

CANADA READS: AN INDEPENDENT CANADIAN READING ADVENTURE

THE REASON

The quote is not firmly imprinted on my mind yet the meaning has stuck with me ever since. I was watching a CBC interview a couple of years ago between Yann Martel - the writer - and Evan Solomon - the journalist. The discussion was robust and diverse. Martel discussed his various novels, as well as his more generic ideas regarding the importance of literature in society. One topic dealt with Martel's ongoing - yet recently derailed - quest to get Prime Minister Stephen Harper to read various books that he sent him (check out the website, *What is Stephen Harper Reading?* to read more). His quest ultimately failed.

But that is not what left an imprint. Martel also discussed his ideas about travel and literature. He said something - the Forgotten Quote - like literature is an open window to peep into a culture; that a poignant novel is more useful than a token phrase book or sightseeing manual. He described - though my mind might be adding details and impressions - how novels allow distant readers to walk the streets, smell the foods, listen to the rhythm of the local words and share thoughts before ever purchasing a ticket or counting out the number of pairs of socks to pack.

I was reminded of that discussion when listening to another CBC program, Canada Reads 2011, because the program passionately, critically, and aggressively presented discussion and debate around the Canadian novel that should be read by all Canadians. It was a fascinating program because in the end no book lost - although one ultimately won the debates. Martel's philosophy was reinforced because the program highlighted the importance of literature in informing us about our culture and informing the world about our culture.

That got me thinking. How can the youth of our nation enter the debate? The answer is simple. Choose a Canadian novel, play or graphic novel and debate it's worth as an important novel for Canadians and immigrants or visitors to Canada.

THE TASK 1 : THE SELECTION

1. Choose one of the following Canadian novels that have been discussed and debated as essential reads for Canadians.

Half Blood Blues, Esi Edugyan

The Sisters Brothers, by Patrick DeWitt

The Brown Girl in the Ring, Nalo Hopkinson

The Orenda by Joseph Boyden

The Year of the Flood, by Margaret Atwood

Fall on Your Knees, Anne-Marie MacDonald

Deniro's Game, by Rawi Hage

Best Laid Plans, by Terry Fallis

Annabel, by Kathleen Winter

Cory Doctorow, Little Brother

2. Try and find an excerpt for your novel and read it before finalizing your selection. If you cannot get into the first pages, perhaps another selection would be more suitable. DO NOT CHOOSE A NOVEL BASED ON LENGTH. YOU WILL PROBABLY REGRET IT.

THE TASK 2: THE RATIONALE

1. Write a rationale for choosing the novel. This is not a summary of the text. Your rationale should include why the author piqued your interest and why the text piqued your interest. It should be very personal. The rationale should be approximately 250 words and submitted to TURNITIN.COM (under the discussion tab - Novel Selection) by March 3, 2014.
2. You are responsible for locating the text. If you need to purchase a copy, I will order from **chapters.indigo.ca**. You must bring in the cost plus applicable taxes if you choose this route. **This is strictly optional.**

THE TASK : THE ACTIVE READ

1. Submit ongoing updates of your progress to the TURNITIN.COM discussion forum (under the discussion tab - ongoing novel updates) . Update your progress every 20% of the book (i.e. every 60 pages in a 300 page book). The update must include the following: 1) a strong/poignant "word" image from the section, 2) three new words, 3) two examples of rhetorical/literary devices, 4) a HAIKU that reflects your personal connections/thoughts/reactions to the section, and 5) three poignant questions based on the themes/issues/philosophies in the section.
2. Identify at least 4 connected media texts (films, articles, stories, novels, poems) that reflect the ideas in the selected novel. A brief ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY for each connected text will be required.

THE TASK : THE ANALYSIS

1. Choose one of the LITERARY THEORIES that have been discussed in the course:

Structuralism
Psychoanalytic
New Historicism
Feminist
Marxist

2. Create a question, based on the selected Literary Theory, that “asks” a critical question of the novel. You can use the questions from the handouts, but it will be wise to modify the questions so that it fits the content/ideas in your novel. Submit the question to TURNITIN.COM (under discussion tab - critical question) by May 1, 2014 for approval and advice.
3. Write a critical literary analysis that answers the questions. The critical assessment should be NO MORE THAN 750 words in length. Refer to Analytic Paragraph Structure and Literary Essay Structure handouts/activities for form and organization.
4. Write an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY using the four connected texts you have identified. The ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY must relate to the question/subject/argument that your essay investigates.
5. The critical literary analysis must be submitted using DOUBLE SPACE, COURIER/COURIER NEW 12pt FONT.
6. Submit your analysis to TURNITIN.COM. The due date for this task will be early June 2012. A firm deadline will be determined in the near future.
7. This will be worth 45 marks in total

THE TASK : THE MULTI-MEDIA PROJECT

1. Create a multi-media product for your novel. This will follow the model of the Macbeth: Re-Constructed > Re-envisioned > Re-Told activity, and include an auditory and visual component. This should be highly creative, organized and appealing. DO NOT USE BRISTOL-BOARD.
2. use at least 5 new words and 3 figurative expressions, lines, passages and write an original RECONSTRUCTED story based on a theme or themes in the novel
3. Create a multimedia product that creatively incorporates visuals (photos, acting, paintings), voice (yours, recorded or live) and sound (i.e songs or special effects). The product can be tangible, digital or live.
4. Present to your classmates.

Evaluation for this project will be based on:

- Your active and critical reading of a literary text
- Your thinking about the intertextual connections between your novel and other texts
- Your communication, using proper form and conventions, of the intertextual connections
- Your application of the literary theories and your thinking about the issues/controversies/philosophies with your text
- Your application of the literary analysis/essay form
- Your use of textual evidence to support your analysis
- Your communication, using strong sentences, rhetorical sentence patterns, literary devices, in literary analysis and creative writing
- Your communication, using figurative imagery, engaging oral techniques, in media creation and audio-visual activities