



RIKS  
TEATRET



# SAGA

Pedagogisk opplegg

Hele landets teater

1/1

Utarbeidet av  
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### Summary of Action

Iceland. Family. Crisis.

Gunnar Oddmunson's life is in ruins. He is standing alone with a shovel in his hands, wondering how it all went wrong. He was feeling lucky, successful, and had big dreams for the future. He had recently sold his fishing boat and quota, and he and his family moved to the countryside to open a bed and breakfast. Using what seemed to be an endless supply of borrowed money, he purchased a big house, a new Jeep, and a stable of horses. It all came crashing down, however, when the Icelandic economy collapsed.

Now, as the variable interest rates reach soaring heights, his loans are suddenly more than he had imagined possible. His attempts to negotiate with the bank and gain control over his financial situation prove ineffectual. Likewise his participation in political protests, which usher in a new government, fail to help his case. As the unjust realities of the modern world start to weigh upon Gunnar, a tiny Viking begins to haunt him. Representing a time when men defended their land and belongings with swords and axes, the Viking calls upon our hero to fight for what is his - the old fashioned way. Gunnar silences the specter and enlists the help of a lawyer, but his attempt at finding justice through the court system is futile. Stubborn and proud, he refuses to give up, even when he receives notice of foreclosure proceedings on his home. His wife and son depart for Norway to begin a new life, and Gunnar

is left alone to battle. The Viking who haunts his dreams grows in size, eventually becoming gigantic in proportion. Gunnar is overwhelmed by his desire for vengeance and pours gasoline throughout his house on the eve before it is to be auctioned. He sets it ablaze, laughing and crying as events spin out of control. Then he drives his new jeep into a ditch, severely injuring himself in the process. As the lights go out on the scene and Gunnar waits for a friend to come to his aid, he cries out from the hood of the car, "I'm still here! I'm still here you Motherfuckers!"

### Exercise 1: Composition

#### SAGA

*noun:*

1. *a long story of heroic achievement, esp. a medieval prose narrative in Old Norse or Old Icelandic.*



What is your relationship with the word SAGA? Have you read anything you would classify as a SAGA? What words come to mind when you hear the word?

Imagine that you were to be a modern hero in a SAGA. Write an outline depicting events in your life. Pick one event and write one to two pages describing the event.

- Recommended class time: 30 minutes

Extra: In our Time BBC Radio 4 on the Icelandic Sagas (43 min)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01s8qx9>

### Exercise 2: Group Discussion:

What is justice? If someone has been wronged how does one find justice today?  
Does it always work?

➤ Recommended class time: 15-30 minutes

### Exercise 3: The Icelandic Financial Crisis:

Read this Article: Review Iceland  
(see PDF)

See video from NRK

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R7DczXylcA#t=870>

Hvilke faktorer førte til finanskrisen på Island?  
Hvilke følger har en slik krise for befolkningen? Kortsiktige og langsiktige.  
Hvordan var det mulig for finanssektoren å holde på slik de gjorde over så lang tid?  
Hva skal til for at det samme kan skje i Norge?

➤ Estimated Class Time: 45 min

### Exercise 4: Sock/Hand Puppets:

The sock puppet is the simplest form of a talking puppet. (Besides the hand itself) Hand puppets, like in SAGA, can have a lot to say. Try making your hand or a sock puppet talk. Work on matching the movement of the syllables to the opening and closing of the hand. Practice this text:

*Excerpt from **SAGA** (Based on Icelandic Prime Minister Geir Haarde's speech)*

**Geir Haarde:** *I am well aware that this situation is a great shock for many, which raises both fear and anxiety. In such circumstances it is extremely urgent that the authorities, companies, social organizations, parents and others who can contribute make every effort to ensure that daily life is not disrupted.*

*The task of the authorities over the coming days is clear: to make sure that chaos does not ensue if the Icelandic banks become to some extent non-operational. It is very important that we display both calm and consideration during the difficult days ahead, that we do not lose courage and support each other as well as we can.*



*I urge families to talk to one another and not to allow anxiety to get the upper hand even though the outlook is grim for many. We need to explain to our children that the world is not on the edge of a precipice and we all need to find the inner courage to look to the future.*

*Thus with Icelandic optimism, fortitude and solidarity as weapons, we will ride out the storm. God Bless Iceland.*

➤ *Recommended Class time 20 minutes*

#### Exercise 5.

Puppets are made in all shapes and sizes: Shadow puppets, hand and rod puppets, hand puppets, marionettes, giant parade puppets, bunraku, etc. Each puppet offers advantages and disadvantages for the puppeteer and for the story being told.

