Chapter 12

Global and Multicultural Literature for Young Adults

This chapter concerns young adult literature that involves or allows for a focus on the experience of social and cultural difference and diversity, locally, nationally, and most importantly globally. In the past we might have called this multicultural literature, or possibly international or world literature, but we prefer the more inclusive and comprehensive term **global literature.** Like multicultural literature, this category includes minority, indigenous, and other literature that highlights local or national culture, communities, and regions (e.g., Native American literature, African American literature, Asian American Literature, Anglo American literature, literature of the America South, and that of the Great Plains/Prairies), but unlike multicultural literature, it also includes historical and contemporary works from the international community, that is, from other countries, other regions, or specific global populations (e.g., pan-indigenous peoples: Native Americans, First Nations, Inuit, Aboriginal, Maori, Sami, etc.).

Learning Objectives

- Understand the distinction between multicultural and global young adult literature.
- Consider and be able to discuss how global young adult literature encompasses the international community from a variety of perspectives.

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- Develop an understanding of cosmopolitan theory as it relates to the exploration of global texts.
- Know the elements of global young adult literature and various strategies for exploring the genre with students.
- Continue to create a database of young adult literature that includes some of the titles discussed in this chapter.

Vignette: Ms. Prine's Middle School Global Literature Class

Ms. Prine teaches in an international charter middle school. She has her students, many of whom have emigrated from various countries, read an award-winning young adult novel *Words in the Dust* (2011) by Trent Reedy. The novel chronicles Zulaikha's life in Afghanistan where she is teased incessantly for a facial deformity (cleft palate) in a culture that values women by their marriage prospects. Although the Taliban is no longer in power, they have taken her mother from her, and at 13, she is keeping house for a very busy and intolerant father and his nasty wife. All this begins to change as Zulaikha meets Meena, a former professor who wants to encourage Zulaikha's writing and teach her about poetry. Her life is altered forever by facial surgery arranged by the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. Ms. Prine asks her students to create Body Biographies (Bean, Readence, & Baldwin, 2011) of one of the characters in the novel. Body biographies start with an outline of a student's body on butcher paper. Students search the Internet or develop their own drawing in the body outline that represents thoughts, feelings, and experiences the character has in the novel. Ms. Prine has her students do a gallery walk where they present their body biographies and explain how they depict the character's experiences.

Common Core Standards

The following standards are addressed in this chapter:

RL.6.9, 7.9 Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems and historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

RL.8.2, 9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text, and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.8.3, 9-10.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

By including multicultural literature from within the country, as well as international or world literature, global literature is a much broader designation and neatly avoids isolating national from international works and authors. Such isolation is a problem. As noted by several scholars, students in world literature classes tend to come away from such courses perceiving "anything non-Western as 'other' or foreign, rather than with a stronger sense that we are the world; and, the world is us" (Qureshi, 2006, p. 34; Reese, 2002).

Moreover, global literature avoids the relativism inherent in the term *international literature* because what is international or foreign is related to one's location. What is international or world literature from the perspective of a reader in India might be different from someone from Canada or the United States.

The designation of international or world literature has other difficulties as well. In America, international literature at times refers to works written in other countries but published (in English) in the United States; in some cases, it refers to these books and to those written by immigrants in the United States about their home countries. In other instances, it is a broader category including any work regardless of the location of the publisher, the language of the text, and/or nationality or location of the author. In this sense, it is more closely aligned with our notion of global literature.

Global literature encompasses it all. In the rationale that is included in this chapter, we discuss why a category that includes national minority and multicultural literature along with works written from elsewhere may be particularly important and relevant for 21st-century students. Activity 12.1 taps into students' global and international experiences and funds of knowledge.

ACTIVITY 12.1: Professional Reflection and Discussion

Reflect alone and share with others the following. Consider your own global/international experience. What are the major global/international experiences or encounters you have had to date in your life? Name and discuss the ways in which the global world is implicated in your day-to-day life: food, music, film, clothing, transportation, services, work, and study. Consider the global literary texts you have read or films you have seen. List the literary texts or thematic units you have studied formally in the course of your secondary and postsecondary education that might fit the category of world or international or global literature.

YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE/GLOBAL LITERATURE

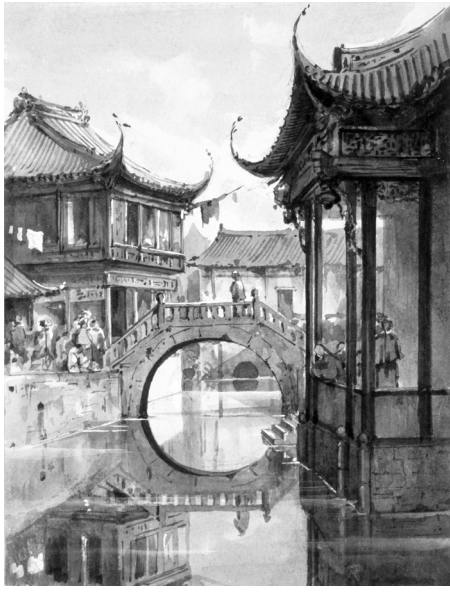
Although global literature is a very broad category, for the purposes of this textbook, we have some parameters. The focus on social and cultural diversity means that not every text would be included. Obviously, narratives where the social and historical circumstances of the context and/or the social and cultural background of the characters are relatively insignificant in the development of the plot or theme would not be included in global literature. For example, generic crime fiction or romantic fiction in which the setting or characters serve only to add a "colorful" or "exotic" backdrop for the narrative would not be considered in a unit on global literature. For us, this explanation is critical because the overriding intention with this literature is to expand students' understanding of themselves and others in the world through the critical study of social and cultural diversity and on how power has now and in the past defined social difference and its effects on individual and collective life.

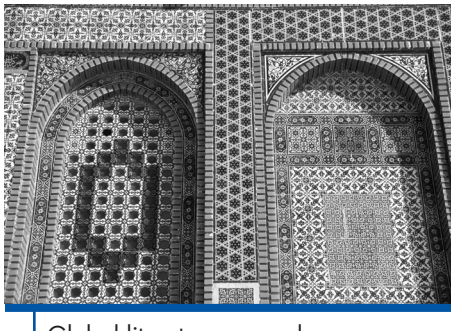
Our focus is on adolescent literature, so we are concentrating in this chapter on global literature for young adults. While global literature is a relatively new term, global literature for young adults is even more recent, although we suspect teachers have been working with the idea for some time. Young adult literature as described in Chapter 2 includes works written specifically for adolescents that usually feature adolescent characters, with themes and narratives that adolescents generally find appealing. Global literature for young adults can be considered a subset of young adult literature. It includes works ideally written for adolescents that feature children or adolescent characters in narratives where race, ethnicity, or nationality, along with other forms of social difference (e.g., gender, religion, social class, language, or disability) are critical. In these stories, a focus on culture diversity and difference and social power is possible.

Well-known children and adolescent literature might be included in the category (e.g., *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank [1952/1995]), but many contemporary works fit the category including such award-winning, young adult books as *Night* (1982) by Elie Wiesel, the testimony of a teenager transported with his family to Auschwitz; and *The Breadwinner* (2001), *Parvana's Journey* (2002), and *Mud City* (2003) by Deborah Ellis, all of which are set in Afghanistan during the 1990s and concern the efforts of a 12-year-old girl to help her family survive during the time of Taliban rule. Other award-winning examples include *The Other Side of Truth* (2001) by Beverley Naidoo, set in Nigeria and England; *Before We Were Free* (2002) by Julia Alvarez, set in the Dominican Republic in the 1960s; *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood* (2007) by Ibtisam Barakat, set in Palestine; and American texts such as *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) by Sherman Alexie; the graphic novel *American-Born Chinese* (2007) by Gene Luen Yang; and *Esperanza Rising* (2000) by Pam Munoz Ryan.

These and other texts will be discussed further in the chapter. In addition, there is an annotated bibliography, as well as a list of websites, that will provide readers with titles of the most recent and recognized works and various teaching resources that would fit the category.

We believe that these works written specifically for adolescents hold tremendous power to engage adolescent readers; however, we must acknowledge that not all cultures would name and recognize adolescents and young adult literature in the same way, if at all. Many cultures may not have texts specified for adolescents, nor will all adolescents, particularly older students, be enamored with what adults have designated and produced as "young adult literature." Also, several excellent contemporary works were not specifically written for adolescents but are popular with them and with their teachers, and these texts would seem to hold great promise for expanding students' understanding of themselves and others in the world in a unit on global literature. These texts include such works as *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (2003) and *Persepolis 2: A Story of Return* (2004), best-selling graphic novels written about childhood in Iran by Marjane Satrapi; *Maus I*: A *Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* (1986) and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (1992), graphic novels written by Pulitzer prize winner Art Spiegelman; or *The Kite Runner* (2003) a novel and now a film written by Khaled Hosseini. We have included a small number of these texts in this chapter, but in general, we have focused on works that are specifically written for adolescents.





Global literature expands understanding of what it means to be a global citizen.

We should also note that although we concentrate on fictional texts in this chapter, specifically novels, the works could include other fictional forms: short stories, poetry, plays, and so on. In addition, although we have used the term *literature*, we encourage a loose definition of this term and ask teachers to consider, in addition, nonfiction and nonprint works, for example, oral and print histories and biographies, and media such as films, documentaries, television, music, and Internet websites.

