example Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, claim that a literary text does not exist until it is read.³⁹ Hence, the text is first created in the cut point between reader

³² Kennedy & Gioia, 666-667

³³ Johansson, 15-28

³⁴ Johansson, 15-28; 290

³⁵ Johansson, 29-31

³⁶ Berger, 23-24

³⁷ Berger, 31-32

³⁸ Svensson & Starrin, 181-182

³⁹ Berger, 33

and text. Abrams, however, disagrees with the reception theories and believes that the text has a great value in itself. The text, he says, has not only effect on the author in his/her process, but also on society and all readers since it reflects them.⁴⁰ Berger suggests that both perspectives are important; that is, the readers are important for the interpretation of a text, yet there are structures in the text itself that give meaning to it.⁴¹

Not any of these four theories can support with an objective method of how to analyse the way poetry reflects fundamental values. Nevertheless, researchers are aware that different approaches contribute in different ways.

4.2 The relation between research and curriculum

In this essay, the poetry from the textbooks will be categorised in a model based on Colnerud's model and the values presented by *Skolverket*. Colnerud has formulated some criteria herself, but they are not specifically adapted for interpreting poetry. *Skolverket* has also listed a number of values in the national curriculum.

1. The school should promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathise
2. All tendencies to discrimination or degrading treatment should actively be combated
3. The internationalisation of Swedish society and increasing cross-border mobility place high demands on the ability of people to live with and appreciate the values inherent in cultural diversity
4. Schools must help students to develop an identity that can be related to and encompass not only what is specifically Swedish, but also that which is Nordic, European, and ultimately global.
5. The national school system is based on democratic foundations
6. Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based.
7. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity between people are the values that the education should represent and impart.
8. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is to be achieved by nurturing in the individual a sense of justice, generosity, tolerance and responsibility

⁴⁰ Berger, 23-24

⁴¹ Berger, 91

9. The task of the school is to encourage all students to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby actively participate in the life of society by contributing in responsible freedom

By combining Colnerud's categories with the values listed by *Skolverket*, a more distinct model appears.

Colnerud's categories	Life ed.	Moral ed.	Value ed.	Civic ed.	Citizen ed.
Skolverket	8	8	1, 2, 3 6, 7	4, 6, 9	5, 6, 9

This constructed model will use the same terminology as Colnerud, but will be a combination of Colnerud's and *Skolverket's* view on fundamental values. The categories can thus be defined as:

Life education concerns questions concerning existential and religious questions. To its nature, the questions do not have to be verbalised or shared. That means that this category includes open questions, such as *what do you think?*

Moral education concerns nurturing attitudes. That is, a will to reproduce virtues such as justice, generosity, tolerance and responsibility.

Value education concerns socially accepted values, such as respect of others regardless of social, cultural or biological deviations from the norm.

Civic education concerns the formation of a national identity.

Citizen education concerns political and democratic values with the goal to form responsible citizens.

4.3 Procedure

To be able to answer the research question, this essay will investigate two textbooks and their attached key material. All poetry in the textbooks will be interpreted and listed in a matrix according to the model suggested above. This essay will primarily interpret the poetry in the light of the context in the textbooks. Thus it will, to a large extent, apply literary criticism on the poetry in

the two textbooks because that is what the authors of the textbooks do themselves. The three other approaches will also contribute to the analysis, although to a lesser extent. In addition to the textbooks, keys to the textbooks will be used to see how the authors themselves interpret the poems through the questions listed in the poetry sections.

Thus each poem will be commented and listed in a matrix. The content in the two textbooks will be data processed separately. However, there will not be any comparison between the two textbooks in the analysis, rather a general discussion how poetry in textbooks teach fundamental values.

4.4 Distinctions and shortcomings

This essay will only investigate two textbooks in English 6. The intention is to say something about the relation between textbook and curriculum when it comes to the use of poetry as a way to teach fundamental values. However, this study also realises the limitations of an essay like this. Two textbooks do not represent all textbooks, but they can contribute and say something in general terms.

The two textbooks were chosen for mainly pragmatic reasons. The first and only criterion to be fulfilled was that the textbooks in this study were to be adapted to the new national curriculum, Lgy 11. The reason for the selection of these two textbooks is pragmatic in the sense that they were available at the school where I work.

5. Data

In this chapter, the results from the text analysis will be presented. Each textbook will be discussed in three separate parts: presentation, interpretation, placement in the model.

