

These notes are for:

- Years 9 - 12
- Middle to Upper Secondary
- 13+ years

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- Drama

Example of:

- Young adult fiction
- Drama/Plays
- Cultural diversity

Experience of:

- Youth
- Poverty and disadvantage
- Sport – Soccer
- Adaptation of text
- Shakespeare

Values addressed:

- Honour and trust
- A sense of identity
- Friendship across cultures
- Social justice
- Understanding, tolerance and inclusion
- Integrity
- Honesty

Themes:

- Shakespeare – Othello
- Racism and prejudice
- Class and gender
- Tragedy
- Civics and governance
- Fame and celebrity
- Freedom and privacy

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia Ph +61 2 9517 9577
 Locked Bag 22 Fax +61 2 9517 9997
 Newtown, NSW, 2042

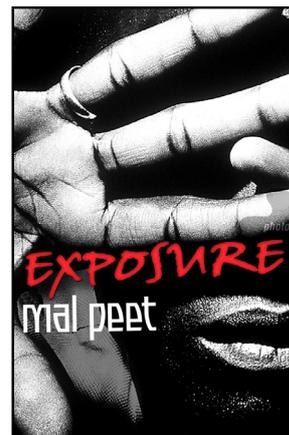
For enquiries please contact Melissa Hamilton:
 mhamilton@walkerbooks.com.au
 www.walkerbooks.com.au
 Notes © 2009 Walker Books Australia Pty. Ltd.
 All Rights Reserved

Exposure - Overview

Exposure

By Mal Peet

Exposure (pbk)
 ISBN: 9781406306491
 ARRP: \$16.95
 NZRRP: \$19.99
 No. of Pages: 368
 April 2009



Outline:

South American sports journalist, Paul Faustino, reappears in this novel as the link between two complex narrative strands in a transformation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. The gritty worlds of politics, football, journalism and street kids collide in a modern tragedy in which different kinds of people are exposed as victims of corrupt governments, organisations and individuals. The story of Othello, a star football player, reveals issues of racism, celebrity and naïve trust while the other narrative strand, about street kids Bush, Bianca and Felicia, highlights issues of poverty, corruption and oppression. Paul Faustino is caught up in the investigation of Bianca's murder and Othello's demise, facing his own questions about how much an individual can help others in a corrupt, dark world.

As a transformation of *Othello*, *Exposure* has quite clear references to the original play: character names, allusions to places, Shakespeare as the name of a public relations company, dramatic techniques, and the overwhelming sense of tragedy that pervades the narrative. Mal Peet develops the contemporary setting by evocative description and builds the action using a variety of text types from drama script to newspaper reports and emails, reaching a climax in Acts 3 and 4 of the novel. *Exposure* can be explored as a text in its own right or with the original *Othello* as a transformation.

Author Information:

Mal Peet is the author of the acclaimed young adult novels, *Tamar*, winner of the 2005 Carnegie Medal, and *The Penalty*, sequel to *Keeper* which won the 2004 Branford Boase Award and the Bronze Nestlé Smarties Book Award. An author and illustrator, Mal has produced over 80 books for young children, most of them in collaboration with his wife, Elspeth Graham.

"Mal Peet takes you to new and unexpected places, where every scene counts and every word matters." *The Centre for Youth Literature*

Notes prepared by Heather Cobban:

Heather Cobban is Head Teacher of English at Fort Street High School in Sydney and she has taught at both comprehensive and selective schools for many years. She has been involved in curriculum development at local and national levels as a curriculum consultant and a member of syllabus writing teams. She has contributed to professional journals and a textbook for Year 10 students, as well as presenting to an English Teachers' Association (NSW) student study day and a colloquium at the University of Sydney on future directions in English. Heather is a regular reviewer for the NSW library services magazine *SCAN*. She has a keen interest in using technology for educational purposes and is learning how to design web pages. Apart from her work in the school community, Heather is an executive member of community organisations in the areas of women's housing and environmental protection.