Global literature is an inclusive, comprehensive, and dynamic category, and we recognize that it may create an organizing nightmare for school librarians and teachers, but it just means broadening the diversity of texts and authors made available to students in light of these new and changing times for 21st-century teens. The intention is to expand students' understanding of themselves and others in the world and of the issues of difference and diversity. By allowing them to cross local and national borders in their reading, they can experience, aesthetically and intellectually, the widest range of experiences and perspectives possible, and they can read and consider local and national literature in relation to the global literature they have read. Nonetheless, the logistics of organizing and framing global literature for students can be challenging, so we offer the following ideas for your consideration.

Some school jurisdictions offer a separate world literature course, which could with little effort be turned into a global literature course, along the lines of what we have outlined. But whether this exists at your school or not, we would support the efforts of any teacher or group of teachers to include more global literature as supplementary reading throughout their English/Language Arts program. Most importantly, we would recommend that a concentrated unit on a theme involving global literature be included in the curriculum.

One of the most common ways of organizing such a unit of study is by place and/or by time, mirroring the traditional organization in university English departments, for example, 18th-century French literature, Victorian (British) literature, 20th-century American literature, and so on. Alternatively multicultural units of study are often organized by the particular social, cultural, or ethnic groups, for example, women's literature, Native American literature, African American (Black) literature, and Hispanic literature. Because the focus in this chapter is on the broad and comprehensive category of global literature, we would recommend a thematic or multicultural unit.

Thematic units that have a global theme with local relevance for adolescents would be most appropriate. Teachers may want to survey their students to determine a specific theme for their study. Students might be interested in global young adult literature that focused on the general topic of war and conflict, the Holocaust, immigration and migration, intergenerational conflict, fantasy, or

coming of age, but it will be important to solicit their ideas. Although we need to take into account their interests, the specific theme or question or emphasis that would frame the unit would be much more dynamic reflecting the specific issues, interests, and energies most prominent at the time.

Providing adolescents with choice and ensuring encounters with a wide range of reading materials is recognized as an element of good teaching according to various policy statements offered by the International Reading Association (www.reading.org), by the National Reading Conference (www.nrconline.org), and by the National Council for Teachers of English (www.ncte.org). Choice is important in motivating and engaging students in their reading, and the range of reading abilities and English language abilities in any one classroom will demand a wide range of reading materials with differing reading levels. More importantly, in a theme in a unit on global literature, a wide range of voices from any one population on any issue or theme is particularly important to avoid simple and stereotypical thinking. Not all texts need to be intensively studied. Although there may be only one or two core texts read intensively by all or by a group of students (literature circles), we suggest supporting texts of all sorts be read in any one unit.

"ADOLESCENT LIVES IN TIMES OF WAR AND CONFLICT": A SAMPLE UNIT

The process of developing a unit encompassing global literature can be illustrated with the following unit centered on conflict in the Middle East. In a unit on "Adolescent Lives in Times of War and Conflict," for example, chosen by the students from a list generated and organized by the class and their teacher, central inquiry might focus on the question of how adolescents understand and represent their experience of war. In the case of American students, the unit might begin with a project investigating local teens' knowledge and experience of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, perhaps through personal or journalistic writing. Literary works that might serve to support and broaden this investigation to a global perspective, depending on the grade and reading levels of the students, might include Thura Al-Windawi's (2004) nonfiction text: *Thura's Diary: A Young Girl's Life in War-Torn Baghdad*. As suggested by the title, this book is an actual diary of an "average Iraqi teenager" during the bombing of Baghdad in 2003. In addition, other works to consider are Amal Rifa'i and Israelia Odelia Ainbinder's (2003) book of letters titled *We Just Want to Live Here*, which chronicles a friendship between a Palestinian and Israeli teenage girls following the Intifada of 2000, and Deborah Ellis's

(2004) nonfiction text *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak,* in which Israeli and Palestinian children offer their personal stories concerning the ongoing Middle East conflict. Mentioned previously in the chapter, Ellis's popular (2002) novel *Parvana's Journey*, and/or the graphic novel *Persepolis: A Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi, and/or the classic text *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank (1952/2005) and/or *Night* (1982) by Elie Wiesel. Teachers may also want to consider the powerful novel by Walter Dean Myers (2008) *Sunrise over Fallujah*, a fictional story of a young American soldier serving in Iraq.

One or two of these texts might serve as a core text and would read be intensively with their teacher and/or their classmates or a subsection of their classmates. The reading and writing done in this unit could be supported further by recent newspaper reports, magazine articles, film, documentaries, Internet sites, and United Nations documents (e.g., the Convention on the Rights of the Child, www.un.org). Certainly a teacher might offer students supplementary magazine articles focused on the issue of child soldiers (see *Time* Magazine*)*.

