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SSW #12

Draft

Beating the Ordinary with the Extraordinary

 When I was younger, I had a tendency to lose myself in imagination. I couldn’t help but see the world for something that it wasn’t; a world full of magic and wonderment beyond normal understanding. So when I began to read books of the Fantasy and Sci-fi genre, later including Utopia/Dystopia, I found myself even more engrossed.

This proved to be a hindrance for my very non-fictional life, which was filled with troubles and trials that couldn’t be solved with the flick of a wand or phaser. However, fiction did offer me something that reality could not, courage. It gave me the strength I needed to face life’s problems.In chapter 7, “Fantasy, Science Fiction, Utopias, and Dystopias” of *Literature for Today’s Young Adult,* the author says, “Perhaps more than any other form of literature, fantasy refuses to accept the world as it is, so readers can see what could have been (and still might be), rather than merely what was or must be.” (LfTYA 102). Neilson goes on to quote Ray Bradbury in the same chapter, where he states,

“The ability to "fantasize" is the ability to survive. It's wonderful to speak about this subject because there have been so many wrong-headed people dealing with it. We're going through a terrible period of art, in literature and living, in psychiatry and psychology. The so-called realists are trying to drive us insane, and I refuse to be driven insane.... We survive by fantasizing. Take that away from us and the whole damned human race goes down the drain.” (LfTYA 102).

Fictional stories, especially ones with extremely different settings like a world of magic or science, offers young adults views of people in situations similar to their own. What was once thought to be a case simply being bullied is taken care of with the courage of Harry Potter or the compassion of Rowan from *Scythe*. The socially awkward are comforted by Ron Weasly or Ender. Even if a young adult doesn’t feel out of place, the stories offered to him/her through the adventures of Katniss Everdeen and Little Bao, gives them the courage to break the mold on society and defy the expectations of those around him/her. The extraordinary problems these characters face and overcome, gives courage to those seeking it, weather they need it to live through life or to improve their life, even if it means screwing it up a bit.

Books:

*Artemis Fowl: The Arctic Incident*

Colfer, Eoin. *Artemis Fowl the Arctic Incident*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2002.

 *The Arctic Incident* is the second book in the *Artemis Fowl* Franchise, and the point in the story where Artemis is now a teenager. When his missing father is found, Artemis must get the help from former adversaries in order to save him.

 The book itself is a little hard to understand as it’s a sequel with characters and jargon that can confuse those who haven’t read the previous book. However, the story delves into the issue of logic vs emotion that young adults face when their emotions are easily unbalance. What is more is that Artemis is a protagonist that has a character arc within the story that exhibits the exeter quality of readers using his experiences to deal with their own life issues.

*W.A.R.P.: The Reluctant Assassin*

Colfer, Eoin. *W.A.R.P. Book 1: The Reluctant Assassin.* Findaway World.

Eoin Colfer’s Sci-fi series starts with the story of Chevie Savano, A teenage FBI agent who has been assigned to London’s W.A.R.P. (Witness Anonymous Relocation Program) branch. She seems reluctant to do so at first, but all of that changes when she meets Riley, a boy from Victorian England who time traveled to the present to escape his former assassin master.

 The story’s plot, though slow at first, soon quickens keeping the readers on the edge of their seats. The relationship between Riley and Chevie portrays real friendship despite the characters being so different, thus it is a good example for readers who experience a feeling of isolation due to having to move. *The Reluctant Assassin* is a good comparison to Colfer’s *Artemis Fowl* series as it deals with many issues while having the same author's style of writing.

*Ender’s Game*

Card, Orson Scott. *Ender's Game.* New York : Tor, 1992. Print.

 *Ender’s Game* is the tale of Andrew “Ender” Wiggins, who is the rare “Third” child in a society that has a two-child policy. However, When Ender is given the chance to go to Battle School in order to fight the “Buggers”, the story challenges Ender’s morality and his loyalty.