5.1 Textbooks

5.1.1 Presentation of *World Wide English 2 – Naturvetenskapsprogrammet*

World Wide English is a new series of English textbooks from Sanoma Utbildning that cover English 5 and English 6 for the Natural Science Programme and the Social Science Programme. In the series, there is a textbook with a student CD, a key including grammar, teacher instructions and a teacher CD. The textbook authors, Christer Johansson, Kerstin Tuthill and Ulf Hörmander, state in the preface of the textbook and on the publisher's homepage that one of the major goals with *World*

Wide English 2 is to give a global perspective of the English speaking world.⁴² That means that the poetry included in the textbook represents different cultures as well as different eras.

There are 20 chapters in *World Wide English 2*, 15 that are general and five that are specific for the Natural Science Programme. Poetry is only included in the 15 first chapters. However, in addition to the 20 chapters, there is a theme under the name “Poetry Through the Centuries”. This chapter introduces several poems and poets and includes several analytical questions to be discussed and answered.

There are eleven poems in total, ten with questions and one with no questions.

5.1.1.1 Interpretation

Bars Fight

Bars Fight was written by Lucy Terry Prince who was an American black household slave born in Africa. In this poem she tells the real story of a raid between Native Americans and the white colonials. The poem is about death and fear, but also about identity. The textbook authors ask the students about what side the narrator seems to be on, the colonial side or the Native American side? Their interpretation is that the narrator seems to be on the white people’s side.

Calypso Blues

Calypso Blues presented by Calypso Rose is a listening exercise presented in the chapter “The Raffle” that focuses on the Caribbean. The textbook authors do not pose any questions to the students about the content. They do, however, give a historical background to the poem: “Calypso Rose sings about a man who went to the United States to work. But he wants to return to Trinidad...”⁴³.

How Many Seconds in a Minute?

Christina Georgina Rossetti wrote mainly for children, so was *How Many Seconds in a Minute?*. In this poem she discusses time. The textbook authors stresses the two last lines of the poem (“How many ages in time?/ No one knows the rhyme”) and asks the students about their opinion about its meaning.

⁴² <http://www.sanomautbildning.se/Laromedel/Gymnasie--vuxenutbildning/Engelska/Baslaromedel/World-Wide-English/Fordjupad-information/>

⁴³ Johansson, Tuthill & Hörmander, 154

Ironic

Ironic by Alanis Morissette and Glen Ballard is a listening exercise in the chapter called “Winners”. The authors give a biographical background to Alanis Morissette where they mention her origin and her success around the world. They also ask the students three questions: *Do you like the song? Why?/Why not? What’s the message of the song, do you think?* No answers are given by the authors.

The lyrics talk about a life and a life style that many young people might be able to identify with. It states that “Isn’t it ironic, don’t you think/A little too ironic, and yeah I really do think/[...]life has a funny way of sneaking up on you/ And life has a funny way of helping you out/Helping you out”.

Not Waving but Drowning

In this poem, Stevie Smith tells the reader a story about a person that has drowned. According to the textbook authors he drowned because no one realised he was in danger. They also ask the students how they interpret the person that drowned; how he looked upon himself and how the people around him looked on him. The textbook authors interpret him as “he had always been ‘too far out’, unhappy and lonely”⁴⁴. They also state that the others “thought he had been a happy and funny man, always larking around”⁴⁵.

O Mistress Mine, Where Are You Roaming?

O Mistress Mine, Where Are You Roaming? from William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* is the oldest poem presented in this textbook. It asks the poignant question, “what is love?”. The authors of the textbook also ask the same question. The answer they give is that “love is something that exists in the moment”⁴⁶. Furthermore, they ask what impression one gets of the mistress in the poem and the answer they give is that she is not ready to commit herself to him.

Pastorelle 8

Pastorelle 8 by John Taggart is the most modern poem in this chapter. The poem is about an Amish girl that he finds beautiful. He explains her looks and the cultural clash between the old-fashioned clothes and the rollerskates. According to the textbook authors, her beauty is growing as the narrator switches off his chainsaw.

⁴⁴ Johansson, Tuthill & Hörmander, 29

⁴⁵ Johansson, Tuthill & Hörmander, 29

⁴⁶ Johansson, Tuthill & Hörmander, 29

The Road Not Taken

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost is, according to the textbook authors, about choices. It is about making a choice and to realise that one cannot go back and change the choices made. The textbook authors claim that everyone has to make several important choices, just as the man in the poem. Their opinion is that the man chooses the road less taken, perhaps because he wanted a challenge/adventure.

