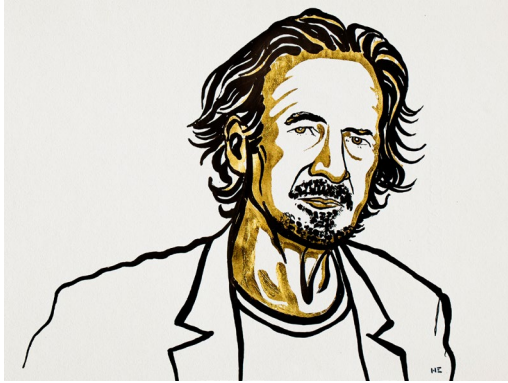


## Student Worksheet – Literature Prize 2019

### Provocative stagecraft



The 2019 Nobel Laureate in Literature, **Peter Handke**, has written in many different genres: novels, essays, note books, theatrical plays and screenplays. The 1987 feature film *Wings of Desire* (original title *Der Himmel über Berlin*) was internationally acclaimed and has been shown in cinemas in many countries.

You have heard earlier about some of Peter Handke's novels. Now let's take a look at

some of his plays.

In 1966 Peter Handke's first play, *Offending the Audience*, was staged at a theatre in Frankfurt. In this play, the actors pepper the audience with insults for going to the theatre. After this, Handke came to be regarded as an experimental writer, someone who tested new approaches and dared to diverge from social norms.

In another of Handke's plays, *Self-Accusation* (1969), there are no visible actors. The play is presented on an empty, lighted stage with open curtains. All that happens is that two voices, one male and one female, speak one at a time, but sometimes at the same time and sometimes interrupting each other. This is how the play begins:

*I came into the world.*

*I became. I was begotten. I originated. I grew. I was born. I was entered in the birth register. I grew older.*

*I moved. I moved parts of my body. I moved my body. I moved on one and the same spot. I moved from the spot.*

Translation by Michael Roloff

### Vocabulary list

**GENRE** A category of literary texts, films or other forms of art that have certain features in common.

**NORM** A rule about how person should behave or be.

## What do you think?

In both plays you read about, Peter Handke used the stage and the actors in a rather unusual way. What do you believe he wanted to achieve by doing this?

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You read an excerpt from the play *Self-Accusation*. What do you believe this play is about?

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What is the most interesting thing about the Laureate's works?

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