



ceumannan 5

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Notaichean an tidseir -
Ròdhag, anns A' Bhliadhna 2000
Teacher's notes - Ròdhag, anns A' Bhliadhna 2000

Litreachas - Ròdhag, anns A' Bhliadhna 2000

Catrìona NicGumaraid

Rugadh agus thogadh Catrìona NicGumaraid ann an Ròdhag – baile beag faisg air Dùn Bheagan anns an Eilean Sgitheanach ann an 1947. 'S e bana-bhàrd, sgrìobhadair agus bana-chleasaiche a th' innte. Tha i pòsta le dithis chloinne agus a' fuireach ann an Glaschu. Sgrìobh i a' bhàrdachd "Ròdhag, anns A' Bhliadhna 2000" anns na seachdadan. Tha stoidhle sgrìobhaidh sìmplidh aig NicGumaraid. Ged a bhios i a' dèiligeadh ri cuspairean mòra, tha tàlant aice rudan a chur ann an dòigh a tha an dà chuid èifeachdach agus furasta do dhaoine a thuigsinn.

Many Gaelic songs and poems have been written about places in the Highlands and islands. Commonly, they praise their scenic beauty, as well as the Gaelic language and culture that belongs to them. There may be a sense of cianalas expressed and a yearning to return to life as it was in the past, if the poet is far from home. Other poems, like this one, lament a way of life that is being gradually and surely eroded and, though not yet entirely gone is in danger of dying out in the not too distant future.

The poem "Ròdhag, anns A' Bhliadhna 2000" predicts what life will be like twenty or so years hence in the poet's native village. NicGumaraid warns of an irreversible cultural shift, alluding to the dilution of Gaelic and the erosion of the traditional culture; ultimately prophesying their death. The poet's main focus is on the incomers who have begun to settle there, bringing with them a language and way of life that is at odds with the traditional ways. We get the impression that the she now feels like an outsider in her own village as she peeks through the settlers' windows and eavesdrops on their conversations.

Below is the poet's own translation of the Gaelic.



Obair 3 Ceistean

1.

Traditional Highland images	Non-traditional images
crofts	playing cards
crofting – sheep, milk cows in byres	drinking wine
tackety boots	poodle
moors	pottery
	English voices

2. Italics are used to distinguish the English words “poodle” and “pottery” and make them stand out from the others in the text. The italics highlight their incongruity, they show that they don’t belong and that they are associated with non traditional culture.
3. The poet appears to have fairly negative feelings about the incomers. She dislikes the changes they have brought and sees them as destructive to the traditional ways.

**(“Nuair a bheir an fheannag an t-sùil às a’ chaora mu dheireadh,”
bidh fhàileadh blàth a’ bhainne air falbh às na bàthchannan,
’s iad làn thruinnsearan fuar cruaidh *pottery*”)**

However, her feelings could also be seen as mixed. On one hand she seems to deride their ways (“*poodle a’ dannsa mun casan*”) but on the other hand she seems intrigued by their way of life (“*bidh mi ri farchluais air d’ uinneagan*” and “*bidh mi ri didearachd air d’ uinneagan*:”). It is possible, of course that intrigue could be mistaken for suspicion about their presence.

4. **“bidh mi ri didearachd air d’ uinneagan:”**
and
“bidh mi ri farchluais
air d’ uinneagan,”



The image of the poet peeping through the incomers' windows and eavesdropping on their conversations suggest that she feels like an outsider in her own village and that somehow she shouldn't be there. She is on the other side of the doors and windows, separated from the goings-on in the village when once she would have been included and have been part of it.

5. a. Sheep: traditional way of life/the indigenous people/Gaelic.
Crow: incomers/ new modern way of life/ English.

5.b.

sheep	crow
victim	predator
white	black
passive	strong
gentle	fearless
timid	harbinger of death
weak	group name is 'murder'
innocent	feeds on/preys on the weak and dying
thought of as stupid	known to be intelligent
belong to a flock	solitary
soft	feared
warm	cold

- c. Pupil's own response. Pupils should link this with their answer in b.
6. a. Strong image of crow fatally wounding the (last) sheep by pecking out its eyes. Image is used to represent the erosion/death of the traditional Highland ways at the hands of the incomers. Brutal and gruesome image intended to provoke shock, pity and even anger. The death of the last sheep signals the end of an era – last signs of life being destroyed and implies that once this life is gone it will not come back.
- b. The repetition of the image at the end of the poem emphasises the poet's strong view and emphasises the finality of the situation.
7. The poet uses contrasting images in the poem to highlight difference and change.

Warm/cold warm milk, cold pottery

"bidh fhàileadh blàth a' bhainne air falbh às na bàthchannan,"

's iad làn thruinnsearan fuar cruaidh pottery"

One is alive, warm, full of humanity/nature, fresh, natural. The other is manmade, and for commercial gain – not a natural part of the environment.



The poet is nostalgic remembering the barns being filled with the smell of warm milk. Now they are empty of the past and filled with cold, hard, pottery for tourists.

Hard/soft hard pottery, hard English voices, hard beak of crow, soft breezes, soft eye of the sheep,

“osagan ag ochanaich,

’s na guthan cruaidh Sasannach

a’ dol an aghaidh na gaoith’.”

The poet uses hardness in association with the non-traditional, alien aspects in the poem, and softness in connection with the traditional ways.

The description of the harsh English voices going against the wind suggests they are unnatural in their surroundings, highlighting the poet's strong views on incomers and the erosion of her native language and culture.

8. Pupil's own personal response.

Airson bhidiothan agus tuilleadh fiosrachaidh mu Chrìona NicGumaraid agus a bàrdachd, coimhead air:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/catriona_nicgumaraid/am_bard/

