



Scottish Prose Non-fiction

Spotlight: Damian Barr

Biographical Details



Damian Barr is a journalist, writer, literary critic, and broadcaster. He was born and brought up in North Lanarkshire. The *Financial Times*' description of Barr as a 'literary impresario' is an accurate assessment of Barr's literary reach and connectedness. Nowhere is this best exemplified than in his hosting roles at London's *Literary Salon* and on the BBC's *Big Scottish Book Club* (two projects conceived by Barr himself). Barr has published three books – an extended essay on the "quarter-life crisis"; a volume of memoir; and a novel set in South Africa. He has also contributed essays and shorter fiction to edited collections. Barr is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.



Publications of Interest

- *Get it Together: A guide to surviving your quarter-life crisis* (2005)
- *Maggie and Me* (Bloomsbury, 2013)

Where to Begin?



- 'Speak to me of my History', Damian Barr in *Imagine a Country – Ideas for a better future*, edited by Val McDermid and Jo Sharp (Canongate, 2020)
- Chapter 3, *Maggie and Me* (Bloomsbury, 2014) pp.28-38.
- 'On going home, when you never felt welcome', *The Guardian Online* (2014)



Style

- Memoir
- Book Reviews/Literary Criticism
- Interview



Core Themes

- Family Relationships
- Identity
- Sexuality



Contextualising

Damian Barr's memoir might be categorised as creative non-fiction, a hybrid genre

Understanding

Thinking about your chosen Damian Barr text, consider the following questions, geared towards checking understanding:



- Identify the key issues presented to us by Damian in your chosen text. **Summarise** these key issues using your own words.
- In his Memoir, *Maggie and Me*, Damian Barr describes his hometown. In your your chosen extract, does he do so sympathetically or unsympathetically? Find and explain three pieces of evidence to support your answer.
- Compare in this text by Damian with the **key ideas** in another text on the same subject/topic. What do the authors **agree** on?

Analysing

Choose one of the following:



Confessional tone	Perspective	The recent past	Contrast	Structure
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Explain how it is used by Damian Barr in his writing.

Evaluating

Thinking about your chosen Damian Barr text, consider the following evaluative questions:



1. Do you agree with Damian Barr's point of view on his chosen topic? Justify your answer by giving three clear reasons.
2. Why would Damian Barr choose to write this particular text? Explain your thinking.