Fendinger / Poch

Nick started with background about Francine Prose, giving some ethos for her. Nicely done! Careful about just looking at me... ironically, *O* magazine.

Mitch: Gave basic summary, then reviewed Prose’s argument via three main points.

1. Oversimplification of complex novels (used *Huck Finn* as an example)
2. Teaching of simple, mediocre novels (*I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou)
3. *Teaching Values through Teaching Literature* by Margaret Dodson. Focusing only on reader-response.

Mitch spoke well enough, though he kept his back to some of the audience a bit.

Fendinger: Went into the central appeals. “Takes some of Angelou’s passages through the Joliffe meatgrinder.” “Think of the children” appeal.

You shared plenty of the rhetorical devices she utilizes. Stumbled over taught / teachen / teached. Laughed at self—you win!

“Anaphora…to levy her claims in the cumulative sense.”

Seminar questions:

* Does Prose straw man Angelou / Lee? Was she correct in using these examples of bad literature?
* Do you agree with Prose’s assessment of how literature should be taught? How would Prose characterize Moeller’s English department?
* Baldwin wrote “the whole process of education…is designed to perpetuate the aims of society.” How is this statement relevant in the ways literature is taught and George Orwell’s “Politics and the English Language?” Can the problems Prose stated really be fixed.

Worobetz / Taylor

Liam: “We read ‘Superman and Me’ by Sherman Alexie”… you then gave background about his life. You summarized his reading, providing some quotes throughout your slide.

Noah: Described how he began seeing everything as paragraphs—using pictures instead of words…

“How it was accomplished…” Reviewed Ethos, Pathos, techniques… you spoke well here, focusing on Alexie’s use of pathos.

You focused on the repetition / contrast inherent in his final paragraph.

Seminar questions:

* Is Alexie’s way of learning to read a good way of learning? Is the DIY method always a good path to take?
* What was the importance of the image of Alexie trying to break down the doors the children put up in and the line “I am trying to save your lives?”
* Despite the impacts that reading pertained to Alexie in his childhood on the Indian reservation, but how can reading—not just basic knowledge and understanding, but enjoying reading—be impactful to everyone?

Absent: Herriott

JJ: So… Prose’s stuff sounds a lot like what I was being taught in grade school…

* Worobetz: Would you clarify that a bit more?
* JJ: Read from paragraph one. Her discussion could have benefitted from the idea that … (**I was unclear about what point you were making**). At the high school level, one should be able to go beyond simple controversy.
* Geyer: Some of the texts she cites—*Lord of the Flies*, Angelou’s book—includes very little language to enhance the message of the story. Anecdote about *Lord of the Flies*…
* Olinger: Does it need poetic language, artistic style to be good? Sure, at our level, it should be less simplistic.
* Menke: Connected to Mori—language / substance… what you prefer…
* Geyer: Appreciate the more complicated ones…
* JJ: In our society (public-school wise), we don’t want to introduce contemporary knowledge…
* Eble: Challenge…
* JJ: My ethos of going through public high school.
* Liam Taylor: We’re not reading controversial things in elementary school…
* JJ: Lakota West—mom freaked out about a book.
* Menke: They are reading books that are controversial?
* JJ: Well, just for the controversy…
* Fendinger: Busting down doors = central image. More people should spread the better books. Can be change everywhere.
* Geyer: Common Core will make it worse. It standardizes the curricula… not necessarily going the right way.
* JJ: MOOCs, not working well… primary goal for Common Core = to get students to think
* Eippert: Common Core takes away the diversity. Standardizing what kids have to learn would take away from that.
* JJ: Mark Twain, profiling his book as racist? Ironic…
* Geyer: Achebe / Conrad…
* Eble talked…
* Luke Weber: What do you think about *To Kill a Mockingbird?*
* Eble talked…
* Weber: She didn’t use as many examples…
* JJ: She specifically targeted Angelou’s lack of prose; yet, she targets the lack of depth in the thematic elements of *To Kill a Mockingbird*…
* Fendinger: To go off that point—you’re put in the position of Huck Finn… whereas in TKAM, you’re always a good guy.
* Weber:
* Eble talked…
* Geyer: But it’s written from a nine-year-old’s perspective. Thus, language / shallow characterization = the nature of the beast. Ignorance / resilience of a nine-year-old …
* JJ: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*… simplistic…
* Olinger: I’m reading *Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*… he posits his point with simplistic prose.
* Eble: Are metaphors hidden, though?
* JJ: We don’t want metaphors inside of metaphors; we want to see thinking, thoughts that make us think like our own thoughts.
* Geyer: The very fact that you think that the writing could be more difficult is itself the problem.
* Olinger asked for clarification
* Geyer: Language should enhance understanding
* Eble: Sure… connected to Orwell…
* JJ: Looking for a quote

Geyer: Prose seems pompous… *Brave New World*…

* Taylor: Simplistic doesn’t mean bad… Ben and TJ only like powerful, meaningful movies…
* JJ: *Brave New World*…
* Eble: Reiterated, looking to paragraph 18 / 19 in Prose.
* Eippert: Books as avenue for new experiences.
* JJ: Shared a quote… from H.W. Faller… to the point of empathy. Books themselves aren’t bad, but how they are being taught is bad.
* Eble: So what has (ironically) been your experience?
* JJ: Reading *Godot* , *Caged Bird* = cake, it’s good, but your face is slammed into it.
* Fendinger: In grade school, we didn’t read *Romeo and Juliet*, but we read *Romeo and Julio*…
* Olinger: First time I realized the deeper meaning = *Animal Farm*.
* Weber: I don’t see what’s wrong with that. More important to get grade schoolers to want to read…
* Eble: Why?
* Weber: That’s entertaining…
* Menke: That’s what I did… I read to entertain…
* Eble: Angry…
* Wright: *Godot* = horrible play, form fits the function, should be respected. If I had read in 8th grade = I would have hated this.
* Geyer: Fun-to-read books have deeper meaning. *Mayor of Casterbridge, Great Expectations*…
* JJ: Harry Potter… there’s lots of meaning in *Harry Potter*… Prose is looking specifically at high school. Shared *Watership Down* to express deeper meanings…
* Weber: Important in high school…
* Taylor: If kids are reading what they like, they’ll find meaning.
* Fendinger: That would be chaotic if everyone wasn’t reading the same thing.
* Weber: AR Reading…
* Geyer: The danger in some of that = *Gulliver’s Travels*…
* Eble: Angry…

Worobetz: Alexie = get kids reading, in general… Alexie himself started reading—not for school, AR books, for deeper meanings, but because he wanted to know how to read a Superman comic.

* Eble: Is anyone saying that?
* Wright: Daby / socioeconomically…
* Worobetz: You can go back, analyze…
* Peed: Your experience—I’d agree with Noah. When you’re younger, you’re reading; it’s up to the teacher to start “training you” to see things in the text. Started with *The Pearl*.
* Eble: I agree with you…
* Eippert: The more books you read, the more you’ll do that.
* Eble: I hope so—is that the standard, though?
* Eippert: I started enjoying reading in the 8th grade.

Eble tried to bring us back to the discussion by bringing us back to Prose.

JJ: Talked about self-impact, thinking deeply enough to record something into posterity…

Fendinger: So what is the importance of annotating a book? Not just in the casual sense, but in being seriously academic about a book?

* Alex Johnson: The nature of annotating makes you more thoughtful of the actual process.

Nick Wright: When you read books in grade school, they’re stories; in high school, they’re novels. Reading for a theme, a message … you’re not supposed to focus on your heart, but on your head. Shared *Grapes of Wrath*; I know that it happened, but I didn’t experience it.

* Eble: I would agree…
* Wright: Emotional / Mental…
* Eble: Loving versus understanding.
* Taylor: Favorite movies…

Eble: Can you teach values through literature?