You and I

In *You and I*, Roger McGough plays with the pronouns “You” and “I”. According to the textbook authors the “I” is a man that is more aggressive than the “You” that represents a woman. Furthermore, they ask if one can learn something from the poem; they do not give any suggestions.

You Don’t Believe

William Blake was “considered one of the greatest and most original of the English poets. He thought that science was evil and tolerated religion only in his own personal version”⁴⁷. His poem *You Don’t Believe* is a text that discusses religion in the light of the Enlightenment era. He reflects on Jesus and Newton and their ideas and the textbook authors ask the students to place different sections and arguments from the poem in either “the Reason box” or “the Newton box”.

Waltzing Matilda

Waltzing Matilda presented by Rolf Harris is a listening exercise with two questions: *Did you like the song? Why?/Why not?* Neither background nor comments to the poem are given. The poem goes under the chapter “Land-locked”, which focuses on Australia.

The poem, however, is often listed as the unofficial national anthem of Australia. It was written in 1895 by Banjo Paterson in Australian slang and is about a man travelling by foot with his goods in a big slung over his back.

The song narrates the story of an itinerant worker, or “swagman”, making a drink of tea at a bush camp and capturing a sheep to eat. When the sheep's owner arrives with three police officers to arrest the worker for the theft, the worker commits suicide by drowning himself in the nearby watering hole, after which his ghost haunts the site.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Johansson, Tuthill & Hörmander, 218

⁴⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltzing_Matilda

5.1.1.2 Model

	Life Ed.	Moral Ed.	Value Ed.	Civic Ed.	Citizen Ed
Bars Fight		x		x	x
Calypso Blues				x	
How Many Seconds...	x				
Ironic	x				
Not Waving, but...	x	x	x		x
O Mistress Mine...	x		x		
Pastorelle 8	x		x		x
The Road Not Taken	x				
Waltzing Matilda	x		x	x	x
You and I	x	x			
You Don't Believe	x				

5.1.2 Presentation of *Blueprint B Version 2.0*

Blueprint is a series of English textbooks from Liber, written by Christer Lundfall, Ralf Nyström, Nadine Röhlk Cotting and Jeanette Clayton. The series includes a textbook, an interactive webpage, a key, a teacher CD and a guide with teacher instructions. *Blueprint* is available for English 5, 6 and 7. The texts are chosen on the basis to give students international perspectives and a greater understanding for other lifestyles. The series also wants to challenge attitudes and values in different contexts in a way that also develops language.⁴⁹

Blueprint B contains six chapters. Poetry does not have any specific chapter, but is listed throughout the book, often as introductions to chapters. There are eight poems in total, four with questions and four with no questions.

⁴⁹ <http://www.liber.se/Gymnasium/Hogskoleforberedande-amnen/Engelska/Engelska-5/Kurslaromedel/Blueprint/#furtherdescription>

5.1.2.1 Interpretation

9 to 5

In the chapter “9 to 5”, students get to listen to the song *9 to 5* by Dolly Parton from the movie with the same title. Students are also introduced to Parton’s life and career. The textbook authors interpret the song that a 9 to 5 job gives no joy since it includes tired mornings, no credit and no promotion. It is the employer that makes money, not the worker. Furthermore, the textbook authors suggest a reading that the only way of escaping the boring working day is to dream of another life.

Funeral Blues

The poem *Funeral Blues* by W.H. Auden is the introduction to the chapter “Reality Bites”. It is not commented in any way, nor followed by any questions. The poem, however, is talking about someone that is grieving after some else’s death; life is dark and the poet states: “Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;/ For nothing now can ever come to any good.”

may i feel said he

This poem, written by E.E Cummings, is the introduction to the chapter called “Love Is In the Air”. It is not commented in any way, nor followed by any questions. However, the poem talks about a he and a she that have some kind of affair. Cummings is known for his romantic style, but also for his controversies and erotic passion.⁵⁰

Résumé

Dorothy Parker’s poem *Résumé* introduces the chapter “How Far Would You Go?”. Like the other poems introducing a chapter, there are neither comments nor questions that explain the poem. However, the poem describes a pretty rough world where the narrator ends with the line: “you might as well live.”

Soldier’s Things

Soldier’s Things by Tom Waits is a listening exercise in the chapter “Reality Bites”. The poem is not printed in text. Students are briefly introduced to the life and career of Tom Waits before they are supposed to answer some questions. The textbook authors state that the poem refers to a children’s rhyme and that Waits often portrays people in the outskirts of society. In their questions, they ask the students to interpret the poem and describe what the song is about and what the setting is representing. According to the textbook authors, the poem is about a soldier or a dead soldier’s

⁵⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E_e_cummings

widow or mother that needs to sell off personal things because he/she is in desperate need of money. The person is anxious and states that “everything’s a dollar in the box”.

Sonnet 116

Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare is also included in the chapter “Love Is In the Air”. Under the headline “Love’s Not Time’s Fool”, students are introduced to Shakespeare’s writing, the sonnets specifically. They are given a background to Shakespeare’s life and how his 154 sonnets were constructed, linguistically and thematically. The authors ask the students to answer five questions related to Sonnet 116. Three of them pose the question to the students to interpret a line or a word in the sonnet, and two of them are of a more technical character. The authors interpret the sonnet’s view of love that it does not have any obstructions, it survives any difficulties and it does not change with time, although “rosy lips and cheeks” do. Furthermore they interpret “Time” as a symbol for death which gives the meaning that love is not death’s fool.

The Schooner Flight

In the introduction to the chapter “Culture Clashes”, *Blueprint B* begins with a stanza from Derek Walcott’s poem *The Schooner Flight* that ends with the two lines “I have Dutch, nigger and English in me,/ and either I’m nobody, or I’m a nation.”. No description is given to why the authors have cut the poem; neither there are any comments or questions connected to it.

You Ought To Know

You Ought To Know by Alanis Morissette is constructed as a listening exercise. The poem is not presented in text. The students are introduced to Morissette’s life through a biographical text. They are also asked to answer the underlying question of the title – “what is it that he ought to know?” According to the textbook authors “he ought to know about the mess he left when he went away; that replacing the narrator with another woman was a slap in the face; the cross she has to bear”⁵¹. The textbook authors also suggest that the song changes tone throughout the lyrics, going from loving regards and best wishes to the opposite where the man is lying and moving promises from one woman to another. They also interpret the tone of the music saying that the singing is poignant and aggressive, just as the text.

⁵¹ Lundfall *et al*, 3

5.1.2.2 Model

	Life Ed.	Moral Ed.	Value Ed.	Civic Ed.	Citizen Ed.
9 to 5	x		x		x
Funeral Blues	x				
may i feel		x	x		
Résumé	x				
Soldier's Things	x		x		x
Sonnet 116	x				
The Schooner Flight	x		x	x	x

6. Analysis

According to the data collection, the poetry in the two textbooks covers all the categories. Out of 19 poems, 14 poems were followed by some kind of questions and five of them stood on their own without any comments. It is evident that some values are more represented than other values. The most frequent value that is taught through poetry in the investigated textbooks is *Life Education* values. It is mainly due to the fact that the textbook authors use the questions *What do you think?* and *Do you like the poem?* to get the students to reflect on their own lives and values. Out of the 19 poems, 17 poems reflect these values. *Value Education* is also well-represented; 9 out of 19 poems reflect these values. These poems do not only show the socially accepted values, but also the opposite – how bad and destructive something can be – and how to turn it to something good. *Moral Education* values are represented in five poems. In *Not Waving but Drowning*, the textbook authors talk about the importance of seeing each other for those we really are whereas in *may i feel*, *You and I* and *You Ought to Know*, the poets and the textbook authors talk about a malfunctioning relationship. The four poems that reflect *Civic Education* values all try to form a national identity: *Bars Fight* is focusing on America and the historical clash between Native Americans, colonial people and slaves; *Calypso Blues* talks about the pride of being from Trinidad and the longing back home; *The Schooner Flight* gives a global perspective of nationality in a transforming world; and *Waltzing Matilda* is a poem about the history of the Australian people. With representation in four poems only, the *Civic Education* values are the least represented values in the investigated textbooks. *Citizen Education* values are represented in seven poems. These poems and commentaries communicate political and democratic values, yet in very different ways. Some of them do it through their political setting, for example *9 to 5* or *Bars Fight*, while others do it

through the textbook comments such as *Not Waving but Drowning*.

7. Conclusion

This essay has investigated two textbooks in English adapted for the Swedish upper secondary school. It has asked the question: *Does teaching of poetry in English 6 textbooks live up to the fundamental values specified by Skolverket?*

This essay shows that poetry is a wide concept that is not limited to style or length. Nevertheless, researchers agree that poetry differs from prose, mainly in attitude and expression.

