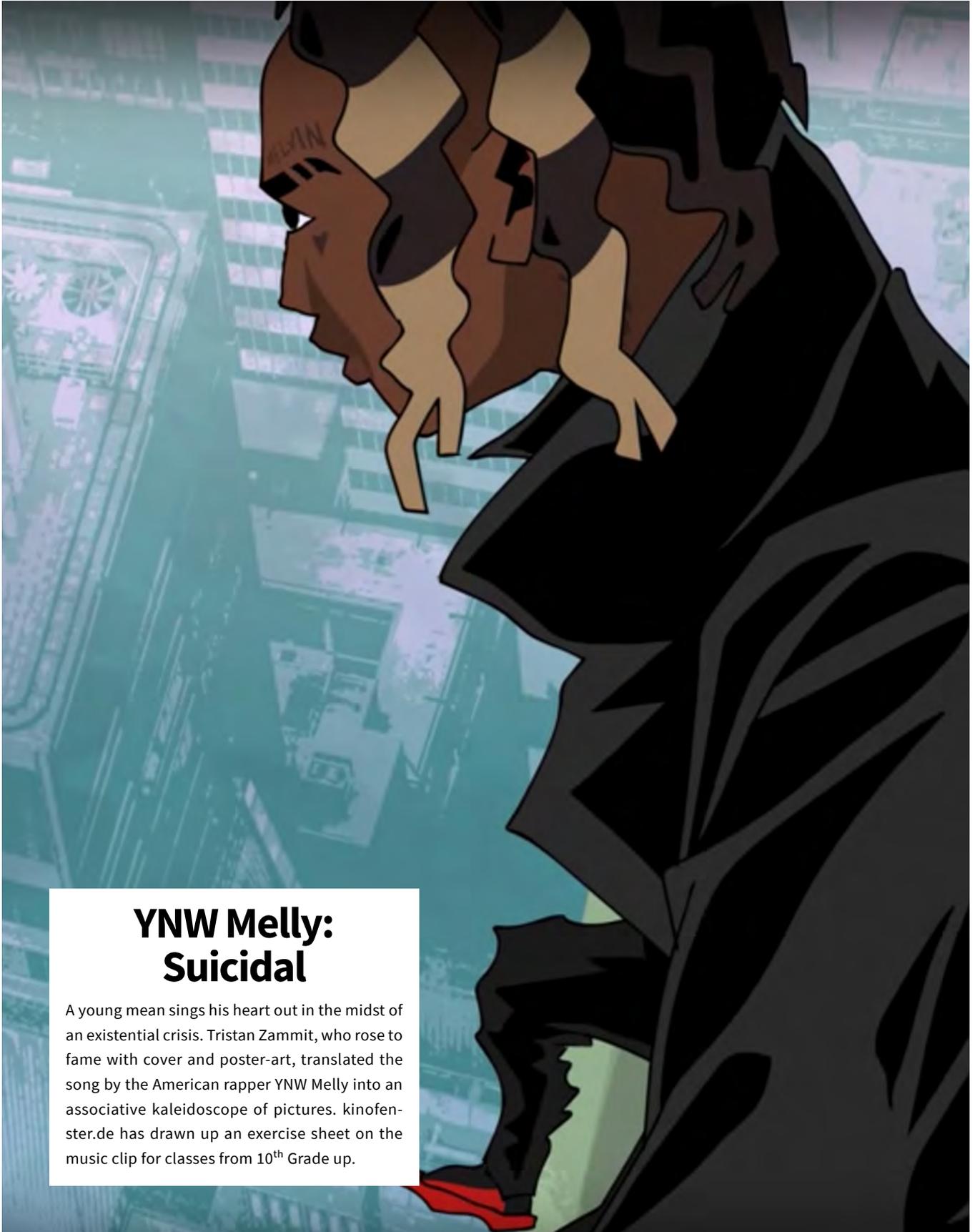


Film Review + Exercise Sheet

April 2020



YNW Melly: Suicidal

A young mean sings his heart out in the midst of an existential crisis. Tristan Zammit, who rose to fame with cover and poster-art, translated the song by the American rapper YNW Melly into an associative kaleidoscope of pictures. kinofenster.de has drawn up an exercise sheet on the music clip for classes from 10th Grade up.

Content

	REVIEW
03	YNW Melly: Suicidal
	EXERCISE SHEET
	Exercise on the video clip SUICIDAL
	- DIDACTIC/METHODOLOGICAL NOTE
	- EXERCISE SHEET
09	Links
10	Legal Notice

Review: YNW Melly: Suicidal (1/2)



USA 2019
Video clip

Director and screenplay:
Tristan Zammit

Duration: 3,44 min, OV

Format: Digital, Colour

FSK: /

Recommended viewing age:
from 15

Grades: from 10th Grade

Topics: Life Crisis (crises),
Music, Search for Meaning

Subjects: German, English,
Ethics/Religion, Music, Art

Review YNW Melly: Suicidal

The animated clip accompanying the song “Suicidal” by YNW Melly visualizes the pictorial language of the lyrics.