How to use these notes:

To appeal to a broader curriculum, these teachers' notes have been categorised into the areas Viewing, Reading and Writing, and Listening and Speaking. Particular themes of interest have also been explored. These activities may appeal to a broad age range but are aimed at years 10 - 12. Recommended websites within these notes may not have content that is age appropriate. Please use at your own discretion.

**Reading the novel:**

Knowledge of *Othello* would assist in developing a sophisticated understanding of the novel but it is not necessary. *Exposure* can be studied as a discrete text with students examining issues of:

- honour and trust in personal relationships
- racism, class and gender
- government corruption
- youth disadvantage and poverty
- political oppression of minority groups
- celebrity in contemporary society
- the paparazzi and loss of personal freedom and privacy
- the politics of sport and players as commodities

Teachers may introduce the novel by having students read, perform or view *Othello* so that all the references in *Exposure* are understood, providing students with the opportunity to see the links between the texts and develop complex readings of each.

Before reading *Exposure*:

- Students read or view *Othello*, discuss main elements and construct an outline of characters, setting, plot and possible readings or interpretations.
- Students identify the narrative conventions of fiction and the dramatic conventions of Shakespearean tragedy such as structure, plot development, use of chapters or acts and scenes, use of prose and verse.
- Students discuss the reasons for Mal Peet's adoption of conventional dramatic techniques in his fiction texts and how this may affect a reader's reception of the text.

Close reading of the text/Discussion questions for *Exposure*:

The activities in this section all involve skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Some ideas for implementing these activities are:

- *Narrative table.* As they read, students complete the narrative table at the end of these notes making brief comments about each scene including main plot elements, ideas and questions, and significant quotes for reference in later tasks.
- *Discussion questions.* After completing the narrative table for each Act students work in groups on the discussion questions. These questions will develop students' knowledge of the text, an understanding of its relevance to contemporary society and provide opportunities for making decisions about values and attitudes. Students can write answers in their own folders/books, on OHP sheets or on large pieces of paper to display around the room.
- When the narrative table is completed, teachers can assign one small group to each Act or two students to each question with students reporting back to the whole class either as a short talk or in writing.
- Teachers can select questions from each Act to discuss as a whole class or ask students to choose a question that is of particular interest to them. As they engage in discussion students can add to their own notes.

Act 1: *Exposure*:

- Scenes 1 - 4 and 6 introduce the characters Faustino, Bush, Bianca and Felicia. What are the positive and negative aspects of the street kids' lives? What is the importance of the teenagers' dreams and desires – the curtains, the photographs of Desmerelda and the pictures of the crabs.
- How is the character of Diego developed in Scene 5? "What's the matter, Capitano? Don't you trust me?" (p45) Should Otello trust Diego?
- Brabanta appears as threatening and "disturbing" (p51). Select quotes and evidence from the text that support or challenge this view.
- Compare the two settings in Scene 6 and Scene 7, looking particularly at the use of descriptive phrases and providing quotes to show the differences between the two places. What does this reveal about life in this South American country? How does Peet use dramatic techniques and verb tense to develop movement and action at the beginning of Scene 7?

Act 2: *Exposure*:

- Compare Brabanta's reaction to the news about Desmerelda and Otello with Babantio in Shakespeare's *Othello* in Act 1, scenes 1-3. Do you think the father is genuinely concerned about his daughter or is he being racist/prejudiced? Has Otello / Othello bewitched or entranced Desmerelda / Desdemona?
- In Scene 4 Edgar Lima and Paul Faustino discuss the meanings of Otello's advertisement. Who is right?
- Explain how the mood developed during Scene 5 is reinforced by the description of the rain, "Fat, slow drops", at the end of this scene.
- Diego manipulates Otello through his arrangements with Shakespeare, the PR company, and in his comments about Michael Cass. How well does Diego manage his own feelings about Otello?
- Otello and Desmerelda start to have doubts about their relationship. What are their concerns and how do you think they could improve their relationship?

