

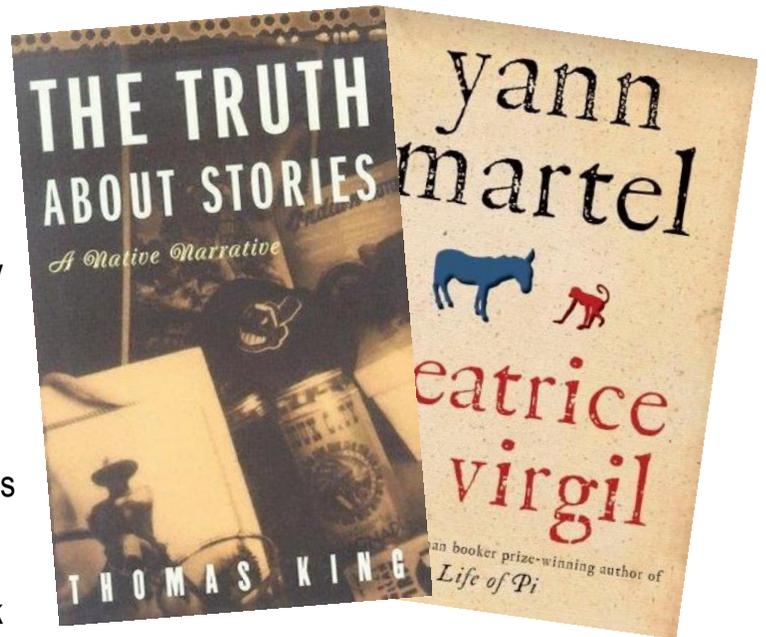
The Nature of History

Art mirrors life.

What does a movie like *Memento* tell us about the very nature of history? What does Canadian author Yann Martel or Irish author Paul Murray say about history in their novels?

Looking at the ideas presented in our class – in at least 300 words – discuss the very nature of history, including the problems it might create for us as historians.

Put simply, I want you to tell me what you think history is, and what problems do historians face in studying it?



Some ideas to ponder . . .

- What is history? What is the origin of the world?
- Is it concrete (factual)?
- What do we do with history?
- What problems can history present us with?
- How does language impact our understanding of reality and history?

Resources available to you:

Passages from:

beatrice & virgil by Yann Martel
The Truth About Stories by Thomas King
1984 by George Orwell
Skippy Dies by Paul Murray

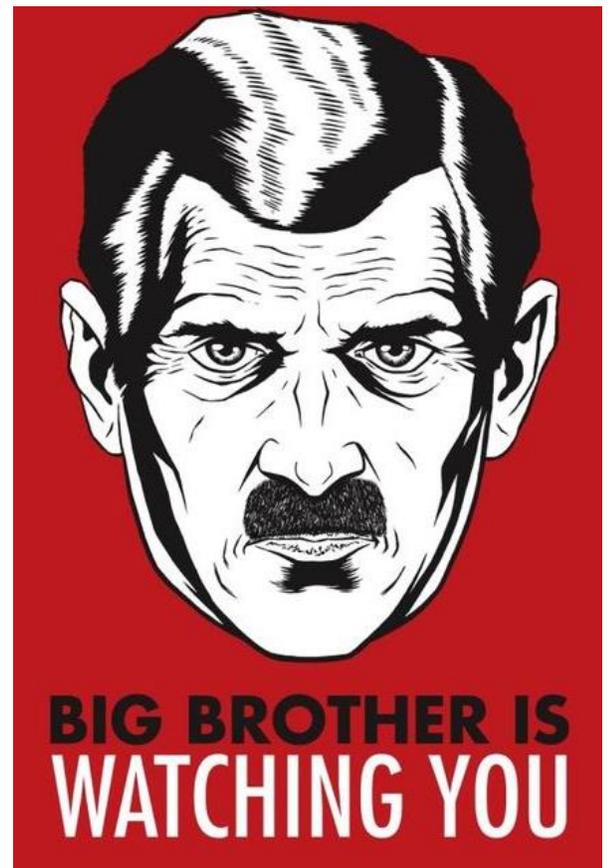
Movie:

Memento (2000)
Big Fish (2003)

Ted Talks:

“The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

September 2019



Curriculum link:

Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication

Overall Expectation Addressed:

- Interpret and analyse information gathered through research, employing concepts and approaches to historical inquiry

Even if you get revenge, you're not going to remember it . . .

Memories can change the shape of a room, the colour of a car . . .

Memories are an interpretation . . .

Fiction may not be real, but it is true . . .

Don't trust other people's notes and scribbles . . .

We are chained to our stories . . .

If history doesn't become story, it dies to everyone except the historian . . .



The Nature of History Rubric

	Below Expectations	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
Method of Historical Inquiry and Communication /10	The content does not reflect that the student understands the concepts this assignment was meant to highlight.	Student's paragraph does not clearly define or analyze what they see as the nature of history, nor does it cite ideas and concepts presented in other sources from the course. There is little evidence that ideas discussed in class and the text has influenced the student's approach to the subject of history.	Student's paragraph defines what they see as the nature of history, attempting to interpret and analyze ideas and concepts presented in <i>Memento</i> and 1-2 other sources presented in the course. There is some evidence that ideas discussed in class and the text have influenced the student's approach to the subject of history.	Student's paragraph successfully defines what they see as the nature of history, interpreting and analyzing ideas and concepts presented in <i>Memento</i> and other sources presented in the course. The ideas discussed in class and the text have influenced the student's approach to the subject of history.	Student's paragraph successfully defines what they see as the nature of history, interpreting and analyzing ideas and concepts presented in <i>Memento</i> and multiple other sources presented in the course, as well as outside examples from class discussions or their own personal experiences. The ideas discussed in class and the texts have influenced the student's approach to the subject of history.
Syntax /5	Syntax is not acceptable.	Syntax is not clear. Many spelling and grammatical errors.	Syntax is somewhat clear. Numerous spelling and grammatical errors.	Syntax is clear. 1-2 spelling and grammatical errors.	Syntax is clear and effective.



Memento



Directed by: Christopher Nolan

Starring: Guy Pearce, Carrie-Anne Moss, Joe Pantoliano

Released: December 15th, 2000

Website: www.otnemem.com

Many medical experts have cited Memento as one of the most realistic and accurate depictions of *anterograde amnesia* in any motion picture. Caltech neuroscientist Christof Koch called Memento "the most accurate portrayal of the different memory systems in the popular media," while physician Esther M. Sternberg, Director of the Integrative Neural Immune Program at the National Institute of Mental Health identified the film as "close to a perfect exploration of the neurobiology of memory." Writing in the journal *Science*, Sternberg concludes: "This thought-provoking thriller is the kind of movie that keeps reverberating in the viewer's mind, and each iteration makes one examine preconceived notions in a different light. Memento is a movie for anyone interested in the workings of memory and, indeed, in what it is that makes our own reality."

Synopsis:

A memory inside a memory, Memento is a complicated head spinning adventure. Leonard is determined to avenge his wife's murder. However, unable to remember anything that happens day-to-day due to a condition he sustained, short term memory loss, he has to write himself note after note that still don't mean anything after he falls asleep. The film goes back in time to reveal each little bit of the puzzle as he tries to find out the person who killed his wife and makes the audience feel just as confused as he is. The narrative closely follows a phone call Pearce has in which he talks about Sammy Jankis a former client of his who he believed had the same condition. The film takes an unexpected twist as the two characters have a lot more in common than is initially put across.

September 2019

