My Textual Lineage

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Early Reading Experiences and Attitude Towards Reading

- As a baby and toddler, my mom said that I gravitated towards picture books with real photographs rather than animations. She knew which ones were my favorite because I would chew on them.
- My parents both read to me regularly before bed up through around 2nd or 3rd grade.
- Through middle school we had a tradition of reading a handful of Christmas books together on Christmas Eve.
- My brother is 2 years older than me, so, for two years before I started school, I would go with my mom to the elementary school while she volunteered in the library.
- My mom and brother were avid readers and read anything they could get their hands on.
- My mom was the parent volunteer in charge of the Scholastic Book Fairs at my schools from elementary through middle school.
  - She had unlimited access to books, but could manage to get me hooked on reading.
My dad said that he couldn’t possibly count how many times he read this book to me. My family’s obsession with Disney has been very strong my whole life, so I LOVED this book. It also helped that my dad was a very enthusiastic reader and he used fun voices for all the different characters.

My Parents also read the Paddington Bear books to me. I liked these books because of Paddington’s fun adventures. I had a Paddington Bear stuffed animal and we even got to see Paddington Station on a trip to London, which fed my interest in the books!

I never realized how big of a roll my dad played in my reading development. This was a series that my dad regularly read to me at bedtime. He had a fantastic Ms. Clavel voice which kept my interest in the books high. I liked the books so much that I had stuffed madeline dolls. I identified with her adventurous and brave spirit.
Harold and the Purple Crayon  
By: Crockett Johnson

When I was 3-4 years old and went with my mom to volunteer at the elementary school library, I would go sit in front of the shelf with all of the books from the Harold and Purple Crayon series. The shelf was right around the corner from the librarian’s storytime rug.

While my mom was in the library workroom processing books, I would sit right there on the floor in front of the shelf and picture walk (although I didn’t know that’s what it was called at the time) through the Harold books.

I think part of the reason I liked these books was because they were “Kate sized” as my family called it, meaning they were little, but they still had thick covers that made them feel like a big kid book.

These were the first books I really started to interact with independently.
Through elementary school, every year on Christmas Eve we would all gather in my brother’s bedroom (he had the bigger bed for everyone to gather around on) and my parents would read Christmas stories before bed. This was traditionally the last story and my favorite because of the pop-ups in addition to the unusual triangular shape of the book. The tradition with this book was a key part of establishing the importance of books and reading in my family.

My dad’s enthusiastic character voices continued to show up in this book which always made storytime fun, but his voices couldn’t help make independent reading fun.
Memories About School and Reading

- All through elementary school I was pulled out of class for AG (Academically Gifted) math, but I wasn’t pulled out for reading/language arts. This was upsetting to me, I wanted to be like my friends who were pulled out for both. I didn’t understand how I could be smart enough for AG math, but not AG reading and it made me feel bad about myself.

- I was still in the top reading level groups, but I hated reading. If we had to read something silently, I wasn’t finished when everyone else was. Reading projects were frustrating because the books were long and I read too slow and got distracted easily.

- AR tests - Throughout elementary school we had to take Accelerated Reader tests. Gaining points in AR got you rewards and celebrations, but you could only take tests from books on your reading level.
  - My reading level had lots of chapter books that took me forever to read. I remember a classmate that would read through 3 Berenstain Bears books during a class period, while I struggled to finish a long chapter book from my level each week. I didn’t get to go to the AR celebrations and this fueled my frustration with reading.

- After stories read aloud to me early on, there are not a lot of books that I remember reading independently until college, I REALLY did not like to read.
I could not for the life of me remember what early chapter books I read, but I knew I never liked the Magic Treehouse and I didn’t read the Judy Blume books that most young girls read. After some searching I vaguely remembered reading Young Cam Jansen and growing into the Cam Jansen series. Even though I don’t remember these books well, from this point on many of the books that held my attention were mystery books, so I believe this series set the foundation for my preferred genre.