**Act 3: Exposure:**

- In his attempt to help Bush, Faustino makes serious mistakes. What does he learn about himself from this incident? How does Faustino finally make amends with Bush in Scene 6?
- Explain how in Scene 2 and Scene 5 Diego plans and plots against both Michael Cass and Otello. Why does he wink at the security camera (p198)?
- During the novel, the composer provides hints of actions to come. In Scene 2 Nestor Barabanta suffers from a spasm of pain in his head (p190). This warning of a future medical condition is similar to the prefiguring of other events in the novel. What is the effect of this narrative technique?
- In the Shakespearean play, Diego's conversation with Emilia in Scene 8 might almost be classified as a soliloquy. What does he reveal during this monologue?
- Desmerelda's pregnancy is another complication in the plot. What consequences might this have for her and Otello?
- The broader political context is revealed in Scene 11 during the conversation between Gallego and Brabanta. What concerns are raised during this discussion? Paul and Nola also comment on Otello's possible role in political affairs. Do you think sports people like Otello have a responsibility to make their political views known?

Act 4: Exposure:

- The clothes label 'Paff!' seems catchy. Do you think it would appeal to its intended market? The "core sentiments" of teenagers' (p275) are outlined by the fashion designers. Do these accurately describe how teenagers feel? How, in the following scenes, does Peet reveal the naivety of the fashion industry in regard to the actual lives of children and young adults in these South American cities? Or do you think the fashion industry is just using the kids for a more cynical, commercial purpose?
- Demerelda feels lonely and Otello is afraid that he is losing his edge. This will help Diego in his plan to destroy Otello, revealed in Scene 5. What is his plan and do you think it will work?
- In Scenes 7–9 Faustino, Nola Levy and Hilario Nemiso all try to help Bush and Felicia find Bianca. However, Nola says "these kids live in a world people like you and me have no access to. I'm sure you want to help, but get yourself ready for the fact that you can't" (p319). From what you have read and discussed so far, is this true? In what ways is it a world of "uncertainty, vulnerability and dread" (p340)?

Act 5: Exposure:

- After all the investigation, it appears that Otello is probably innocent of any involvement in Bianca's murder (p390). Outline the evidence Nemiso uses to arrive at this decision. What effect has the incident had on Otello and Desmerelda as individuals and their relationship?
- In Scene 2 Peet employs a number of dramatic techniques to develop the plot. Outline these techniques and explain their purpose at this stage of the novel.
- Faustino helps Bush and Felicia after his discussion with Fidel who has challenged Faustino by saying, "There are no solutions for kids like Bush. For them, solutions are undreamed-of luxuries." (p378). Compare this statement with the earlier dreams of Bush, Bianca and Felicia. Does Faustino solve their problems?
- Explore the reactions of Diego during this Act and discuss the significance of his relationship with Emilia. What does this reveal about his character?
- Brabanta and Gallego have another discussion in Scene 8. Why is Gallego disappointed? Is Brabanta's fate tragic?
- In scene 10 we learn much more about Diego. What surprises you in this scene? How does this inform your view of Diego? Has he been successful?
- What is the tone at the end of this Act and how is it created?

Epilogue: Exposure:

- What is the purpose of an epilogue? Are there any issues or questions to be resolved at the end of *Exposure*?



Follow up activities based on students' close reading of *Exposure*:

- In small groups students construct a mind map, drawing out the major aspects of and issues in the text and making links between these to show the complexity of the narrative structure and the relationships between individuals and groups. Two groups join together and discuss each group's mind map to refine their ideas about the text.
- Students work in small groups to explore major issues identified in the novel by the teacher or by the groups in the mind map activity. Groups collate a report on their research to present to the whole class. They can make a PowerPoint presentation, design a page for a class website or compose a written report for class reading and discussion.