Choose a folktale that you could imagine performing with puppets. Which style puppets would you use? Why? Discuss the advantages of using this type of puppet and the disadvantages. Would it help your story if you could use more than one style? Why?

➤ *Recommended Class time: 30 minutes*













*Exercises before or after the students see the performance.*



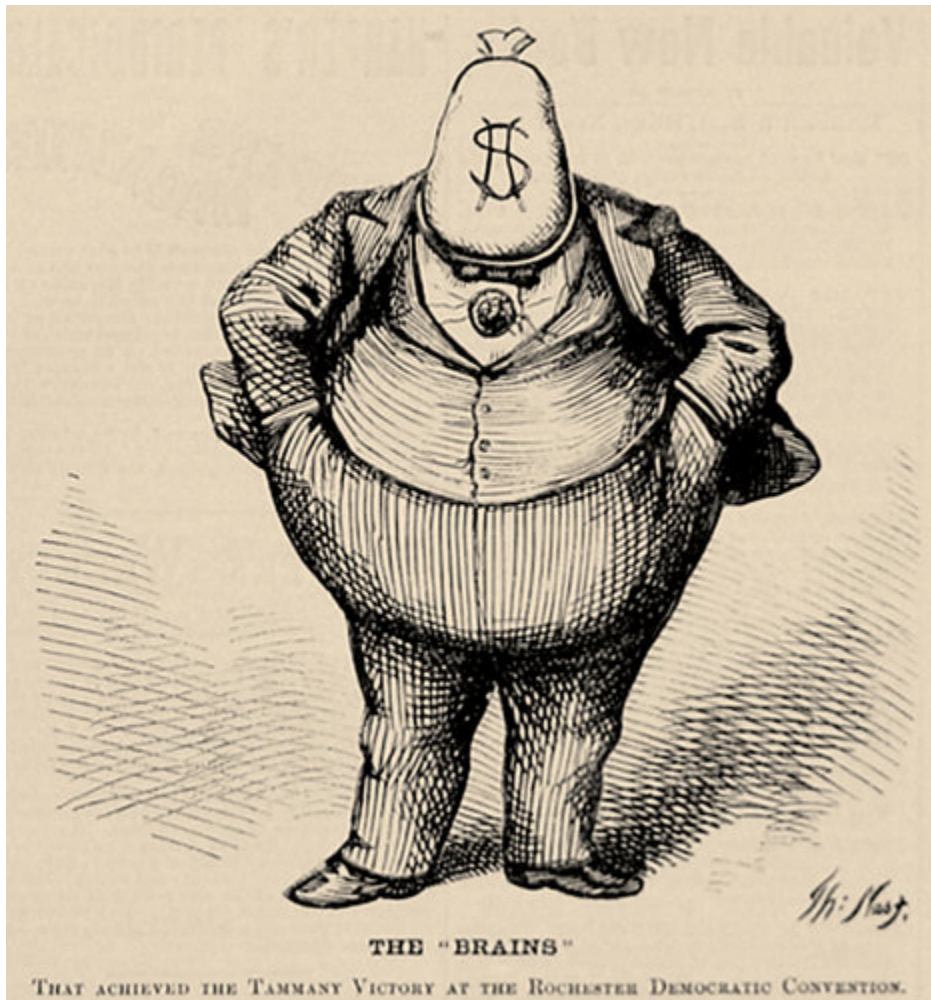
**Exercise 1: Creative Writing/Cartooning**

Political cartoons are made to rile, provoke, and amuse. In contrast to a newspaper editorial, a cartoon has the economy of a captions and the power of visual punch.

Look at these cartoons: What are these cartoons trying to say? Are they successful?



*"Your resumé looks remarkably similar to our CEO's."*



Divide the class into two groups—Artists and Writers.