These literary material and texts offered in this unit will be, or certainly can be, emotionally difficult for students and teachers, although we think watching the evening news can be equally as difficult. A supportive and sensitive teacher is necessary for this unit and any unit that allows for deep engagement with traumatic local/global events and circumstances. Materials will need to be carefully selected as appropriate for the age and emotional maturity of the students involved. Class discussion will be a must.

Other challenges that this and any unit on global literature might present include the following. The wide range of texts and literature needed in any global literature unit might not be easy to secure. Some schools and departments with a strong focus on national and canonical works may not have a wide selection of classroom texts that fall under the category of global or international literature, particularly those that might also be considered contemporary young adult texts. In part, this may be because global literature is not a priority nor is it a well-known area of study for many teachers or administrators, who might be more inclined to go with what is familiar to them and their own educational history. Furthermore, there may be a prescribed list of approved texts that prevents new and alternative works from being considered, let alone purchased. This means that teachers, department heads, media specialists, and librarians will need to work together to expand the approved lists for all the reasons described previously.

Another challenge for some teachers is that they may feel uncomfortable teaching a literary work that they have not read before, situated in a place, about

a population, and culture they themselves do not know. Fortunately, there are many resources for teachers, not the least of which are students, their parents, and communities. The involvement of parents and community members can provide some powerful learning experiences for everyone. In addition, the school librarian, literacy specialist/coach, and bookstore personnel might be able to assist in the selection of powerful, award-winning texts.

We would like to draw particular attention to an excellent list of such books: The Notable Books for a Global Society K-12 (www.tcnj.edu/~childlit/proj/nbgs).

An annotated bibliography of the books on this list is published each year in *The Dragon Lode*, the journal of the Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association. For a recent analysis of the list, see Nancy Hadaway and Marian McKenna's 2007 text *Breaking Boundaries with Global Literature: Celebrating Diversity in K-12 Classrooms*.

No teacher can have the breadth of knowledge that may be called on in a unit on global literature, so above all else, a teacher needs to acknowledge the limits of his or her own knowledge, even about cultures and circumstances that he or she may know intimately. Of course, no teacher or student should feel pressured to represent his or her cultural background(s) or for that matter share his or her family's history or circumstances if reluctant to do so.

A wide range of interpretations or voices is important on sensitive or difficult issues in any unit but particularly in a unit in global literature; for example, the issue of wearing the hyjab may arise in the reading of literature written by and about Muslim women and girls. A range of perspectives on this issue would seem in order. This does not mean that teachers need to include all perspectives and/or opinions, even those that might be offensive. Democratic principles and values and human rights doctrine can help prevent discussions and choices from becoming relative and subjective.

Of course, in any unit of study, but particularly one on global literature on controversial topics, great sensitivity and civility needs to be assured for a positive learning environment. Misunderstandings, communication difficulties, and differences of opinion should be expected and discussed with students prior to their occurrence. Again, several multicultural education and anti-racist resources can help teachers feel more comfortable in designing and implementing powerful, exciting, relevant, and possibly controversial global literature units in their English/Language Arts classrooms.

Finding, choosing, and organizing literary and nonliterary material and ensuring a positive, culturally responsive learning environment are critical, but of course, they represent just the beginning. A unit or course on global literature

requires more than a supportive environment and more than just a wider and diverse selection of reading materials; we believe it requires a new perspective: a new way of reading.

COSMOPOLITAN READING

Global literature is not just about books, per se, but about an approach: what we are calling **cosmopolitan reading.** We believe this approach or stance can be brought to bear on all literature, but it seems particularly important in a unit on global literature for young adult readers.

Individuals become citizens of the world when they adopt a global mindset.

Cosmopolitanism is a term with a long history that dates back to the ancient Greeks; it reappears in the works of the Enlightenment philosophers of the 18th century, and then it returns in the discourse of our own times. In its modern iteration, there are multiple definitions. Among other possibilities, a cosmopolitan might refer to a city dweller or to a world citizen. Cosmopolitanism might refer to a political position or philosophy. For some of you, "cosmopolitan" is a particular women's magazine or a famous cocktail.

In what we are naming as cosmopolitan reading, cosmopolitanism refers to a critical perspective that frames self and other in relation to the world rather than, or in addition, to the nation. Part of this reframing, by necessity, involves extending the obligations of self to others beyond local and national borders and beyond national citizenship (Appiah, 2006; Banks, 2004; Nussbaum, 1999). Such a global reframing of the self is the result of a stronger local and global interface that finds many of us, and certainly many of our students, immersed in social and cultural diversity and difference, and where increasingly "21st-century life and identities are ethically and culturally simultaneously global and local" (Beck, 2002, p. 36; see also Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2005). Students who develop or maintain contacts internationally as well as in their school or neighborhood using the Internet are certainly living out lives and identities that may be local and global. What students wear, what they listen to, where and what they eat, and where they may work or live now and in the future may reflect a global or cosmopolitan trajectory.