The ethics and practices of journalism:

- Research the ethics of journalism and assess how the different fictional journalists measure up against published codes of practice.
- "Sports reporters...are comfortable with clichés, banalities, sound bites..." (p50). Examine a variety of sports reports and assess the validity of this viewpoint.
- Explain the extent to which the media make sportspeople into commodities and find examples of this in contemporary sports journalism and advertising.
- The journalists in *Exposure* are described as "our gloriously scabby press" (p411). Discuss whether this is a fair viewpoint in terms of both the novel and your own research of the industry.
- Page references: 50-52, 71-72, 108, 110, 248, 371, 388, 404, 411, 420.

Celebrity:

- Chart the ways in which Otello and Desmerelda became celebrities in their individual areas of expertise. Explain how fame or celebrity status affects personal relationships.
- Explain the relationship between the media and celebrity status, how the media and the advertising industry make and break celebrities. Use examples from three different areas such as sport, music, fashion and find reports or advertisements from the media which reveal how the celebrities are represented.
- Diego has a negative view of contemporary heroes. "heroes are mere celebrities. Fashion designers. Footballers. Pop singers ... Pathetic, isn't it?" (pp235-236) Assess the truth of this viewpoint.
- Page references: 109, 125-130, 152-154, 158-160, 174, 176, 235-236, 247-249.

Racism:

- Otello is the recipient of racist remarks and attitudes from both the media and individuals such as Nestor Brabanta. Find examples of these comments in the novel and explain what effect they have on both Otello and the makers of these comments.
- Compare the comments from Nestor Brabantia with those of Brabantio in Shakespeare's *Othello* in Act 1, scene 1, pp 89-90. Explain the similarities and differences between the language and sentiments expressed.
- Research examples of racism in sport and sports journalism and explain how these have been resolved by individuals and at an organisational level by clubs or national governing bodies.
- Present ideas about how racism in sport can be decreased or eliminated.
- Page references: 18-19, 52-54, 92, 94-95, 102-106, 113.

Street kids:

- Research the lives of street children in South America and another part of the world, explaining the major problems and dangers for these children. Describe how these problems are revealed in *Exposure*.
- Governments in some countries have pursued children in ways similar to the Rataneros and police in *Exposure*. Explain the effects of these policies and the reasons for these actions.
- Present ideas about how governments and private business could improve the lives of street children.
- Page references: 26, 29, 32, 34, 39, 38, 43, 136-142, 291-294, 378-379.



Belonging:

- *The concept of belonging is often revealed by exploring alienation and isolation.* Discuss this statement in relation to *Exposure* by finding examples of how people are alienated and isolated. Consider the lives of street kids, Faustino's personal and professional life, Otello and the football industry, Desmerelda and her relationship with Brabanta, and Diego. How does not belonging affect individuals and the wider society? What factors influence or determine whether a person 'belongs'?
- Diego seems to be the most alienated character in *Exposure*. Why do you think he might be like this? Explain the extent of his influence over others? How do you think a character like Diego could be changed?
- *The family is the place where you belong.* Explain the different kinds of family in the novel. Discuss the notion that a 'chosen' family may be more valuable than a 'birth' family. What values and attitudes towards the concept of family are revealed in *Exposure*?
- *Belonging – sometimes you do, sometimes you don't.* Belonging to someone, or having a relationship with someone, is a fluid or changing process. Examine the relationships between Bush and Faustino, and Otello and Desmerelda. Chart the stages in their relationships and note the factors that develop or destroy their relationships. Decide on 3 factors that will enhance a relationship.
- Choose one of the characters from the novel and write a reflection from his or her point of view for the personal opinion section of *La Nación* titled 'Belonging'. Give the character's sentiment and two or three reasons, with references to incidents in the novel, for this opinion.