Writers: Write a caption, but leave out the envisioned cartoon.

Artists: Draw a cartoon but leave out the envisioned caption.

After each group has finished swap: Give the drawings to the writers and the captions to the artists.

Writers: Write a caption for the artwork you've received.

Artists: Draw a cartoon for the captions you've received.

Swap several more times until each artwork has possible captions and each caption has 3 possible cartoons.

Hang them up at the front of the class and vote on which ones are the best. Why did they win?

➤ *Recommended Class time: 1 hour*



## Exercise 2: Puppetry/Animating Objects

Many objects can be animated—some easier than others. Look at these You Tube clips.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPzn4fQU9Kk>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08j-SFBaL\\_I&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08j-SFBaL_I&feature=related)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gzk7FICqfQ>

Break into small groups. Find objects around the classroom and see if you can bring these objects to life. Experiment with different objects and movements. Present your animated objects to each other in the form of a short piece.

➤ *Recommended class time: 1-1 1/2 hours*

*Exercises after the students see the performance.*

## Exercise 1: Poetry

Iceland has a long tradition of writing stories and poetry. According to the BBC News (October 2013), Iceland has more writers, more books published and more books read, per head, than anywhere else in the world.

Here are two poems, one by Egil Skallagrimson from the time of the Icelandice Saga's (circa 11-13<sup>th</sup> century) and one by Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl, a prize winning poet from Iceland today.

Imitate either style of poetry (or make up your own) and write a poem about Gunnar Oddmunson and the events that take place in SAGA.

➤ *Recommended class time: 30-45 minutes*



*Read this poem by Egil Skallagrimson.*

### **The Irreparable Loss of Sons**

My mouth strains

To move the tongue

To weigh and wing

The choice word:

Not easy to breathe

Odin's inspiration

In my heart's hinterland

Little hope there.



A leaden weight  
Lies on my tongue,  
I cannot sustain  
The measure of a song  
Odin has stolen  
My heart's treasure;  
I draw no succour  
From the stores of my soul  
The pride of my house  
Is beaten to the ground  
Like trees of the forest  
Bowed before the storm.  
How can a man rejoice  
Who has borne to the grave  
The bodies of his kin  
From their earthly seats?  
**The Irreparable Loss of Sons**  
First I must tell  
Of the death of my mother,  
The loss of my father.  
Breath of my praise shall

Rise from the temple

Where language lives,

Where words adorn

The structure with leaves.

Our family shield-wall Is torn wide open;

Cruel waves broke

My father's firm line.

How vast is the breach,

How empty the place

Where the sea entered

And snatched away my son.

[Ran](#) the fierce sea-god

Has ravaged all my land,

All those I loved

He seized as his spoils.

Broken are the bonds

That held us together,

The links I held firmly

Between my hands.

--

The pillaging sea



Has robbed me of my riches.

Hard it is to speak of

The loss of my kin.

He who was our shield

Has left us defenseless,

Lost to our sight

On the distant roads of death.

No shred of bad faith,

No falsity ever

Would have grown in my son –

I know that well,

If the young wood

Of his shield had hardened;

If he had not fallen

To the barbarous armies.

For him my word was law;

He stood by his father

Though all the people

Might hold a different view.

More than any other

He would sustain me;

He was ever

A stronghold sure.

What other comrade

Shall I find faithful

To stand at my side

In my hour of need?

When among traitors

My friends melt away

And I must flee, who then

Will cover my retreat?

What can make amends

For the loss of a son?

What compensation

Pays for such a death?

How could I beget

Another such boy

Who should be held

The equal of his brother?

I take no pleasure

In the company of men:

Though they are peacemakers,

Still I avoid them.

For now my son reaches

The god's dark palace;

Now my wife's darling

Has gone to join his kin.

The fire of a fever

Has burned up my son,

Hatefully ravished

Away from our world.

Wise, he's free forever

From threat of shame,

Never can touch him

The taint of disgrace.

To Odin, chief among gods

And friend of Mimir,

Henceforth I'll offer

No willing sacrifice,

Though he –

I won it freely –

Gave for what I suffer

As recompense,



a gift I hold as unequalled.