The intense interface of the local and global is a result of **globalization**, that is, by the extensive movement or flow of information, ideas, images, capital, and people across increasingly permeable political borders as a result of economic and technological change (Castells, 2004; Luke & Carrington, 2001). The speed,

durability, flexibility, and mutability of networks and flows are effecting every aspect of local and national communities, albeit unevenly.

In the case of migration, James Banks (2004) noted that "worldwide immigration/migration is increasing diversity . . . . Migration within and across nation-states is a worldwide phenomenon. However, never before in history has the movement of diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups within and across nation-states been so extensive, so rapid, or raised such complex questions about citizenship, human rights, democracy and education" (p. 132). In addition, for those with access, technological advancement has made worldwide communication, and the movement of ideas and images, easy and immediate. Thus, it is possible to gain instant access to the world community and its conditions, as well as to form and maintain global identities, attachments, commitments, and allegiances in both our work lives and our personal lives.

Individuals by choice or necessity become citizens of the world with a global mindset. In an ideal world, such "citizens may be more likely to make decisions and take actions in the global interests that will benefit mankind" (Banks, 2004, p. 134). Indeed, the underlying ethos of cosmopolitanism promises ways of living together in conditions of social and political difference . . . to understand our social and ethical responsibilities in the context of unexpected or perplexing diversity that exists within and beyond our borders (Appiah, 2006).

Although a cosmopolitan reading or perspective may be increasingly important for all of us, we would argue that for adolescents in the 21st century, it is absolutely critical and absolutely necessary. Although we cannot predict precisely what their lives will look like, we do know that they will be living in conditions that will be quite different from many of us.

We know now the following:

- Because of technology, the world of the 21st-century adolescent is much more globally interdependent and interconnected. There is and will be much more immediate virtual contact with communities beyond the local and national context.
- Because of globalization and the extensive migration and immigration of populations across the planet, adolescents now and in the future will be in direct contact with increasingly diverse populations in their local contexts or will be represented in the migrating and immigrating.
- Because immigrants and established minority populations are increasing in diversity among adolescents, new and established migrating groups along with indigenous populations more than ever need to work together to expand and deepen and enrich democratic life and the sensibilities it will require.

- Because of the mobility of people and capital, and the domination of capitalism, work and economic life patterns may be more dynamic and certainly more international in scope, and economic life will be more interdependent.
- Because the world continues to be plagued by poverty, inequality, injustice, violence, terrorism, and oppression, and because the nations of the world are increasingly interdependent and interconnected, solutions now and in the future will require global solutions. As citizens now and in the future, adolescents will be contending with these problems.
- Ecological issues and other issues related to the natural world will also require global cooperation. Adolescents will be facing difficult ecological dilemmas now and in the future and will need international cooperation.

Certainly global warming will require creative, courageous, and integrated efforts from the local, national, and global community.

This is our rationale for including global literature and cosmopolitan reading in this book and in our teaching lives; please add to it as you see fit. If global literature and cosmopolitanism reading are viewed as critical and necessary in these times for ourselves and particularly for our students, then the question remains: What does the articulation of this perspective look like in relation to the teaching of global literature to young adults?

LITERARY ORIENTATION AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

As stated in the section on cosmopolitan reading, "cosmopolitanism" refers to a critical perspective that names and frames self and other in relation to the world rather than or in addition to the nation. In this work, we emphasize inquiry concerning social and cultural difference and diversity from a global perspective in efforts to increase global awareness and develop sensibilities suitable for global citizenship.

In these cosmopolitan/global times, culture, cultural difference, and identity are not fixed but are dynamic as individuals and groups fashion themselves a new in response to changing conditions and influences. Cosmopolitan readings work to increase knowledge and understanding of dynamic local and global cultures, as well as cultural identities, while acknowledging one's own cultural and geographical location(s), and so recognizing the limits of ever fully understanding others. It works against stereotyping and simplistic understandings of social and cultural issues and contexts. Although cosmopolitanism and the study of sociocultural difference could apply to any subject area, particularly

social studies or civics, in the English/Language Arts classroom, it means organizing and structuring encounters with literature or text that allow for and encourages the reframing of the self and one's local/global cultural practices within a global frame.

