

## Developing Perspective Consciousness via Middle Grades Trade Books that Feature the Global South(s): A Case for Using Thanhha Lai's *Inside Out and Back Again*

*No one would believe me  
but at times  
I would choose  
wartime in Saigon  
over  
peacetime in Alabama.<sup>1</sup>*

Elizabeth Barrow and Kathryn Caprino  
*Georgia Southern University and Elizabethtown College*

OUR SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS are filled with students from many different backgrounds. But do the texts we select for them reflect their identities and experiences as well as the diverse world in which we live? This article aims to help middle grades (grades 6-8) social studies teachers consider how trade books that feature the global South can be paired with primary historical texts in order to help students develop perspective consciousness. After articulating the importance of global education and defining *perspective consciousness* and the *global South*, we share lesson activities that correlate with Thanhha Lai's *Inside Out and Back Again*, a middle grades trade book, that align with the C3 Framework. We also share additional middle grades titles that feature the global South for teachers who want to adapt and modify the lesson activities we offer for *Inside Out and Back Again* to other middle grades texts and/or historical periods.

## Global Education and Perspective Consciousness

The multitude of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and races that exist in today's classrooms only underscores the importance of building students' global understanding. In a classroom with a global education aim, teachers are committed to facilitating students' open-mindedness<sup>2</sup> and global perspectives<sup>3</sup> about the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences among us, thus promoting deeper understanding and appreciation of these differences. If students and teachers understand and appreciate these differences as well as the world's complex and interconnected economies and political systems, then perhaps they can "develop the understanding, skills, and attitudes needed to respond effectively and responsibly to world events."<sup>4</sup>

We address specifically one tenet of global education posited by Robert Hanvey: perspective consciousness, or recognizing that one's worldview is not the worldview of others.<sup>5</sup> Social studies educators have long utilized primary sources as a tool to acknowledge multiple perspectives; however, if the subjects of primary sources are unfamiliar, not all students may be able to completely grasp the concepts of perspective consciousness. One strategy many social studies teachers have used is to pair primary historical texts with trade books so as to offer their students stories to which they may more easily relate. In addition to helping students relate to characters' struggles and triumphs and foregrounding diverse voices, trade books can encourage dialogue among students about how the texts contextualize primary sources and global perspectives and, hopefully, foster perspective consciousness. One way to develop students' perspective consciousness is to expose them to texts that feature the global South.

### What is the Global South and Why Study It?

Though we acknowledge that the historical context and discussion surrounding the definitions of both the *global North* and the *global South* are complicated, and many definitions of these terms exist, we articulate one interpretation of the *global South*. We use the phrases *global South* and *global Souths* to refer to regions of the world that were exploited during colonial times.<sup>6</sup>

Often, narratives about the global South, or from the perspective of the global South, have been underrepresented in social studies textbooks. The first author recently asked graduate students in an International Education course to define *global South*. Results were mixed, but the most common definitions included geographic locations (countries, and, in some cases, continents) with high levels of poverty, childbirth, pollution, hunger, and a lack of education. Countries that fit this description largely exist in the Southern Hemisphere; however, there are exceptions that prevent the blanket use of geography to define *global South*. For example, using the markers of poverty, pollution, and lack of education posited by the graduate students, Australia and New Zealand do not fit the definition of the global South despite being geographically located in the Southern Hemisphere. To further complicate the discussion of the global South, we argue that regions matching our definition of the *global South* can exist in the Northern Hemisphere, or regions known as the global North.<sup>7</sup> If the global South is considered to be an area of high poverty, then, by contrast, the global North is an area of wealth, industry, and advancement.

But we must ask ourselves how and why this dichotomy exists. Implied within our definition of the *global North* is a historical power dynamic between the north and south, between what Nour Dados and Raewyn Connell refer to as those with and without “geopolitical power relations.”<sup>8</sup> This dynamic stems from periods of colonialism when European countries and the United States exploited other countries’ land and resources for financial and political gain.<sup>9</sup> Following the fall of colonialism, many of the exploited countries have struggled to compete with the global North and remain in the shadow of their one-time colonizers. In addition to the physical impact of colonization, there is also a psychological impact, wherein an ideology of inferiority shrouds the global South.<sup>10</sup>

This perception can also be applied to areas of the global North, including, for example, the southern United States. Despite major improvements in manufacturing and industry over the past fifty to sixty years, many areas of the South, especially the Deep South, may still be perceived as inferior to the North. Thus, whereas we acknowledge that Miami, Orlando, Atlanta, Charlotte, and other urban Southern regions are economic epicenters, many regions or states situated within the southeastern U.S. may still be perceived as part of the global South given that they are not as wealthy and

advanced as other areas. Therefore, it is important for educators to challenge the systemic underrepresentation of the global South and to encourage students to think about and discuss the perspective of individuals who are ethnically, religiously, linguistically, and culturally different. We believe such conversations can happen and lead to building perspective consciousness via one of several middle grades trade books that feature protagonists who are residents of the global South.