When my brother was in 4th grade he did this cool book report on Holes, where he filled up a briefcase with things from the book. I was so interested by the rubber spotted lizard in the briefcase that I wanted to read the book 2 years later when I was in 4th grade. This furthered my affinity for mystery books as I was excited for Stanley to find out the mystery behind his family’s curse.

Between 4th and 5th grade this series became really popular. Off the bat, they called to me since mysteries held my attention. I’ve never been known for my attention span though, and after about 5 books with no resolve to the mystery, I got bored and stopped reading the series. It felt weird to leave the series unfinished, but losing interest in this series was the first time I learned that it is okay to walk away from books that are no longer holding your interest.
My whole family was obsessed with the Harry Potter books, we even have multiple copies of some of the books because my mom, dad, and brother were all trying to read them at the same time as the movies started coming out. They sounded so interesting to me, I liked all the magic and mystery my family talked about. However, I didn’t have the reading speed or the attention span to make it through the large books when my family was reading them while I was in 3rd grade. So, my mom bought the books on tape and we listened to them on road trips to dance competitions.

This was a confusing stage for my reading. I felt disappointed that I couldn’t read fast enough to tackle this series, but I did enjoy listening to the books on tape.

As my reading requirements grew going into middle school and I traveled more for dance, my mom reluctantly got some of my required texts on tape to help me keep up with my school work. I think she was a little frustrated that I couldn’t focus and keep up, but I was too.
Glasses!!

Midway through 5th grade my mom took me to the optometrist.
- Turns out my eyesight was so bad, that I couldn’t even see once they dilated my eyes.
- While my eyes were dilated, the eye doctor told me that I needed to pick out very rounded glasses frames, because my lenses were going to be very thick.

In school, the yearly eye exams tested for nearsightedness (ie: they were checking to make sure students could see the board) but I am terribly farsighted, so I struggled to see what was right in front of me!

Now I had an explanation for why I was taking so long to read!
- But getting glasses didn’t automatically make my reading speed faster, or make me like to read more.

Later in life, my mom speculated that the reason I preferred books with real photographs, was because it was easier for me to track real faces with my poor eyesight than to track cartoon faces.
Middle Grades

I didn’t read a lot for pleasure during middle school and high school. I honestly don’t even remember finishing many of the required texts, but my mom always made sure I had access to books. I often got some of the popular series and new releases as Christmas presents.

The Uglies Series by: Scott Westerfeld-
My mom gave me this series for Christmas in 6th grade. At this point on the rare occasion that I did read for pleasure, I read in my bed at night with a book light (another Christmas present). Once again, I don’t think I finished the series, but I did like it. This was my first enjoyable experience with Sci-fi books. It paved the way for me to actually enjoy reading Ender’s Game by Orson Scott Card in 9th grade, when it was one of our assigned texts.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants Series by: Ann Brashares-
The movie version of this series came out as I finished 5th grade. I liked the movie so I read the first book and continued with the series as they came out through middle school. There was no mystery like in many of the books that hooked me before, but it was nice to read a realistic fiction about girls close to my age that I could talk about with friends. Reading this series gave me a glimpse of what it was like to read for fun and talk about books with friends that I wouldn’t see again until college.
Thirteen Reasons Why By: Jay Asher-
Another Christmas present, I read Thirteen Reasons Why in high school. This text took me back to my love of mysteries that I cultivated in elementary school and tapped into my anxious teenage emotions. Not only did I relate to some of the cruel things that happened in Hannah’s school, but the text also made me think about how I treated others. I wouldn’t want to be someone that Hannah left a tape for, so I became more introspective about my actions. As one of the only books I read for pleasure in high school, this was one of my favorites until the Netflix series recently came out and forced me to think about some of the toxic narratives intertwined into the story. This would be a good text to really delve into from a critical literacy perspective.
Memorable Impacts on my reading

- **Community College- Reading with Friends**
  - During community college I had more free time than I had ever had in K-12
  - I met a girl that quickly became my best friend, we had so many shared experiences and interests, and she loved to read!
  - This friend shared her books with me. She had highlighted lines and phrases that resonated with her or felt powerful.
  - I was finally excited about reading and other friends started sharing books with me too!