* Fendinger: Let someone read the book…
* Wright: *Of Mice and Men*…
* Olinger: Menke and I with Emerson, who talked about the instructor being there to present the tools and to allow the students how to use them…
* Geyer: I still think that students need guidance. Shared anecdote with *To the Lighthouse*…
* Olinger: Some guidance is necessary…
* Eble: Did Prose have a credible enough ethos?
* Sanders: She didn’t qualify her claim… with anything, you need balance…
* Geyer: Hard not to come off as pompous—no good way to come off humbly…

Eble: All-school read?

* Taylor: If something goes against Catholic viewpoints, we *should* teach it. You’re not helping, protecting students by not letting students read these books.
* JJ: Shared experience… I liked the book, but when it comes to the all-school read, the lack of ability to relate = the problem.
* Taylor: Because we don’t relate = the reason we should read it.
* Schutter: Entering high school, where we might experience these things.
* JJ: We’ve got the reading from junior year—people remember that. Maturity of the readers, how they reflect what they read. Freshmen / Sophomore classes…
* Taylor: That’s reality…
* Schutter: These are realities we have to face…
* JJ: If a huge amount of Moeller parentage hears from Bobby that we should seek help, not feel stress that’s great…
* Taylor: Not a safe assumption to assume that all people will see the bad message, same meaning.
* Geyer: Hard to reject a book about mental health that has mental health problems.
* Wright: Send a letter home… have an adult to walk them through it.
* Diesslin: A big part = how the book is presented.
* Eble: Lenses…
* Taylor: *Chocolate War*… McLaughlin prepped us…
* JJ: That’s what I’m saying… it’s about the student reaction to what they read. How much enthusiasm has the student body had, especially among the younger age groups? This is the kind of book that needs to be prepped… we will have an entire class of eighth graders.
* Spuzzillo: People might actually read it…
* Menke: Reaction to previous books = one thing of controversial issues… negative reaction
* Wright: Don’t’ have expectations that are too high…
* Callahan: Political swing of each book = more of a liberal leaning…

Fendinger Notes:

* Harper: Related Prose to his grade school education, high school should be more advanced and we should advance further and read what’s worth reading.
* Harper: Prose could have benefited from citing that some schools are being taught down and should be taught more important things. Should be able to go beyond simple controversy in high school.
* Geyer: Language was really simplistic in some of the books Prose cited, very easy to read; reserve them for the younger audience.
* Olinger: Books don’t necessarily need very good language to be considered good; agree that we should challenge ourselves
* Menke: Mori and the moral of the story; focus on the broader image.
* Geyer: Still, we should reserve the easier books for the younger generation.
* Harper: Don’t want to introduce contemporary or controversial knowledge into the minds of the youth.
* Eble: challenges Harper’s claim
* Taylor: Parents want to protect the children from controversial ideas.
* Harper: personal anecdote over friend’s parent freaking out over a controversial book
* Geyer: Common Core will make reading in high school worse, standardizing the curriculums, not sure if we are going to get out of the hole
* Harper: MOOCs and common core are interrelated in a sense
* Marshall: Common core eliminates diversity of reading in public schools
* Harper: Using Mark Twain’s texts to profile him as a racist; sad because the book was originally banned
* Geyer: Achebe calling out Conway as a racist instead of valuing the text for rich language
* Eble talked about teaching Twain and Achebe
* Weber: Prose didn’t use enough textual evidence to prove why *To Kill a Mockingbird* was bad and how it was a bland take on racism
* Harper: TKM focused on easy characters, made us feel good
* Geyer: TKM is written from the perspective of a 9 year old; reason why the language could be simple and why the prose just isn’t that good. All about point of view, should be judged based on the characterization
* Harper: alludes to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
* Olinger: *Art of the Zen of Motorcyle Maintenance*: author uses simplistic language but it’s still a good book. Don’t need large metaphors and complicated writing to get your point across
* Harper: we don’t need Angelou simple, but we do need some thoughts in writing that make us think about our own thoughts
* Geyer: hiding ideas with hard writing is what’s the problem, should be able to appreciate the concept and know how the language affects a point
* Olinger: can look for balance
* Geyer: Prose might be pretty pompous. Some of the books she lists are actually good
* Liam: just because something is more simplistic but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s bad; a movie doesn’t need to be over the top spectacular be good
* Harper: *BNW* and some other books are just being taught wrong and are not honing students in on amazing book
* Marshall: good books take you into their world, an avenue for new experiences and if you compare it only to yourself then you limit the experience
* Harper: HW Fowler quote; her biggest argument was how and why books are being taught
* Harper: *Caged Bird Sings*, we had a Prose crappy English moment
* Olinger: *Animal Farm* in grade school and was able to find the newer meanings of books beyond the story
* Weber: get students to love reading rather than finding the meaning, at least get the youth reading
* Menke: agrees with Luke, wants to read
* Wright: reading for plot v reading for theme
* Geyer: there are some books that are really good and entertaining and still have great meaning; all about balance
* Harper: lots of meaning in *Harry Potter*; Prose is looking at high school specifically not necessarily the entire English spectrum, let’s use of brains while reading, cites *Watership Down*
* Weber: don’t necessarily see finding meaning younger is the same as developing English skills
* Geyer: can read *Gulliver’s Travels*  in two entirely different ways; one is a fun story and the other is uber deep meaning
* Worobetz: Alexi says that we just need to get kids to be reading in general; we don’t advertise for reading. Alexi started for reading just for the fact because he wanted to entertain himself and eventually became a professional writer; by reading for entertainment, he ended finding his own form of deeper meaning.
* Peed: agrees with Worobetz, teachers gradually worked their way up to the deeper lenses; Rose frosh v Rose junior meaning, everyone just wants to be prepared so that by the time your older you can be an English juggernaut; teachers are just helping us try and get to that point
* Eippert: the more books you read, the more you’ll analyze
* Harper: looks at his second hand book annotations, people care and look up new information
* Johnson: the nature of annotating helps you understand, puts you into the book, more deliberate
* Wright: reading books should be read for your head and not your heart
* Liam: can understand and love good movies even though the experiences aren’t the same
* Wright: *Of Mice and Men*, readers take separate stances
* Olinger: students should be able to use the tools in their own way and find their own meaning
* Geyer: IRP, had no idea what was going on, some guidance is necessary
* Olinger: guidance helps, but it shouldn’t be overwhelming
* Sanders: Prose did not qualify her claim at all and sets her up to be dissected by English classes
* Geyer: hard not to come off as pompous when you criticize what’s being read
* Liam: all school reads can go against Catholic values, good to challenge, these things happen, we should read about them
* Harper: lack of ability to relate to the topics
* Liam: need to learn about things we can’t experience directly, expand our horizons
* Diesslin: never got to discuss the book with Mr. Minnick before writing and doing assignments; need to discuss
* Taylor: McLaughlin prepped students for *Chocolate War* ; got people ready read about relevant topics
* Harper:
* Callahan: problem with the political swing in all the books

Poch Notes:

Harper: I had what Prose was talking about in grade school…high school should not be the same

Noah: clarify please

Harper: At the high school level you should be able to handle more controversial topics

Geyer: The books she cites have very simplistic language

Olinger: A good book doesn’t necessarily have to have poetic language

Menke: Substance v. Style

Harper: As a society we don’t want to introduce controversy into the classroom

Eble: challenging James

Taylor: Parents don’t want their younger kids in grade school to be reading something inappropriate

Harper: Anecdote about a mom being upset over a controversial book. People are reading solely for the controversy, not the literary merit

Fendinger: spread more good literature

Geyer: Common core will probably make this issue even worse because of standardizing everything

Eipert: Common core takes away the diversity of literature

Harper: Presenting the irony of Huckleberry Finn being a “racist novel”

Eble: I hope you focused on the language of Huck Finn and not that they said “nigger” 200+ times

Weber: Why did Prose attack To Kill a Mockingbird? I thought it was good

Harper: She’s saying that To Kill a Mockingbird straw mans the entire story, and is very black and white instead of presenting the gray areas of the issue

Weber: Couldn’t the rest of society see Atticus as the bad guy?

