

Goethe's Favourite Western

Project Goethe-Gymnasium 2019

The Pioneers by J.F. Cooper

Looking at Goethe's favourite Western, there are a lot of aspects that deserve attention. In this project we looked at the first chapter of the novel concentrating on the aspects of:

- the beginning
- nature
- the frontier



All aspects

connect with different topics that are still relevant today. The structure of texts is still important because texts and stories are still a way to process information, be it books, video-clips or blog entries. Nature is something we destroy and treasure at the same time and something that we finally realise we cannot live without. The frontier is a concept of the American Dream. It is part of the idea that individualism is one of the most important things America stands for.

After discussing these three and other relevant aspects, like the characterisation of the female character in the beginning of the novel, racism and the concept of the savage, whether noble or not, the pupils came up with their own attempts of writing a story in this context.

Indian Life

It was the year 1784 when the conflicts between the Indians and Europeans near the great frontier reached their peak. There was one man called Johnson, a very tall and well trained man with long brown hair and a chain with a cross around his neck, he had learned the language of the Indians because he had been in contact with them for quite some time and had learned very important things about them. And most importantly, he had joined a tribe called Mohicans because they had large herds of cows to provide themselves with milk and dairy products. He lived a very exciting life because of having to deal with the daily threats of life in the wilderness and especially near the frontier. One day he went on

a hunt and discovered a dead deer lying on the muddy ground. It wasn't shot but instead it was stabbed right in the heart by a pointy weapon like a long knife or a spear. "Who could've done that", Wooden Bone, Johnson's best friend and brother said. The deer had been killed out of pure blood-lust and for the Mohicans, that was a sacrilege. It was clear that none of their tribe would have done that despite the fact that this was their territory. Someone had to have crossed the border and it was most likely a member of the Hurons, they had been and still were well known for their wild and savage ways but the Mohicans had managed to get them to agree to a treaty that they'd always stay in their own territory. But this day it seemed like they had crossed the border. But the Mohicans didn't want to start a war and spill blood pointlessly, so they took the deer with them to honor its sacrifice. It was a great feast but Johnson's new fiancée, Fast Lynx didn't take a single bite...

W.T. Indian Blues

New York 1783 Aliceblue wants to see everyone at the center of our village.

Staying outside feels like the sun is hugging you. The stony path we are standing on feels like lava, even though we are wearing shoes. Our throats are begging for water even though we have just drunk. "Aliceblue, you wanted us all together?"

Azure, the little brother of Aliceblue and son of Royalblue, the former cacique of the Blue since he had passed away, is looking at him "Midnightblue came to me after his daily hunting trip and told me that he saw the Reds trading with Europeans which violated our blood-sealed agreement"

"The Reds have violated our agreements too often now, Aliceblue, your father would have never allowed such behaviour with Green on our side we could..."

"Shut your almost black mouth Darkblue, let me finish what I have to say first.

Cyan, Dodgerblue, Midnightblue, Lightskyblue, Steelblue and I are going to visit the Reds tomorrow and will solve the problem"

"Why are you not taking me with you big brother, I can..."

"No! That is that. I need people with experience and strength and you have neither of that so go back to your hut" everyone is starting to laugh at the young Blue.

"That's not fair! Steelblue is only one year older than me and doesn't have experience at all so why can he come?"

"I'm the cacique, Azure, I decide who will come and Steelblue is pretty strong for his age and with Cyan, Dodgerblue and Midnightblue we have enough experience"

"So when we have enough experience why should I stay home? Take me with you so I can earn experience"

"Azure....you will stay home and in one year we can hunt together, if you train enough"

"Promise that you will take me with you next year"

"I promise"

"No! Promise it as my older Brother"

"I promise it as Aliceblue your big brother. Okay, when everything is clear now, let's go to our huts it's still hot as hell and everyone I have named to come along, we will meet in the morning"

After Aliceblue's speech is finished everyone is going to their huts. Azure is looking neither sad nor is he angry about the fact that I could go with the other and he couldn't.