”I thought that we were meant to be, you took my heart and made it bleed“, sings the American rapper YNW Melly at the start of the music video. The young man has clearly lost all hope after the breakdown of a relationship and life has lost all meaning for him. He is a man on the brink; as he drowns his sorrows in alcohol, he is tormented by suicidal thoughts.

The artist Tristan Zammit, who is known for his music videos and his cover and poster-art, designed SUICIDAL as an animated single piece. The clip delves into Melly’s mental world, unleashing an associative rush of pictures: hands or heads mutate into bottles. A tongue turns into a snake, catches fire and burns, turns into a skeleton and ultimately disappears in a brandy bottle. While the images occasionally play with art-historically established images such as the seductive serpent, other passages in the clip visualize the pictorial language of the lyrics. Throughout the

clip, he succeeds in visualizing YNW Melly’s feeling of forsakenness and loss of control by depicting him against a black background or in the grip of countless hands. With its concentration on the mental perspective, the music video also builds a bridge to the rapper’s own narrative style, through which he has already addressed various mental health issues such as personality disorders or anxiety in first-person songs. Stylistically, the clip is strikingly similar in aesthetics to Anime, with a rougher, consciously unrefined style. The producer of the clip also cites the influence of the Anime series Serien SAMURAI CHAMPLOO (Japan 2004 ff) and FLCL/FURI KURI/FOOLY COOLY (Japan 2000-2001)

The video clip can be used in ethics and religion class to discuss the extent to which YNW Melly and his music strike a chord with a young audience while talking about death wishes and suicide. Discussions should focus not just on taking the >

Review: YNW Melly: Suicidal (2/2)

fears of the protagonist seriously, but also on demonstrating positive perspectives despite his hopelessness, exploring ways out of the crisis and identifying where he might seek help. While an analysis of the lyrics and attempts to write in the rap style would be ideal for English lessons, the associative montage and the new scope for interpretation presented by the pictures, as well as the style of the animation, its origins and the effect of the images can all be addressed in art classes. In Music, the clip naturally demands a treatment of hip-hop and rap and its various forms. This can also include closer examination, in the context of the video clip, of YNW Melly's biography. He is currently in jail awaiting trial for the murders of two friends (which is probably why he had to appear in "animated" form only in the video). What influence does the behavior of artists have on the reception their work? What ethical issues arise as a result? To what extent can we separate artists' private lives from their creative work? These questions could also be addressed in a broader context, for example by including similarly controversial personalities.

Author: Stefan Stiletto, 22 February
2020, Translation: Don Mac Coitir

Exercise: YNW Melly: Suicidal / Didactic/methodological note:

EXERCISE ON THE VIDEO CLIP SUICIDAL BY YNW MELLY (FOR TEACHERS)

Didactic/methodological note

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Subjects: English, German, Ethics,
Art from 10th Grade, from 15 years

Note: The issue of suicide requires sensitivity in class. It is essential to prepare and debrief. Detailed notes on the treatment of the subject in class are to be found here: <http://www.fhnw.ch/de/weiterbildung/paedagogik/beratungsstellen-und-beratungsangebote/beratungsstelle-gesundheitsbildung-und-praevention/publikationen-gesundheitsbildung/media/lebenslust.pdf>

Didactic note: Because of the subject matter of the English text, the exercise can be completed in combinations of subjects (for example, English/Ethics, English/Art or English/German).

Growth in expertise and experience: In English and German classes, the focus is on speaking and hearing. Across all subjects, closer inspection of the cinematic devices used leads to deeper understanding.

Didactic/methodological note: The music video should be played first without images (www.kinofenster.de/lehrmaterial/methoden/den-ton-einer-filmszene-abspielen/), to allow students to form their own free associations. After a second hearing, this time with video, you should talk about categorizing the film genre as an animation. Then examine the atmosphere in the video: the protagonist is almost always shown on his own, illustrating his sense of abandonment. One exception is a short sequence (00:38:00-00:40:00) that appears to be a flashback. Here, we briefly see the hands of his former lover as they share a meal.

Then, assign partnerships to explore the imagery of short sequences and compare the differences and similarities between lyrics and video. The students should be provided with pre-prepared sheets.

The next step is to make sure that the class differentiates between the lyrical first person and the author of the song. In Upper School (Oberstufe) it is appropriate

to address aspects such as fictionalization and authenticity (greater emphasis). It is essential to highlight how young people should deal with a situation whereby a friend expresses suicidal thoughts.

