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New School Assignment Meta-Analysis

We had the task of completing the New School assignment for the ENGL 7711 course. This allowed us to express ourselves more freely by being able to be a bit more creative, as opposed to answering the traditional writing prompt. We were called upon to select a work of literature from the course and in some way, shape or form, create something more “real world,” oriented. I wanted to work with what I deemed my favorite text of the course *Sold*, by Patricia McCormick. I then decided to expand on the thoughts that I had while reading the book; which was: “Man this would make for an awesome movie!” Now I know that not every novel can capture the same magic on the silver screen as it did with readers, but the topics in the novel were so heavy, and to me they should be brought to life! Now I could’ve tried to create a movie script, or even tried to turn the novel into my very own feature film, but I thought to myself: How can I really test myself? Then I thought back to my previous course ENGL 7741, and the song that I created. It was a lot of hard work, but the finished product made me extremely proud. So I decided to include my love for both films and music and thought it would be interesting to create my own music score for *Sold,* if it were a film!

The most difficult part of the assignment was picking out sections within the book that I felt would be most noteworthy. While searching through, you don’t really want to miss any important parts, but you also must realize that you cannot include everything. I selected 8 chapters within the book to touch on. If I had to briefly summarize the novel they would certainly be the sections in which I included. After selecting sections, I had the daunting task of choosing the musical selections that I felt would best describe these sections. I also decided to put my own personal spin on these song choices as well. If we were to give this kind of assignment to our students we must be prepared for them to take on the personalities of the students within our classrooms. I had a challenge ahead of me, but I was motivated to begin working.

The first song I selected was *Addictive,* by Truth Hurts featuring Rakim. This song is very upbeat, and definitely includes a “Bollywood ,” flare to it although it was originally a hip-hop song. The song represented “A Tin Roof,” and the other high-spirited and optimistic sections within the beginning of the book. Next I used the song *Bad Luck*, by Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. This song was used to represent “Windfall,” “The Next Day,” and “Nightfall” in the book. This is when Lakshmi’s stepfather had a great day and won while gambling. When he could have purchased something to benefit the family he instead receive a motorcycle. His hot streak was short lived and he had the “beast,” for one day only to lose it once again. I felt as though the chapter “A Trade,”was the next section I should represent. This is when Lakshmi was being sold. She was very proud of being the first person in the family to go away, not knowing any of the terror she was soon to face. She made sure to purchase her mother a Coco-Cola and I used the sound bite from and old Indian Coca-Cola commercial to represent that part. Next I wanted to symbolize her entire journey. Although Lakshmi was often very tired, and confused during her travels, she was mostly excited to be able to go and work and possibly earn her family a living. I used a track I found on YouTube called *Acoustic Replay*, by Turbolax. It is also a very upbeat song that could be used to symbolize her excitement and eagerness. The stark ending to the song represents the sudden turn of events once Lakshmi arrives at the “Happiness House.” Probably not the best idea since we are discussing Multiculturalism and respect for other cultures, I used google to search for: “*Sad Indian Music.”* The next song I used was what was found on my search and it represents her time being depressed, confused and manipulated in the home by Mumtaz. I then decided to use the song *Friends on the Other Side,* which was from the Disney film *The Princess and the Frog*. This helped to symbolize the evilness of Mumtaz as well as the friends she had on the “other side,” in the police. There is a chapter within the book of the same name that explains this situation more in depth. My next selection was the song *Novacane,* by Frank Ocean. This represented the “Mathematics,” and “Calculations,” chapters within the novel. This is when Lakshmi came to the realization that she was going to have to sell her body to earn enough money to pay Mumtaz and leave the current situation she was in. She was numb to the destruction that was being caused; with only one goal in mind and that song does a great job expressing that. Finally I wanted to represent the final chapter within the book “The Words Harish Taught Me.” This is when Lakshmi is strong enough to reveal herself to the Americans who are trying to save her. I used the song *What’s a Man To Do*, by Usher. This was a nice wrap up to the score symbolizing her strength and ability to overcome adversity.

All in all this assignment was a lot of work; however, it did not feel like work at all. I truly enjoyed being able to submerge myself into this assignment and do my best to put the proper touches on the score. I feel that this type of work would be fantastic for students to complete. When students are able to use different avenues to express yourself as opposed to a traditional writing prompt, I feel that they will truly put their all into the assignment. With writing prompts students often times put them off until the last minute and just do whatever they can to meet the proper page requirements. With a project like this you are allowing students to put their own personally skills and hobbies to the test. This in turn will also allow you to learn more about your students and be able to see what their interests are. I think assignments like this should be included more. Students will possibly be more interested to read so that they can put the proper effort within their assignments.

Work Cited

McCormick, Patricia. *Sold*. New York: Hyperion Paperbacks, 2006.

Print.