In practical terms, a cosmopolitan reading focuses on the following three general sets of questions concerning any work:

1. *The World in the Text:* Questions concerning the nature and circumstances of the story and its context and its effect on the reader, for example, What is this narrative about? What surprised you about the setting and characters? What are the issues concerning cultural difference and diversity evident in this text or group of texts?
2. *The Text in the World:* Critical questions concerning text as a representation of the world and as an artifact in the world, for example, Who wrote this book and from what perspective? Who reads this text? Where was it published, and was it translated? How was it received locally and globally; that is, who would like or not like the text? How does it relate to other similar texts now and when it was written? How does the text work to support or challenge the dominant or conventional ways of understanding self and other in the world?
3. *The Text in the World of the Adolescent:* Questions concerning the effects/relevance of this text on the immediate life, the cultural identities, and the identifications lived out locally/globally for teens, for example, What are the implications of this text for local adolescents? What critical actions might they take in light of their reading? What other reading would they like now to do?

Although it is possible that these foci might be approached through any of the general orientations toward the study of literature described in Chapter 3 (cultural heritage, personal or reader response, and cultural criticism), reader response and cultural criticism seem most appropriate. We list possible ideas and activities for you to consider and, if implemented, to customize for use in your particular context.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRIOR READING ACTIVITIES

For students and teachers to engage deeply in the literature and other texts in the unit, let alone the overall theme or question framing their work, means attending to the local and global context: the local context in which the work

is read and the context in which the work is set. The connections between the two are critical to creating an experience wherein the unit of study is not as viewed as a long travelogue in which the reader becomes a traveler studying another culture but as an engaged and deeply implicated participant, inside not outside the experience. In research, we call this position a participant-observer. Implicating the reader is an ongoing process, but initially it might mean beginning with students' local lives, identities, and communities, as well as their connections to the global community. Earlier, Activity 12.1 asked readers to trace their international experiences and connections experienced in their everyday lives (the food they eat, clothes they wear, and music they listen to). This activity might be a good way for students to begin to highlight the global, and to explore and reflect local lives and identities within a global frame.

In the case of the unit on "Adolescent Lives in Times of War and Conflict," teachers might begin with, and over the course of the unit return to, local teens and their knowledge and experience of the war in Iraq and the conflict in Afghanistan. It may mean beginning with listing possible effects of war on American adolescents. It might mean finding and analyzing military recruitment materials, ads on television, and news reports of the war; working with the social studies teacher to provide background on the war; and collecting local stories about the war and families. It will mean considering how the Middle East is represented positively and negatively in the local population and in the local culture (restaurants, fashion, and architecture). It might mean tracing the effects of war across family generations.

Reading global young adult literature helps students to understand the complex nature of cultural, national, regional, and global identifications.

Although the unit might start with the local, in any global literature unit, the local *in the global* needs to be developed to support reading and inquiry in the unit. Expanding out to the global through the study of texts will require knowledge, openness, and courage.

Thus, the specific context of the literary work or text to be read and studied will need to be attended to, as it is in any literature lesson. Background information begins with what knowledge individuals bring to the unit about war and how war stories are narrated, and in this case with what they know about the setting and circumstances of the literature they will be reading. This knowledge can be developed through supplementary reading, films, websites, personal contacts, and interviews and presentations from the pertinent community members and organizations.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES ARISING IN THE READING OF CORE TEXTS

Three sets of questions were listed in this chapter. Considering the unit on war, this framework might be articulated as follows:

The World in the Text: Groups or individual students work to develop understanding of a chosen text or narrative (see Chapter 3 for ideas) such that they can share the story, review its contents, and dramatize important selections to other students as part of a larger depiction of the war experiences of adolescents from various groups of students who are reading different works (e.g., literature circles). Comprehending the world in the text is the key to this activity.

The Text in the World: Students might contact, online or in print, the writer of the text, the adolescent featured in the work, or other readers of the text for their comments and thoughts about the work. Students might want to explore reviews of the texts and other information on authors' and publishers' websites. Students might want to develop comparisons with between the text and other narratives, and other genre forms on a similar topic/theme.

The Text in the World of the Adolescent: Students might want to reflect on what the readings across the unit mean in relation to their own direct and indirect experiences of war and conflict. They might be encouraged to consider their commitments and sacrifices during times of conflict and war. They may wish to write their own reviews of the pieces read, create a collage of quotes from the fictional and/or real-life teenagers they have read, or in some dramatic or artistic form represent the experience they have had in the unit and present it to an audience wider than their classmates. Such an activity could serve as a culminating event for the unit.

In working through the texts and the activities in the unit, James Banks, among others, has suggested that schools should help students to understand how cultural, national, regional, and global identifications are interrelated, complex, and evolving. Each student should be encouraged to examine critically his or her identifications and commitments and to understand the complex ways in which they are interrelated and constructed (Banks, 2004). In the case of this unit, students could explore how adolescence and adolescent life, its identity, and affiliations are changed, intensified, subverted, and obliterated in the context of local and global warfare as well as across borders.