 Ender represents a child who is lost in life, similar to many young adults and teens who feel like they don’t fit in anywhere. Because of this, Ender becomes a prime example of a character whose fictional experience helps other readers overcome their real life issues. What is more ist that the theme of loyalty and morality is constantly put into flux, challenging the reader to think for themselves.

*The Hunger Games*

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games.* Scholastic Press, 2010.

 Katniss Everdeen is a teen who fights to survive in her home of District 12. However, she is soon put into a competition where she not only must fight other district children, but also the leader of the Capitol, President Snow.

 Katniss is a character who has to make choices that none of that age should make. However it is through seeing what she chooses and how it affects her world that readers see the consequences of good AND bad choices. The world is one that can easily become our own, acting like a warning to the readers to think about their choices.

*Scythe*

Shusterman, Neal. *Scythe*. Simon & Schuster BFYR, 2017.

In a world where not even age can kill you, Scythes are the only people who can bring death. However, when two teens are apprenticed to a Scythe, both learn what it means to take a life.

 The idea of a world where death only happens if someone else, whose job is to take lives, is one that captures a reader’s attention. It is then that he/she are introduced into a world of politics that center around grim reapers. It is through this world that a reader can come to understand the bigger world as it not only includes different characters, but different views on the idea of taking a life.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Rowling, J.K, and Jim Kay. *Harry Potter and the prisoner of Azkaban.* Bloomsbury, 1999

 Harry, now a teenager, is once again going to Hogwarts for a third year to learn. However, when he is give a clue about a traitor who got his parents killed, Harry’s emotions become charged for conflict.

 While it is true that the world of Harry Potter is a magical one, it still offers readers solutions to problems that may be similar to their own, such as bullying and racism. What is more is that Harry is not a perfect character in the story, as he is very tempted to kill Sirius Black. However, when he restrains himself, he allows for the readers to see that sometimes violence isn’t always the best solution.

*Bluescreen*

Wells, Dan. *Bluescreen.* Balzer Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2017.

 In a world where the world is completely connected to the internet, everyone is online all the time. However, beneath this cyber-linked world works a something dark. When Marisa Carneseca and her friends find out about it, they soon find themselves in trouble.

 This book is a valuable to a reader as not only is it relevant with it’s issues of drug use and internet addiction, but it also draws the reader's in with its story. This is important as its interest makes the reader pay attention more to what he/she is reading. This in turn helps convey the message more and makes it stick.

*Face Like Glass*

Hardinge, Frances. *A Face Like Glass.* Harry N Abrams Inc, 2017.

 In a world underground, FaceSmiths teach the people how to make faces to hide their emotions. However, one little girl with no memory and an always expressive face, brings about a change for the worse or the worst.

 The book is a compelling story for readers who are feeling isolated because of who they are. By exaggerating a world where everyone puts on ‘masks’, the reader becomes engaged in the world of lies and is lead down a path of solution and courage to be one’s self. What is more is that the book’s world of politics allows for the reader to see a bit of the adult world from the perspective a young girl, who may share his/her own views.

*Boxers* (From *Boxers & Saints)*

Yang, Gene Luen, et al. *Boxers & saints*. First Second, 2013

In a time of war, what would you fight for? Would you fight for your country, even if it meant killing your own people? Little Bao must choose between his personal morality and his loyalty to his country.

The book is only the half of the full story. However, because it is half, it offers an almost fully bais view, which after reading *Saints*, allows the reader to chose for (his/her)self which side was write or wrong. What is more is that in both books it doesn’t try and have the characters sympathise with the other side, allowing readers to see what true loyalty is, and what it costs.

*Bridge to Terabithia*

Paterson, Katherine. *Bridge to Terabithia*. Harper, 2017.

 When reality is too harsh, one can use imagination to overcome certain obstacles. That is what Jess Aarons and Leslie Burke do when they go to Terabithia. But how much does imagination really help?

 This book is the centerpiece to my work as it brings together the exaggerated ideas of imagination and true ideas of reality. The problems these two kids face are ones that are common but tough for a kid to face. However, when it comes to the end, the hurdle that must be overcome is difficult, but not impossible to overcome. This lesson is one that carries through all generations.