This essay has also shown that the fundamental values of *Skolverket* are built on democracy and respect. It talks more specifically about five pillars: the intrinsic value of every human being, freedom and integrity of the individual, equal value of human being, equality between men and women, solidarity between people. This way of listing fundamental values has been criticised for its ambiguity. Therefore, other models and categories of fundamental values have been suggested. This essay has primarily used a model proposed by Gunnel Colnerud who divides the fundamental values into five categories to be able to discuss and analyse what fundamental values are and what consequences they may have. This essay has combined the values listed by *Skolverket* and the model proposed by Colnerud. Thus, a new model adapted to discuss the poetry material in the two textbooks has appeared. This model has been used to categorise the poems from the two textbooks.

The results of this study show that the two investigated textbooks cover different perspectives of fundamental values. According to the model, the 19 poems cover all areas, yet in different degrees. Most frequently represented were the *Life Education* values that focus on existential questions and challenge personal opinions. These values were represented in 17 of 19 poems. Least represented were the *Civic Education* values that were represented in four of the 19 poems. Hence, this essay shows that the teaching of poetry in English 6 textbooks live up to the fundamental values specified by *Skolverket*.

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Information about Waltzing Matilda

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltzing_Matilda (April 23, 2013)

Appendix

Bars Fight

August, twas the twenty-fifth,
Seventeen hundred forty-six,
The Indians did in ambush lay,
Some very valiant men to slay
Twas nigh unto Sam Dickinson's mill,
The Indians there five men did kill.
The names of whom I'll not leave out,
Samuel Allen like a hero foute,
And though he was so brave and bold,
His face no more shall we behold.
Eleazer Hawks was killed outright,
Before he had time to fight,
Before he did the Indians see,
Was shot and killed immediately.
Oliver Amsden he was slain,
Which caused his friends much grief pain.
Simeon Amsden they found dead
Not many rods from Oliver's head.
Adonijah Gillett, we do hear,
Did lose his life which was so dear.
John Sadler fled across the water,
And thus escaped the dreadful slaughter.
Eunice Allen see the Indians comeing
And hoped to save herself by running:
And had not her petticoats stopt her,
The awful creatures had not cotched her,
Not tommyhawked her on the head,
And left her on the ground for dead.
Young Samuel Allen, Oh! lack-a-day!
Was taken and carried to Canada.

Calypso Blues

Wa-oo-oo, wa-oo-oo,
Wa-oo wa-oo wa-oo wa-ay...
Wa-oo-oo, wa-oo-oo,
Wa-oo wa-oo wa-oo wa-ay...

Sittin' by de ocean
Me heart, she feel so sad,
Sittin' by de ocean,
Me heart, she feel so sad...
Don't got de money
To take me back to Trinidad.

Fine calypso woman,
She cook me shrimp and rice,
Fine calypso woman,
She cook me shrimp and rice...
Dese yankee hot dogs

Don't treat me stomach very nice.

In Trinidad, one dollar buy
Papaya juice, banana pie,
Six coconut, one female goat,
An' plenty fish to fill de boat.

One bushel bread, one barrel wine,
An' all de town, she come to dine.
But here is bad, one dollar buy
Cup of coffee, ham on rye.

Me throat she sick from necktie,
Me feet hurt from shoes.
Me pocket full of empty,
I got Calypso blues.

Dese yankee girl give me big scare,
Is black de root, is blonde de hair.
Her eyelash false, her face is paint,
And pads are where de girl she ain't!

She jitterbug when she should waltz,
I even think her name is false.
But calypso girl is good a lot,
Is what you see, is what she got.

Sittin' by de ocean
Me heart, she feel so sad,
Sittin' by de ocean,
Me heart, she feel so sad...
Don't got de money
To take me back to Trinidad.

Wa-oo-oo, wa-oo-oo,
Wa-oo wa-oo wa-oo wa-ay...
Wa-oo-oo, wa-oo-oo,
Wa-oo wa-oo wa-oo wa-ay...

Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead'.
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,

My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

How Many Seconds in a Minute?

How many seconds in a minute?
Sixty, and no more in it.
How many minutes in an hour?
Sixty for sun and shower.
How many hours in a day?
Twenty-four for work and play.
How many days in a week?
Seven both to hear and speak.
How many weeks in a month?
Four, as the swift moon runneth.
How many months in a year?
Twelve the almanack makes clear.
How many years in an age?
One hundred says the sage.
How many ages in time?
No one knows the rhyme.