Language and structure of the novel:

Students complete the following writing activity in pairs:

- You have been invited to a writers' festival and will give a 15 minute presentation on how writers appeal to young adult readers, focusing on language forms and features. Write your speech using the ideas below and any other ideas you have identified while reading *Exposure*.
- Mal Peet has used techniques that are more conventionally used in a drama script. Explain the purpose and effectiveness of these scripted segments: pp 67, 91-95, 115-120, 208-209, 228-230, 355-357, 360-362, 383, 427-428, 435-437.
- What is the effect of the double narrative structure (the Paul Faustino-Bush story and the Otello-Desmerelda story) in the transformed text?
- *Exposure* has different text types such as extracts from newspaper articles (pp 16, 18-19, 121, 404-406), headlines (pp 188, 369, 371, 428) and emails (pp 20, 258-259). Explain how these narrative techniques develop the plot and the novel's credibility.
- Peet's descriptive language is effective in building a sense of place and character. His figurative language has an edgy quality, a contemporary grittiness that develops the threatening atmosphere and isolation felt by the characters. Explain the meaning and effectiveness of the similes (pp 23, 26, 86, 101, 183), metaphors (pp 28, 75, 46, 228) and symbolism (pp 38, 43, 64, 72, 224-226, 232-234, 440) used in the novel.

Extended writing/representing activities:

- Compose a feature article on street kids for a quality magazine based on the characters from *Exposure* and additional research material. Use graphics to support the text of the article. Publish the article using a desktop publishing program such as *Publisher*.
- You are on the fashion design team for 'Paff!'. Create colour illustrations for the range of street clothing to show Desmerelda and Otello at your meeting. Design a print advertisement for a teen magazine for one or two of your outfits.
- Imagine that *Exposure* is to be made into a film for a contemporary youth audience. Prepare a pitch for a producer in which you provide a brief synopsis of the film, casting list, examples of two scripted scenes for the film with storyboards, and publicity material for the film release.
- *Exposure* - what is exposed in the novel? Write a critical essay in which you explain how the novel criticises aspects of contemporary society.

**Exposure and Othello:**

- Construct a chart showing the similarities and differences between the two texts. The following headings could be used:

Context of composition
Literary form
Characters
Setting
Plot
Narrative/dramatic structure
Meanings

Class discussion and follow up allows students to add or change their individual charts.

Discuss the following in small groups:

- How is the relationship between Diego and Emilia in *Exposure* (pp 82-83, 162, 200, 230, 234-237, 266-267, 307-308, 424-426) different from the relationship between Iago and Emilia in *Othello*? What is the significance of this difference?
- The notion of trust and honesty is central to our understanding of both texts. In *Exposure* there are many references to honesty (pp 18, 23-24, 69, 86, 122, 132, 149-150, 160-161, 192-199, 228, 424). How does Diego use the word 'honest' to deceive others? Is Othello gullible?
- At the end of *Exposure* it seems that Desmerelda has more power than Othello while in *Othello* Desdemona has been killed by Othello who afterwards kills himself. How can you account for the different ending of the modern text? What does it reveal about modern society?
- Find out what happens to Bianca in *Othello*. Why do you think Bianca in *Exposure* meets a different fate? Are the two women similar in any way?
- What is the value of a transformation of an older text? Why would Mal Peet have chosen *Othello* as the original text for his novel?
- In his article at the end of the novel, Faustino calls Othello's story a "modern tragedy" (p 428). Do you agree with him?

Narrative table:

View the Narrative Table on the next two pages of these notes.

Exposure has two narrative strands – the strand based on Shakespeare's *Othello* telling the story of Othello and Desmerelda, and the strand with the story of the street kids, Bush, Bianca and Felicia. These strands are linked by Paul Faustino, the top sports journalist at La Nación, who becomes involved in resolving the many problems and questions raised in the novel.

Using the table on the following sheet students can make brief notes about the content, ideas and any key quotes as they read the novel. This information can be classified into the two narrative strands and the linking strand, focusing on the role of Faustino as he moves between the two worlds of the street kids and the privileged world of Othello and Desmerelda. Some examples have been given as a guideline for students.

Ideas for the library:

Display key resources for the study of *Othello*, including the original text, film adaptations and critical material.