MULTIMEDIA TEXT SET

In this text set, teacher Mark Fielding chose books and resources that explored the issue of refugees in different locations. He wanted students to understand that refugees are found in every part of the world and that this problem is not tied to a particular place. Moreover, he chose books that would allow students to understand the point of view of the main characters. In his words,

> I chose *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan (Williams, 2005)* and *The Colour of Home (Hoffman, 2002)*. Both of these explore the subject from the point of view of children around the same ages of my students. Additionally, *The Colour of Home* deals with an experience that many of my students are familiar with, which is the experience of being a new student at a new school in a new place.

Picture Books:

1. Cha, D. (1996). *Dia's story cloth*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

I selected this picture book because it explores the issue of refugees in another locale, Laos and Thailand. I really like the idea of students being able to see that the issue of being a refugee extends to many parts of the world, and that the hardship and difficult experiences are unfortunately common threads throughout. This book also has a very unique way of depicting the events with pictures from a story cloth. I thought this would be an interesting way to show students how illustration does not have to simply be a literal picture of the text.

2. Williams, M. (2005). *Brothers in hope: The story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

I selected this picture book because it again explores the experiences of refugees in another location in the world. Additionally, it focuses on refugees that are around the ages of the students at my school, as the Lost Boys range from 8 to 15 years old. The sheer amount of refugees, the extreme difficulty of their experiences, and the resettlement of some of the boys in America make for extremely engaging topics to discuss with students.

3. Hoffman, M. (2002). *The colour of home*. New York, NY: Penguin.

This book explores the issue of refugees from Somalia but from a different perspective. In this story, Hassan is telling his experience as a newly resettled refugee in England and his difficulty adapting to his new home in England. For many of my students, changing schools and homes is something they have experienced, as well as the fear that comes with change. I thought this would be an excellent book to both explore the theme of refugees and connect it to my students' own experiences.

MULTIMEDIA SOURCES

1. Website of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

I chose this because I think students' first reaction to exploring the issue of refugees will be "What is being done to help them?" I want to show students that there are people who care and are trying to provide assistance to refugees, but unfortunately they cannot extend help to everyone.

2. Website for the Jewish Council for Racial Equality:

www.jcore.org.uk/what.php

This is a website for an organization that promotes education about justice and equality for children, as well as provides practical support to refugees seeking asylum. I think it is an interesting resource because it shows one group of people, defined by their religion, proclaiming their belief that race and religion should have no bearing on a person's individual rights. I think it could lead into an interesting discussion about coexistence of different peoples.

SUMMARY

We believe the study of high-quality, high-interest global young adult literature taught from a cosmopolitan perspective will help in the development of students who are knowledgeable about, sensitive to, and comfortable with social and cultural difference and diversity locally, nationally, and globally and who will seek more just, equitable, compassionate, and democratic communities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the distinction between multicultural and global young adult literature? Provide examples.
2. How does global young adult literature encompass the international community from a variety of perspectives? Are there perspectives that are not represented?
3. How does cosmopolitan theory as it relates to the exploration of global texts provide students with a critical perspective?
4. What are the elements of global young adult literature? Which of the various strategies for exploring the genre with students would you want to try? Why?

KEY TERMS

Cosmopolitanism 250
Cosmopolitan Reading 250
Globalization 250
Global Literature 241

SMALL-GROUP ACTIVITY: CREATING AND DEVELOPING A UNIT

This is, of course, is only the beginning of a "unit on Adolescent Lives in Times of War and Conflict." In light of the students you teach or anticipate teaching, how would you customize this unit or another unit, what kinds of reading materials would you use, and what kind of activities might be possible? What kind of resistance might you anticipate? What kind of benefits might there be? Discuss with your classmates and/or colleagues.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Carey-Webb, A. (2001). *Literature & lives: A response-based cultural studies approach to teaching English*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

This excellent resource offers teachers a critical perspective for engaging students in vibrant discussion.

Hadaway, N. L., & McKenna, M. J. (Eds.). (2007). *Breaking boundaries with global literature: Celebrating diversity in K-12 classrooms*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

This edited volume includes lists of global literature and resources.

WEBSITES ON GLOBAL LITERATURE

Notable Books for a Global Society from the Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association: www.tcnj.edu/~childlit/proj/nbgs

JOURNALS ON YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

The Alan Review
Dragon Lode

RECOMMENDED YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE FEATURED IN THIS CHAPTER

Al-Windawi, T. (2004). *Thura's diary: A young girl's life in war-torn Baghdad*. New York, NY: Penguin.