Exercise: YNW Melly: Suicidal (1/2)

EXERCISE ON THE VIDEO CLIP SUICIDAL BY YNW MELLY (FOR STUDENTS)

a) Listen to the song “Suicidal” by YNW Melly. Summarize in class what the song is about. What images do you associate with the verses and sounds you heard? Exchange your views using the “Blitzlicht” method (<https://www.kinofenster.de/Lehrmaterial/methoden/blitzlicht/>).

b) Now watch the video clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90mgXxiK-V7A>). b) What differences and similarities between your images from Exercise a) are especially striking? After that, determine the film genre (http://www.geschichte-projekte-hannover.de/filmundgeschichte/zitieren_und_dokumentieren/beschreibung_von_inhalt_und_form/filmgattungen_gestaltungsformen_und_genres.html) of the clip directed by Tristan Zammit.

c) Now watch the music video again. Pay attention to how many characters are shown and what effect this has.

d) The refrain goes “Suicidal, your love is suicidal / And lately, I’ve been feeling suicidal“. To whom is the song addressed? – Who is the lyrical second person?

e) The images in the music video associatively mirror the mental world of the lyrical first person. Some of these pictures refer directly to the verses, others employ a separate imagery. Along with a partner, select at least three images and interpret them. Use

the following table on a sheet already containing examples.

Timecode	Plot	Interpretation
00:00:26-00:00:30	The protagonist dances alone in the garden with a bottle.	The bottle refers to the verse “Red Lipstick on my Hennessy”. The protagonist can still see the traces of his lover. That means she only left him recently, since they shared the bottle of Cognac. Dancing alone here visualizes the sense of abandonment, while the attempt to dull the pain with alcohol is also imminent.
00:00:52-00:00:54	The protagonist’s hand reaches for another hand, which suddenly turns into a Cognac bottle.	The protagonist yearns for intimacy. The outstretched hand symbolizes help, but this suddenly turns into alcohol – the only consolation, apparently, in this situation. That the word “suicidal“ is heard simultaneously opens up another level of interpretation: the protagonist’s substance abuse is also dangerous, even potentially fatal.



Exercise: YNW Melly: Suicidal (2/2)

Timecode	Plot	Interpretation

7
(09)

f) Present the results of your work in class. Then, using those results as a basis, compare the atmosphere created by the music clip with the mood engendered by the lyrics.

g) The lyrics of the song are written in the first person, who is not to be equated with the author. However, sadly there are people who really are tormented by suicidal thoughts. How would you react if a friend confided in you that they were thinking about suicide? Discuss in class and compare your strategies with those on the website www.irrsinnig-menschlich.de/hilfe/suizid/.

OPTIONAL:

h) One of reason why the video was animated was that YNW Melly is in jail, on suspicion of murdering two of his friends (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47244337>). Imagine that your mother or father wanted to forbid you from listening to YNW Melly's music because they thought it glorified violence. What would you say? Use the relationship between the lyrical first person and the author as one aspect of your argumentation. Write down bullet points and refer to these when presenting your arguments.

Author: Ronald Ehlert-Klein,
 20 April 2020, Translation: Don Mac
 Coitir

Links

Links

🔗 YouTube.com: Clip "Suicidal"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90mgXxiKV7A>

🔗 Bento: Warum ich weiterhin die Musik eines Rappers höre, der zwei Menschen getötet haben soll

<https://www.bento.de/musik/ynw-melly-kuendigte-der-murder-on-his-mind-saenger-die-morde-an-seine-freunde-an-a-bbf91b1d-a3c5-4deb-9fc0-8d6c3b99c82a>

🔗 Laviasco.com: Uncovering the Safe Meaning Behind The Lyrics of "Suicidal" by YNW Melly (engl.)

<https://laviasco.com/ynw-melly-suicidal-lyrics-meaning/>

🔗 XXLmag: Über den Prozess gegen YNW Melly (engl.)

<https://www.xxlmag.com/news/2020/02/ynw-melly-former-lawyer-bradford-cohen-not-guilty/>

Read more

🔗 STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

(Filmbesprechung vom 26.08.2015)

<https://www.kinofenster.de/filme/filmarchiv/straight-outta-compton-nik/>

🔗 Kurzfilme im Unterricht (Hintergrundartikel vom 16.10.2018)

<https://www.kinofenster.de/themen-dossiers/alle-themendossiers/dossier-kurzfilme-fuer-kinder/dossier-kurzfilme-fuer-kinder-einfuehrung/>

🔗 THIS IS AMERICA (Besprechung des Musikclips vom 04.09.2019)

<https://www.kinofenster.de/themen-dossiers/alle-themendossiers/dossier-kurzfilme-fuer-jugendliche/dossier-kurzfilme-fuer-jugendliche-this-is-america-film/>

Legal Notice

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(09)

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Herausgegeben von der Bundeszentrale für
politische Bildung/bpb
Thorsten Schilling (v.i.S.d.P.)
Adenauerallee 86, 53115 Bonn
Tel. bpb-Zentrale: 0228-99 515 0
info@bpb.de

Redaktionsleitung:

Katrin Willmann (bpb, verantwortlich),
Kirsten Taylor

Redaktionsteam:

Karl-Leontin Beger (bpb, Volontär), Ronald Ehlert-
Klein, Jörn Hetebrügge

Autor:

Stefan Stiletto

Autorin Arbeitsblatt:

Ronald Ehlert-Klein

Übersetzung:

Don Mac Coitir

Layout:

Nadine Raasch

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