He - the wolf's enemy,

Veteran of battles -

He gave me this matchless

Gift, which is my art.

And with it, a nature,

Bane of my enemies

That drives me to root out

Their treacherous frauds.

Now all goes hard for me.

I see Hel, the goddess,

Foe to duplicity,

Waiting on the headland.

Nevertheless, joyfully,

With a jocund will

And a heart that fears nothing,

I await my death.

--*Egil Skalla-Grimsson*, poem from *Egilssaga*. Poem *translated* by *Anne Ridler* (1912-1992), 1992.

**Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVi7O8Y3vIc>

**Exercise 2: Creative Writing**

Write an alternate ending for SAGA.

➤ *Recommended Class time: 1 hour*

**Exercise 3: Reflection/Group Discussion**

In the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Icelandic Horse came from Norway with the first settlers to Iceland. From the beginning the Icelandic horse played a major role in the life of Icelanders. The horse was the only means of transportation and the most valued working animal. For over a thousand years, the breed has remained pure. The Icelandic Horse is the only breed of horse in Iceland.

Why do you think the puppeteers dressed as Icelandic Horses? What role do they play in the telling the story of SAGA?

➤ *Recommended Class time: 15 -20 minutes*

**Exercise 4: Role Play/Improvisation**

In SAGA the audience is often shown different perspectives of the same scene: For example the miniature landscape with the Gunnar's House and Stables, and the car driven by both Oli and Gunnar.



Pretend that you are a family in a car on vacation. Try to show both the family in the car (actors pretending to be in the car--use chairs to represent the front and back seats of the car) and the car on its journey (use a toy car or a small object as the car). Imagine “cutting” back and forth between these two shots. Perhaps the car drives past a mountain, or into a tree, or gets a flat tire. How can you show this using these two perspectives?

➤ *Recommended Class time: 1 hour*



## **Praktisk veiledning til hvordan man kan jobbe med dukker/figurer i klasserommet.**

Dukker og figurer er universelle og finnes i alle kulturer. Deres styrke ligger i at man gjennom dem kan fortelle og lære om seg selv og sine omgivelser på armlengdes avstand. Ved å bruke en dukke/figur som aktør er man på samme tid både skuespiller og tilskuer.

### **Hvordan lage enkle dukker/figurer til bruk i klasserommet.**

Dukker/figurer lages i alle typer materialer og alt kan animeres. Mennesker finner ansikter og figurer i alt som omgir oss. Finn fram alle mulige slags materialer som kan brukes til å forme et hode, en kropp med tilhørende utvekster. Tekstiler kan f.eks fint brukes sammen med sterke strikker til å forme en dukke/figur. Hverdagslige objekter kan også brukes. Elevene kan ta med seg hjemmefra et utvalg overflødige objekter/tekstiler og samle dette i en kasse og deretter velge derfra og klippe og lime.

Saks, lim og malesaker/tusj er nødvendige verktøy. Sett sammen hode, kropp og utvekster først. Legg til mindre appendikser som neser, ører etc. Sett øyne på, eller tegn dem på til slutt.

Hva slags dukke man vil lage bør være fritt valg. Om det er et menneske, dyr, fugl, fisk, plante eller fra mytologiske eller andre univers spiller ingen rolle. Alle dukker kan spille sammen.

### **Øvelser man kan gjøre med dukker.**

1.

Etter at eleven har laget sin dukke/figur må den utforskes og eleven må finne ut hvordan den kan bevege seg. Dette kan gjøres individuelt eller i grupper.

Start med enkle bevegelser og ikke glem at dukkenes/figurenes karakter er ofte å finne i ubevegeligheten.

La så dukkene/figurene utforske sine omgivelser.

2.

To dukker møtes. Noe skjer. La dukkene/figurene være stille til å begynne med. La elevene utforske hva som skjer når to møtes. Elevene som ser på kan etterpå fortelle hva de så/hva som skjedde.

3.

To dukker møtes. Så kommer det en til. Som øvelse 2. La ordene komme dersom de føles naturlig. Begynn alltid i stillheten.

4.

En gjeng dukker samles for å synge og danse.

5.

To dukker skal rydde mens to roter. En står og ser på. Noe skjer.