Pairing Young Adult Literature with Traditional Text(s) Books

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WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WHATCHA WANNA KNOW?
Which would YOU rather read?

- The best time to cry is at night, when the lights are out and someone is being beaten up and screaming for help. That way even if you snifflle a little they won't hear you. If anybody knows that you are crying, they'll start talking about it and soon it'll be your turn to get beat up when the lights go out. (1)

- Walter Dean Meyers, *Monster*

- In the days when the spinning wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses-and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning wheels of polished oak-there might be seen in districts far away among the lanes or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race.( 1)

- George Eliot, *Silas Marner*
Classics vs. YA Lit

• Which first lines are more appealing?
• What are the differences between the “classics” and YA titles?
• Why do we teach the classics?
“How Classics Create an Aliterate Society” by Donald R. Gallo

• “A classic is a book that ‘requires a teacher to figure out a glimmer of what it says.’”
• “The books I read on my own, you never want to put them down; the ones assigned, you never want to pick up.”
• “My experience in high school with the classics was similar to dissecting a frog: it was tedious and it stunk.”
• “Required literature has nothing to do with me...(literature is) keeping in touch with the dead.”
• “Why was I supposed to care about a Puritan woman who got pregnant from having sex with a minister? What did I have in common with a crazed old king who alienated the only daughter who really loved him and then didn't have enough sense to come in out of the rain?”
The Challenge - Overcoming the “Snob Appeal” of the “Classics”

• Can we teach the reading and analytical skills with the “less challenging literary works”?

• Like the classics, contemporary YA books “have plots that can be charted, settings that play significant roles, characters whose personalities, actions, and interactions can be analyzed...figurative language, foreshadowing, irony, symbolism, other literary elements...”
What Trade Books Can Offer

• Variety and depth of information
  – Increase motivation and knowledge
• Reveal realities of life beyond surface-level understandings
  – Develop sense of history, personal perspective, and the ability to view present/future with an historical perspective
• Breathes life into history
  – Raises awareness of common bond of humanity
• Provides entry into considering both the existing world and the world that could be/have been
• Varied reading levels and multiple points of access
• Text complexity
Difficulties of Trade Books

- Many are not intended for lower-level readers (re: vocabulary, etc.)
- However, there are some options:
  - High-low texts: Ellen Libretto’s *High/Low Handbook: Best Practices and Websites for Reluctant Teen Readers*
  - Matthew’s *High Interest Easy Reading*
  - Online resource for evaluating “hi-lo” texts, as well as some resources: [http://www.writing-world.com/foster/foster03.shtml](http://www.writing-world.com/foster/foster03.shtml)
Promoting YA Literature Using Technology

- Literacy on the Web:
  - [https://literacyontheweb.wikispaces.com/](https://literacyontheweb.wikispaces.com/)
- Reading 2.0 – Using Technology to Promote Books – not Replace Them:
  - [http://readingtech.wikispaces.com/](http://readingtech.wikispaces.com/)
Other Resources

• International Children's Digital Library (ICDL: http://en.childrenslibrary.org/). The ICDL collection includes 3932 books in 54 languages. (10-13 is highest age range)

• http://storylineonline.net/. Has numerous children's books on the site that are read aloud by actors/actresses.

• American Rhetoric web site has audio and video clips from speeches, movies, and media events with the scripts! It also has educational information on rhetoric, its terms, background etc. http://www.americanrhetoric.com/

• Lit2Go http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/index.htm contains read alouds for classic books and literacy activities.

• No Strings Attached http://etc.usf.edu/plans/default.htm which has videos of teachers using technology in the classroom. There are some lessons that use smart boards included
Share out of book pairings

• What are various ways/reasons/examples of how you can pair books?
• What are some of the major classics you (are required to) teach? Why?
• What makes something a “good” or “bad” pair?
Pride & Prejudice

Who is Mr. Darcy?

Bingleys bring bling to Britain

How to cure your boy-crazy sisters!

Lizzy on love, loss, and living

Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies

Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith

Adapted by Tony Lee
Illustrated by Cliff Richards
What Pairing YA Literature Offers

• Multiple perspectives
• Creating spaces to think differently
• Engage students’ empathy, imagination
• Encourage critical literacy
  – i.e., Texts are never neutral, always constructed by particular people with particular goals and motivations
• Encourage enjoyment of reading
• Demonstrate relevance
• Deepen background or contextual knowledge
Ways to Pair

• Themes
• Parallel stories
• Characterization
• Literary Concepts
• Text Structure
• Retellings
  – Updated
  – Graphic adaptations
Pairing the Canonical with Non-Canonical Literature

• **Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics** ed. by Joan F. Kaywell

• **From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges Between Young Adult Literature and the Classics** by Sarah K. Herz and Donald R. Gallo

• **Pairing Young Adult Literature with the Classics** by Jennifer Elizabeth Polidoro
Parallel Plots & Themes