Eble: But through the eyes of Scout, the narrator, Atticus is a hero and so that’s how we see him. In Huck Finn, we see a boy rejecting society and thinking he’s going to hell because he’s doing what he thinks is right. It’s a matter of perspective

Geyer: But the view of To Kill a Mocking bird is through the eyes of a nine year old which justifies the simple language

Olinger: I’m reading…the language is very simple compared to other writers, but he gets his point across. I don’t think the sentences have to be huge and flowery

Harper: We want to see some thinking in our writing, but maybe not the mixed metaphors like Angelou

Geyer: The problem is that you think it’s hard to read, but it should be something you should be able to understand and appreciate the nuances of the language and how it enhances the language- where English classes are failing

Eble: Orwell, the goal of language is to communicate effectively, not obscure meaning

Geyer: I think she is pompous. Even if the language is simple, it doesn’t mean it’s bad. Form fitting function- Brave New World

Taylor: I agree. People often enjoy reading simpler books

Harper: The purpose is not to ask what we would do in that situation. The books may not be necessarily bad, but how they are taught is bad

Eble: Substituting language for ethics- Prose is saying that that is pointless

Eipert- Good books capture you in the world. If you only compare those experiences to yourself, then you miss out on the other experiences present in the novel

Harper: How and why the books are being taught is what is bad, not the books.

Harper: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings and Waiting for Godot I felt were pointless because I didn’t feel connected. Like getting your face smashed into cake

Weber: I don’t understand why it’s so important to get grade schoolers to look for the deeper meaning. They should be learning to enjoy reading.

Menke: I agree, I read for pleasure and entertainment.

Eble: I don’t understand how reading for meaning and pleasure should be separate.

Wright: Reading for plot versus reading for meaning is completely different.

Geyer: Good books are a balance of the two.

Harper: There is a lot of meaning in Harry Potter. Refocuses on high school.

Taylor: I feel like allowing kids to read books that they like would help them to find meaning in books that they enjoy.

Geyer: You can read books (Gulliver’s Travel) in two different ways.

Eble: Different lenses with which you can read. Deeper meaning is horse shit. I’m pissed

Worobetz: You could read for pleasure and then go back and analyze

Peed: Teachers are slowly preparing us to analyze and find the “deeper meaning”

Eipert: The more you read, even for just pleasure, the more you will pick up more of the word by word level language where a lot of the “deeper meaning”

Eble: I think what James is saying is that reading has become all about the entertainment

Harper: Discusses how reading can deeply affect someone

Fendinger: What is the purpose of annotating?

Johnson: Just the nature of annotating, allows you to be more thoughtful in your reading and look at the book on a word by word level

Wright: Books in grade school are presented as stories, in high school are presented as novels. I think Prose is trying to say that high school students should analyze how the books have an impact on your mind, not your emotions.

Eble: Books and movies can be empathy machines. The language helps to do this. The job of the teacher is to help students see the language so that they can experience the weight of the novel. Also to help students appreciate the language even if they can’t connect with it.

Wright: Let the reader decide the moral values from their own reading and analyzing, the teacher shouldn’t be teaching the value.

Geyer: I think the teacher needs to give guidance.

Sanders: Prose didn’t qualify her claim at all, and I think she was claiming too much.

Geyer: I think it’s hard to not come off as pompous when she’s criticizing the “canon” of English class

Taylor: I think we should read the controversial book for next year, because even if it might be against Catholic values, the issues dealt with in it are real issues. We should support Catholic teaching, but at the same time these are issues that people have to deal with.

Harper: I find that a problem with the all-school read is that we cannot relate with them.

Schutter: Kids face these issues, so it’s important to read these controversial issues

Geyer: It’s dumb to ban a book about mental health because it has mentally unhealthy material in it

Harper: We need the prep for this book

Spuzzillo: If it’s controversial, then maybe people will actually read it

Callahan: I do not like the political swing of the summer reading books.

Everyone: Challenge your viewpoints, and then defend them