Display a selection of transformed texts: *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, *Twelfth Night* and *She's the Man*, *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and *Richard III* and *Looking for Richard*.

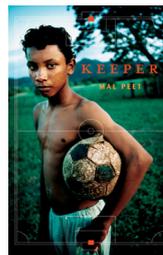
Display student work based on this unit in the library.

Other Walker Books titles focussing on text adaption:

Beowulf: Graphic Novel by Gareth Hinds
The Merchant of Venice: Graphic Novel by Gareth Hinds
Stormbreaker: The Graphic Novel by Horowitz and Johnston

Other Walker Books titles focussing on Shakespeare:

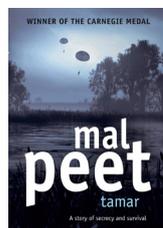
Shakespeare's Apprentice by Veronica Bennett
Bravo Mr. William Shakespeare by Marcia Williams
Mr William Shakespeare's Plays by Marcia Williams
Shakespeare His Work and His World by Michael Rosen

Other books from Mal Peet:**Title** *Keeper***ISBN** 9781406304107**Price** Arrp \$16.95/NZrrp\$19.99

In a newspaper office, Paul Faustino, South America's top football writer, sits opposite the man they call El Gato, the cat, the world's greatest goalkeeper. Combining vivid imagery and heart-stopping action, this beautiful novel will haunt readers long after the story is ended. Awarded the 2004 Nestle Children's Book Prize (Smarties Award) Bronze, 9-11 years category.

**Title** *The Penalty***ISBN** 9781406309362**Price** Arrp \$16.95/NZrrp\$19.99

The thrilling sequel to the award-winning *Keeper*. Paul Faustino, South America's top sports journalist, is reluctantly drawn into a mystery. As a story of corruption and murder unfolds, he is forced to confront a bitter history of slavery, and the power of the occult.

**Title** *Tamar***ISBN** 9781406303940**Price** Arrp \$16.95/NZrrp\$19.99

When her grandfather dies, Tamar inherits a box containing a series of clues and coded messages. Out of the past another Tamar emerges, a man involved in the terrifying world of resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied Holland half a century earlier. Winner of the 2005 Carnegie Medal.

<i>Act, scene, page</i>	<i>Bush – Bianca- Felicia</i>	<i>Faustino</i>	<i>Otello - Desmerelda</i>
Act 1			
1. 1 13-20	Bush outside La Nación building	Writes story about Otello's move to Rialto	Report of Otello signing for Rialto
1. 2 21-28			
1. 3 29-34			
1. 4 35-44			
1. 5 45-55			Otello meets Nestor Brabanta
1. 6 56-64			
1. 7 65-83		Faustino at the party	The party at Brabanta's; Otello sees Desmerelda for the first time
1. 8 84-90			Otello on Cypress Island; Desmerelda arrives during the storm
1. 9 91-97			
Act 2			
2.1 101-106			
2. 2 107-114			
2. 3 115-122			
2. 4 123-133			
2. 5 134-144			
2. 6 145-157			
2. 7 158-168			
2. 8 169-172			
2. 9 173-179			
Act 3			
3. 1 183-187			
3. 2 188-200			
3. 3 201-205			
3. 4 206-215			
3. 5 216-219			
3. 6 220-227			

3.7 228-233			
3.8 234-237			
3.9 238-246			
3.10 247-253			
3.11 254-267			
Act 4			
4.1 271-281			
4.2 282-286			
4.3 287-289			
4.4 290-295			
4.5 296-308			
4.6 309-311			
4.7 312-319			
4.8 320-326			
4.9 327-332			
4.10 333-341			
Act 5			
5.1 345-354			
5.2 355-368			
5.3 369-380			
5.4 381-385			
5.5 386-392			
5.6 393-401			
5.7 402-406			
5.8 407-412			
5.9 413-421			
5.10 422-429			
Epilogue 433-440			