• **Romeo and Juliet** - Shakespeare
  – *Romiette and Julio* by Sharon Draper
  – *Scribbler of Dreams* by Mary Pearson
  – *If You Come Softly* by Jacqueline Woodson
  – *Crushing on a Capulet* by Tony Abbott

• **Julius Caesar** - Shakespeare
  – *Scorpions* by Walter Dean Myers

• **The Scarlet Letter** - Hawthorne
  – *Waiting for June* by Joyce Sweeney
  – *Annie’s Baby* ed. by Beatrice Sparks
  – *Someone Like You* by Sarah Dessen
  – *Speak* by Laurie Halse Andersen
More Parallel Plots & Themes

- *Dracula* - Bram Stoker
  - *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer
  - *The Silver Kiss* by Annette Curtis Klause
- *Lord of the Flies* - Golding
  - *The Goats* by Brock Cole
  - *Gone* (series) by Michael Grant
- *1984* - George Orwell
  - *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
  - *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier
  - *Feed* by M.T. Anderson
  - *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card
Even More Parallel Plots & Themes...

- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* - Twain
  - *47* by Walter Mosley
  - *The Day They Came to Arrest the Book* by Nat Hentoff
- *Moby Dick* - Melville
  - *Leaving Protection* by Will Hobbs
- *Cyrano DeBergerac* - Rostand
  - *Uglies* by Scott Westerfield
- Shakespeare (generally)
  - *The Shakespeare Stealer* by Dutton
  - *Hamlet* by John Marsden
  - *Fagin the Jew* by Will Eisner
- *Walden*
  - *The Island* by Gary Paulsen
An example... *The Odyssey* - Journey/Quest Hero Motif

- Students select and read a parallel YA novel.
  - *East* by Edith Pattou
  - *Looking for Alaska* by John Green
  - *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment* by James Patterson
  - *So Yesterday* by Scott Westerfield
  - *Hole in My Life* by Jack Gantos
  - *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini
  - *I am the Messenger* by Markus Zusak
  - *Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman
  - *13 Little Blue Envelopes* by Maureen Johnson
- Select from a menu of projects.
Text Sets

• *Black Ships before Troy: The story of the Iliad* by Rosemary Sutcliff
• *Dateline Troy* by Paul Feischman
• *Inside the Walls of Troy* by Clemence McLaren
• *Troy* by Adele Geras
• *Troy High* by Shana Norris
Other “Just Good” Books

• *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
• *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* by Mark Haddon
• *The Book Thief* by Mark Zusak
• *Kindred* by Octavia Butler
• *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
YA Novels with non-ELA Content Courses

• After reading the novel, students research the topic and create a brochure answering an essential question.

• Science
  – *Code Orange* by Caroline B. Cooney
  – *California Blue* by David Klass
  – *Double Helix* by Nancy Werlin
  – *My Sister’s Keeper* by Jodi Picoult
  – *Fade to Black* by Alex Flinn
  – *Kissing Doorknobs* by Terry Spencer Hesser
  – *Stuck in Neutral* by Terry Trueman
  – *Cut* by Patricia McCormick
Dystopic Books

• *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Haddix (population control)
• *House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer (cloning)
• *Exodus* (trilogy) by Julie Bertagna (climate change)
• *Feed* by M.T. Andersen (overconsumption of technology)
• *Life as We Knew It* by Susan Beth Feffer (moon hit by asteroid, climate change)
• *Who Fears Death* by Nnedi Okorafor (second-class citizens and mutilation)
Using Historical Novels

• *All Quiet on the Western Front* - Remarque
  – *Kipling’s Choice* by Geert Spillebeen

• *Night* - Weisel
  – *Briar Rose* by Jane Yolen
  – *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli
  – *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

• *The Things They Carried*
  – *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers

• *The Grapes of Wrath* - Steinbeck
  – *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse
  – *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis
Other History Texts

• American
  – *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Andersen
    • *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy
  – *The Sons of Liberty* by Alexander Lagos and Joseph Lagos (American Revolution with superpowers, anyone?)
  – *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor
  – *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by James Lincoln Collier
  – *Sarah Bishop* by Scott O’Dell
  – *Spite Fences* by Trudy Krisher
  – *Journey to Topaz* by Yoshiko Uchida
  – *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Houston

• Global
  – *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis
  – *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi
  – *Deogratias* by Stassen
Other Subject Areas

• Art
  – *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett

• Chris Crutcher books (lots of sports)

• Math
  – [http://sci.tamucc.edu/~eyoung/middle_school_literature.html](http://sci.tamucc.edu/~eyoung/middle_school_literature.html)
    – Math Curse by Sziceska
    – Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett
Further Resources

• Great annotated list

• Contact Info
  – Jung Kim, Ph.D.; Lewis University
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