Ironic

An old man turned ninety-eight
He won the lottery and died the next day
It's a black fly in your Chardonnay
It's a death row pardon two minutes too late
And isn't it ironic... don't you think

It's like rain on your wedding day
It's a free ride when you've already paid
It's the good advice that you just didn't take
Who would've thought... it figures

Mr. Play It Safe was afraid to fly
He packed his suitcase and kissed his kids goodbye
He waited his whole damn life to take that flight
And as the plane crashed down he thought
"Well isn't this nice..."
And isn't it ironic... don't you think

It's like rain on your wedding day
It's a free ride when you've already paid
It's the good advice that you just didn't take
Who would've thought... it figures

Well life has a funny way of sneaking up on you
When you think everything's okay and everything's going right

And life has a funny way of helping you out when
You think everything's gone wrong and everything blows up
In your face

A traffic jam when you're already late
A no-smoking sign on your cigarette break
It's like ten thousand spoons when all you need is a knife
It's meeting the man of my dreams
And then meeting his beautiful wife
And isn't it ironic...don't you think
A little too ironic...and, yeah, I really do think...

It's like rain on your wedding day
It's a free ride when you've already paid
It's the good advice that you just didn't take
Who would've thought... it figures

Life has a funny way of sneaking up on you
Life has a funny, funny way of helping you out
Helping you out

may i feel

may i feel said he
(i'll squeal said she
just once said he)
it's fun said she

(may i touch said he
how much said she
a lot said he)
why not said she

(let's go said he
not too far said she
what's too far said he
where you are said she)

may i stay said he
(which way said she
like this said he
if you kiss said she

may i move said he
is it love said she)
if you're willing said he
(but you're killing said she

but it's life said he
but your wife said she
now said he)
ow said she

(tiptop said he
don't stop said she
oh no said he)
go slow said she

(cccome? said he
ummm said she)
you're divine! said he
(you are Mine said she)

Not Waving but Drowning

Nobody heard him, the dead man,
But still he lay moaning:
I was much further out than you thought
And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking
And now he's dead
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,
They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
(Still the dead one lay moaning)
I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.

O Mistress Mine, Where Are You Roaming?

O MISTRESS mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear! your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet-and-twenty!
Youth's stuff will not endure.

Pastorelle 8

Young woman
Amish
green dress black apron translucent white
prayer bonnet
strings of her bonnet trailing in the air

rollerskating down the road

by herself alone in the air and light of an

ungloomy Sunday
afternoon
herself and her skating shadow

the painter said
beauty is what we add to things

and I
chainsawing in the woods above the road
say what could be added
what other than giving this roaring machine
a rest.

Résumé

Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live.

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The Schooner Flight (extract)

I'm just a red nigger who love the sea,
I had a sound colonial education,
I have Dutch, nigger and English in me,
and either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation.

Waltzing Matilda

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,
Under the shade of a Coolibah tree,
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boil,
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me,
And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boil
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Down came a jumbuck to drink at that billabong
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee,
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me,
And he sang as he shoved that jumbuck in his tucker bag
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Up rode the squatter mounted on his thorough-bred
Down came the troopers One Two Three
Whose that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda Waltzing Matilda
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me
Whose that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Up jumped the swagman sprang in to the billabong
You'll never catch me alive said he,
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong

You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda Waltzing Matilda
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong
You'll come a Waltzing Matilda with me.

You and I

I explain quietly. You
hear me shouting. You
try a new tack. I
feel old wounds reopen.

You see both sides. I
see your blinkers. I
am placatory. You
sense a new selfishness.

I am a dove. You
recognize the hawk. You
offer an olive branch. I
feel the thorns.

You bleed. I
see crocodile tears. I
withdraw. You
reel from the impact.

You Don't Believe

You don't believe -- I won't attempt to make ye:
You are asleep -- I won't attempt to wake ye.
Sleep on! sleep on! while in your pleasant dreams
Of Reason you may drink of Life's clear streams.
Reason and Newton, they are quite two things;
For so the swallow and the sparrow sings.

Reason says `Miracle': Newton says `Doubt.'
Aye! that's the way to make all Nature out.
`Doubt, doubt, and don't believe without experiment':
That is the very thing that Jesus meant,
When He said `Only believe! believe and try!
Try, try, and never mind the reason why!'