After I get to my hut, I lay on my bed and asking myself many questions: "What will happen when we arrive? Is there really a peaceful way?"

It makes me uncomfortable to think about possible situations that could happen and could get wrong but after several hours I finally fall asleep. The next day arrives and Aliceblue and the rest are waiting for me to get up and join them. "You sure you want to take him with us, Alice?" asked Cyan "he is pretty young and inexperienced he could bring us more problems then solve them" "Don't be such a pessimist, Cyan. His inexperienced young mind could maybe make us think of something we normally would't." responds Dodgerblue. "Hey guys, remember we are not going to fight. So I take Steelblue with us, so he can earn some experience" answered. "We only want to talk and get rid of this." Aliceblue answers. "Sorry guys for beeing late it took a while." "No problem Steelblue. Okay, so now that all have gathered, let us venture forth" After Aliceblues words my first adventure started.

Cultural confrontation

The third of March was a hot and dry day back in 1786. On a plain close to where New York lies today two men where walking by. The younger one wore tight pants, flashy yellow gloves. He was talking nose combined with thin lips red hat that covered blonde thick hair, and some to his taller friend whose black beard and the long showed Irish roots. After some time they arrived in the woods, found a rock to hide and waited using the big treetops to avoid the heat. Hours passed by in the quiet wood without any signs of animals when the blonde guy started to complain: "Sir what the hell are we doing here, for God's sake this forest is so quiet even the deer is getting bored" "Relax son, calmness is the key to success, a wise Indians once said" "With all due respect, the Indians are crazy, Sir" the blonde one responded immediately "Henry, They believe in praying to fucking nature gods and dead animals" "We might be more successful if we tried that too, Alex" While they were arguing, a light brown deer suddenly crossed their path but hushed away immediately between two huge trees. Abruptly they stood up, took their guns and followed the animal. Quickly but cautiously. After a couple of minutes they found it. "Okay this is our chance, don't mess it up, son" they ducked down 200 feet away in a bush and positioned their rifles. The object of interest had discovered a lovely tiny lake and was drinking water. The two hunters could not believe how lucky they were. "Three days and nights in these goddamm woods and finally success" said Alex. "That will be our ticket back into our pioneers' group, they'll stop laughing at us from now on". These confident words got followed by two shots at the deer. Both they hopelessly missed their goal by far, the bullets struck a tree 15 feet away. Seconds of silence followed. "Oh Lord we are so bad" the Irish said when the deer rushed away from the lake. But only cruel noise. The animal cried out full of sorrow, stopped running and was about to go down when Henry took his shot, in the truest sense of the word and shot the defeated enemy in the back. "Killshot, motherfucker" Alex yelled through the woods Proud and confident they spectated their victim. But after a couple of those seconds they had truly enjoyed they didn't know know what to do with the body. "I've never shot anything before, have you Henry?". No response. There was an awkward silence. Suddenly, out of nowhere an Indian stepped out of a bush 50 feet away carrying his bow over his shoulders. Ignoring the two gentlemen next to the dead deer he began gutting the animal. "Issa knife" he simply responded to the puzzling views on him doing his work. "Dear Mister Indian, I would say, our shot killed the poor thing" lying beneath us, it's our right to possess it" Henry said politely. The small Indian looked up and took a critical look at the pioneers. "You wouldn't even hit bear if it was standing right in front of you spitting in your face"

Henry and Alex looked puzzled. "Okay why don't we cut it up and share it?" Henry offered. "You can take the whole body but the head, okay?" "White people are crazy men but not as crazy as the god that gave your peoples those weapons. But I agree; whatever you wanna do with this head you sick bastards". After he had left, Henry and Alex took the head proudly and carried it to their pioneers' group. They told their friends that when they shot the animal they got attacked by a bear in the woods and had to flee but took the head to prove their ability and get back into the group. The others accepted them and everybody enjoyed a happy ending