- **World Lit for Children class & the 4+1 program**
  - In my undergrad class World Literature for Children we examined experiences that shaped us as readers and then lenses that we read through.
    - I connected that my previous distaste for reading was likely linked to the struggles I faced with my eyesight. By the time I got glasses, I was pretty discouraged with my reading pace and wasn’t motivated to try to like reading.
    - I also felt that in school, I didn’t have teachers that took the time to try to find books that spoke to my interests.
  - I LOVED reading all of the children’s literature in this class!
  - This class also helped me find learn how to find quality texts and books that fit my interests.
  - When the teacher mentioned the 4+1 in Reading Education, I knew I wanted to do it! I want to be the teacher that is hyper vigilant about student’s sight, finds books that hook my students, and prevents students from growing up hating reading like I did.
    - My mom laughed at me when I told her about the Reading Ed program, but she was so happy! After all of her years of trying to get me to be a reader, I finally had a passion for teaching reading.

- **Dr. Frye’s Class**
  - This semester we have read and introduced so many powerful books. I am still growing into being a reader, but from our class I have created an amazing list of books that I am just itching to read!
Paper Towns was the first book shared with me by my friend who loved reading. It was perfect for me because it was mystery meets oh so relatable anxiety, depression, and angst. The amazing thing about this book sharing experience was that my friend had already read the book and highlighted parts that really resonated with her or seemed powerful. I took a different colored highlighter and did the same. This experience made reading so much more engaging and meaningful to me.

After seeing how excited I was about sharing *Paper Towns* and talking about what I read, my best friend at the time (now my boyfriend) gave me his copy of *It’s Kind of a Funny Story*. This time all three of us shared and discussed the book, which made reading that much more meaningful, exciting, and engaging.
I can't remember what list I found this book on, but I read it as part of a realistic fiction response log assignment for the world lit for children class. As someone who has personally struggled with self harm, I went into this book prepared to be slightly insulted by what some author thought it meant to be a teenage cutter. I was pleasantly surprised at how authentically Patricia McCormick represented the emotional struggle of the characters.

Without knowing it at the time, I was very actively engaging with this text from a critical literacy perspective. Patricia McCormick had taken the manuscript for Cut to a residential treatment facility for girls who self harmed. In her note “On Writing Cut” she says about going to meet the girls “I was prepared to toss it [the book] in the garbage if these girls told me that I had no right to try to tell their story.” This reminded me of our class conversation with Kathryn Erskine and how she put a ready to publish book on hold, because it might be insensitive to assume that character’s voice at this time. While McCormick was never a cutter and the girls from this facility were not involved in the writing of the book, in talking with them afterwards, McCormick discovered that she had subconsciously written the book from an authentic place of her own self destructive tendencies. My thoughts about the book could have been shaped by critical literacy questions such as: What emotional or physical state seems the best or treated better? Why do you think the author wrote this book? What are the intentions of the author?
My Reading Habits

- I haven’t been reading much for pleasure while working on my bachelors and masters, but luckily I have been assigned some pretty amazing and powerful books!
  - Right now I do some amount of reading of assigned books and articles 5-6 days a weeks.
  - Everyday of the week I find myself reading some form of news/magazine article, blog, or social media.
  - I have a wishlist on Amazon full of books that have been mentioned in classes that I can’t wait to read once I graduate!

- Where I read:
  - I like to be curled up somewhere comfy with a blanket.
  - I currently live with my boyfriend and spoiled 13 year old black lab, Lucy. I like to be close to both of them when I read, so this usually means I read on the reclining portion of the couch. However, sometimes Lucy decides she’d much rather be in bed and whines at me until I come with her.
Books I look forward to reading soon: