



# Teaching with Weblogs: Vernon God Little

*Catharina Belinghausen*

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Seminar paper from the year 2008 in the subject English - Pedagogy, Didactics, Literature Studies, grade: 2,0, University of Cologne, language: English, abstract: The award-winning first novel „Vernon God Little“ by DBC Pierre

„ puts an astute, if needling, finger on the scary collusion between entertainment and law enforcement in American culture...If Huckleberry Finn were set on the Mexican-American border and written by the creators of South Park, it might read something like this“

states the San Francisco Chronicle.

Vernon Little as well as Huckleberry Finn is a coming of age story and describes the protagonist's struggling against society, the media and his single mother. Written in an unfiltered and sharp adolescent-boys-slang, one could be reminded of dialogues adapted from South Park.

Teaching „Vernon God Little“ in an English as a 2nd language classroom can be challenging for several reasons. Some might claim that style and language could be inappropriate in some ways for a classroom. On the other hand the novel offers various topics interesting for teenage students and worth discussing in class as highschool massacres, mass media, US justice system or even more subtle coming of age topics as the relationship towards family, first love and sexual interests.

In this paper a short overview of the novel, its plot, its main characters and the setting is provided as a general basis.

The topic „adolescence and family as a special coming of age theme as well as „the influence of media“ as a special topic are exemplarily analysed.

The main character's relationship towards his single mother is complex and a noticeable metaphor of „a knife in his back“ occurs throughout the novel. The struggle between independence and emotional and material addiction to their parents is well-known by adolescent students and might be an interesting topic they can elaborate on.

The media gains more and more influence in teenagers' daily lives and therefore a critical discussion of this topic might be appropriate.

As the title of this paper refers to weblogs as a way of teaching the novel, a short overview of reading logs, blogs in general and the possible connection between those as a teaching tool is provided.

Reading logs support the student's individual access to a novel, their transformation to the modern platform of the Internet is discussed and the explicit application of weblogs to the novel „Vernon God Little“ is described.

The last part offers some tasks, according to the prior introduced topics „adolescence and family“ and the „influence of media“ which can be provided in the weblog.

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