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HF Novel Response
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Historical Fiction Response

One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia is the award-winning story of three girls, Delphine, Fern, and Vonetta, who travel to Oakland, California to reunite with their runaway mother, Cecile. The protagonist and narrator of the book, Delphine, is the oldest sister, who takes on the responsibility of being a real mother to her sisters, whereas Cecile is anything but a good mother. She sends the girls to the local Chinese food restaurant every night because she won't let them in her kitchen, which is filled with printing equipment. Every day, Cecile tells the girls to get breakfast at the local Black Panther camp, where they end up being taught lessons about unity and how to fight for what is right. Throughout the novel, the young girls are thrust into the very real world of politics in the 1960s; through all of their adventures, they learn a lot about themselves, their family, as well as the world around them.

This book is definitely a mature read for elementary students; however, I think it is an entertaining and informational read for middle school age students (ages 11-13). There are several mature themes relating to divorce, diversity, politics, and historical movements; yet, historical fiction is meant to inform. I think middle grade readers would learn a lot from this novel through a very well written perspective.

The genre is historical/realistic fiction and it completely shapes the entire book. It allows readers to get a glimpse of what life was like for African Americans in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement. In my opinion, Williams-Garcia does an excellent job of tying in factual historic events, while at the same time, weaving an intricate and realistic fictional tale of three African American girls.

This is a novel that I will definitely implement in my future classroom because it promotes social justice, a topic I am extremely passionate about. I believe that teaching students about movements such as the Black Panther movement is extremely relevant in today's society with modern movements, such as Black Lives Matter.

While reading the book, I tried to brainstorm ways in which I could communicate important issues to kids and how I could tangibly create a lesson plan surrounding real topics such Black Lives Matter.

Efferent ~ Keeping in mind whether or not the events in the book are based on true events or not. Doing the research on the Civil Rights movement. Trying to brainstorm good lesson plans surrounding the novel and connecting it back to diversity in children's literature. Because it was assigned as a class assignment, that definitely took a toll on my aesthetic response; however, I tried to ignore my duties and just enjoy the text.

Aesthetic ~ I tried to focus on reading this book from an aesthetic perspective because I truly wanted to put myself in the shoes of a middle-schooler reading it. Once I started reading, I feel like I got a flash back to my middle school days when I used to have plenty of free time to devour books. I wish I could do the same now!

I believe Williams-Garcia wonderfully set the stage for some crucial topics, such as divorce, relationships, fighting for what you believe in, etc. She did a great job at not coming off biased; rather, she created characters that questioned all the angles of issues such as African American rights and political views. Yet ultimately, she took a stance for African Americans in America, which I really appreciated and definitely agreed with. It was such an important perspective for her to approach and even though it is historical fiction, we could learn a thing or two about how to support discriminated people today.

One Crazy Summer is a phenomenal book that will most definitely be added to my teacher library! I can't wait to suggest it to my future students.

Works Cited

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*. New York, NY: Amistad, an Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2012. Print.