This account traces the onset of war in Baghdad from the perspective of an Iraqi citizen, Thura, a 19-year-old college student. Ultimately, she flees the city for the United States and a chance to continue her college studies. Her diary traces this journey away from the bombings and strife in her homeland.

Alexie, S. (2007). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*. New York, NY: Little, Brown.

Junior, the main character, leaves his friends in the struggling Spokane, Washington, reservation high school to attend a high-powered town school. This commute off the reservation angers Junior's friends and creates powerful inner conflicts as Junior experiences firsthand the radical differences in material resources in the two settings.

Alvarez, J. (2002). *Before we were free*. New York, NY: Knopf Books for Young Readers.

In the Dominican Republic, 12-year-old Anita de la Torre's family opposes a violent dictatorship and Anita must flee her country, leaving everything familiar behind.

Barakat, I. (2007). *Tasting the sky: A Palestinian childhood*. New York, NY: Melanie Kroupa Books.

Written as a memoir of a Palestinian refugee from the Six-Day War that concluded in 1967, resulting in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, this first hand account takes the reader into the heart of the Middle East conflict.

Ellis, D. (2001). *The breadwinner*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Groundwood.

The first of three books chronicling the war in Afghanistan, this novel follows a young teenaged girl, Parvana, as she and her family prepare to flee war-torn Kabul. Two other novels trace her journey out of her home country (*Parvana's Journey*, 2002, and *Mud City*, 2003).

Ellis, D. (2002). *Parvana's journey*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Groundwood.

Ellis, D. (2003). *Mud city*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Groundwood.

Ellis, D. (2004). *Three wishes: Palestinian and Israeli children speak*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Groundwood.

This is a very compelling collection of the voices of Palestinian and Israeli youth with their proposals for peace in the region. The 110-page book includes historical information, photos of the region, and biographical sketches of each of the young writers.

Frank, A. (1952/1995). *Diary of a young girl: The definitive edition.* New York, NY: Doubleday.

This crucial account is now part of any unit on the Holocaust, and it is clearly part of the literary canon. Newer accounts of youth in war zones like Deborah Ellis's trilogy also offer an insider's view of struggle and survival in war-torn nations.

Hosseini, K. (2003). *The kite runner.* New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

Myers, W. D. (2008). *Sunrise over Fallujah*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

The war in Iraq is seen from the perspective of a young African American soldier from Harlem working with the local people as part of a Civilian Affairs unit. The contradictions and doublespeak that cover the real purpose of this unit's operation weighs heavily on Robin Perry, the main character.

Naidoo, B. (2001). *The other side of truth*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

This novel is located initially in Lagos, Nigeria, where Sade's father is a well-known journalist protesting the military coup. He is the target of an assassin who inadvertently kills Sade's mother and the family must flee illegally to London, England, where Sade and her brother are victims of racism and bullying. Sade is resourceful and a survivor, using the media to help her cause.

Reedy, T. (2011). *Words in the dust*. New York, NY: Arthur Levine Books.

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, Zulaikha learns to write poetry as a salve for everything she has gone through, but other challenges loom in her village.

Rifa'i, A., & Ainbinder, I. O. (2003). *We just want to live here*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.

Following a summer peace camp, two teenage girls carry on a conversation about their respective lives in Palestine and Israel. They correspond through letter writing and create alternatives to feeling trapped in their respective countries.

Ryan, P. M. (2000). *Esperanza rising.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Set in a Mexican farm labor camp outside Bakersfield, California, this novel chronicles a young Latina girl's life during the Great Depression. The story is based on the author's maternal grandmother who left a rich life in Mexico to immigrate to the United States and work in a San Joaquin Valley labor camp. As historical fiction, the novel can be paired with nonfiction accounts in history to illuminate the grassroots experiences of Mexican immigrant workers during the Great Depression.

Satrapi, M. (2003). *Persepolis: The story of childhood.* New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

This graphic novel is a powerful autobiography of a young girl growing up in Tehran, Iran, during the Islamic revolution of 1979. It can be read and discussed alongside other young adult novels dealing with war issues.

Satrapi, M. (2004). *Persepollis 2: A story of return*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

In this sequel, Marjane returns to Iran after graduation, studies art at the university, and falls in love. Her struggles in fundamentalist Iran haunt her in this powerful graphic novel.

Spiegelman, A. (1986). *Maus I*: A *survivor's tale: My father bleeds history*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Spiegelman, A. (1992). *Maus II: A survivor's tale: And here my troubles began*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Vladek's tortured relationship with his aging father frames these comic pages.

Wiesel, E. (1982). *Night*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

This Holocaust novel is centered in a Nazi German concentration camp with dark images and despair a constant.

Yang, G. L. (2007). *American-born Chinese*. New York, NY: First Second.

This popular graphic novel features three parallel stories and themes of struggling to fit in.

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