We recognize that the term *global South* is complex and may be new to readers and students. Whereas students may not need to be informed of the precise definition of the global South, we do believe it is important for teachers to present the global South in a way that highlights the cultural and ethnic diversity of these regions and their contributions to the world. Providing students opportunities to discuss the ways in which their lives compare and contrast with the characters of the global South as portrayed in the middle grades texts may help build students' capacity for perspective consciousness. Before we make an argument for using middle grades books that feature the global South, we share our rationale for using trade books that feature the global South in the social studies classroom.

### **Reasons for Using Middle Grades Trade Books that Feature the Global South**

We are guided by Tom McGowan and Barbara Guzzetti's definition of a *trade book* as "any quality work that is not a textbook, including biography, history, fiction, poetry, drama, and informational books."<sup>11</sup> Whereas this definition encompasses both fictional and nonfiction texts, we have selected to focus on fictional texts written particularly for students in middle school—middle grades trade books—in this article. Although the focus book for this article is a book-in-verse, we advocate for the use of middle grades texts in all genres and formats that feature the global South for three reasons: 1) trade books allow students to connect personally with characters who are in their age group, 2) trade books that feature the global South permit students to access both literary and historical content that emphasize global perspectives, and 3) trade books about the global South facilitate interdisciplinary understandings. Each of these three reasons relates to the idea of developing students' perspective consciousness.

The first reason to use trade books in the middle school classroom is that students can relate personally to the characters, who are often similar in age. According to Diane McCarty, trade books help students connect with people in ways impossible with textbooks: “students will generally not get the chance to ‘get to know’ a person from that place from a social studies textbook. Instead, trade books have been introduced to supplement social studies units.”<sup>12</sup> What makes using middle grades books that feature the global South so powerful is that students can see themselves within some of the characters’ triumphs and struggles and can develop empathy for characters who may or may not look, act, or believe in the ways they do.<sup>13</sup> Students gain perspective consciousness while at the same time gain understanding about particular historical moments.

Second, trade books create spaces for teachers and students to encounter global perspectives often missing in fact-based, traditional textbooks.<sup>14</sup> Sharing texts that depict the global South allows teachers and students to engage in discussions about diverse perspectives and cultures that showcase that “stories matter. Lived experiences across human cultures including realities about appearance, behavior, economic circumstance, gender, national origin, social class, spiritual belief, weight, life, and thought matter.”<sup>15</sup> Elinor Parry Ross states that “[t]rade books are more likely to deal with moral and social issues that enable the reader to experience what life was really like at another time and place. Information accompanied by insight and sensitivity leads to a greater understanding than facts alone.”<sup>16</sup> As they help students develop empathy for people with different perspectives and backgrounds in ways that textbooks often do not, middle grades trade books, again, help build students’ perspective consciousness.

Third, when teachers use trade books, they facilitate interdisciplinary understandings in ways that complement social studies standards. To foster visual literacy, teachers can ask students to identify the geographic locations of characters within the texts using maps, allowing for a simultaneous assessment of students’ geography knowledge. An effective way to help students build writing skills is by asking them to write about understanding gained from empathizing with a particular character or from learning about a new geographical space. This also provides the opportunity for teachers to assess students’ realizations about the global South. Interdisciplinary understandings can also move students toward

perspective consciousness as they begin to consider peer-aged characters from geographical locations other than their own.

Having established our rationale for using middle grades trade books that feature the global South, we will now consider teachers' apprehensions about using trade books and provide ideas on how to overcome those anxieties and successfully introduce trade books into their curriculum.

### **Getting Started with Using Middle Grades Trade Books that Feature the Global South**

We know that some teachers may feel overwhelmed by the idea of using trade books, given the time constraints social studies teachers face.<sup>17</sup> And because we understand the intense pressure to meet particular curriculum standards, we advocate using trade books only in ways that foreground the social studies content. Trade books should enrich the content, allowing students to relate to global characters, engage in interdisciplinary work that complements their social studies curriculum, and gain understanding of global perspectives often absent in traditional textbooks. We suggest teachers new to trade books start by selecting one unit in which to incorporate a trade book.

There are many ways that reading a middle grades text can inform the social studies content. First, teachers can select middle grades texts that connect to particular historical moments. For instance, teachers might select Laurie Halse Anderson's *Chains* to complement a unit in which students are learning about the perspectives of different people during the American Revolution. The length of trade books, especially some of the books-in-verse, makes it possible for teachers to read aloud texts at the beginning or end of class if acquiring a class set is not possible. One way teachers might contextualize a lesson on women's history in Cuba is to read aloud Margarita Engle's book-in-verse *The Firefly Letters* at the beginning of each class. Second, teachers can facilitate out-of-class online discussion groups centered on a trade book that complements the in-class social studies content. Students might engage in out-of-class online discussions about Linda Sue Park's *A Long Walk to Water* while they are studying varying perspectives of those native to Africa and those who visit the country discussed in their social

studies class. Third, social studies teachers can also collaborate with colleagues to teach a particular trade book. For example, a social studies teacher teaching about different perspectives on the Great Depression through primary sources might collaborate with an English Language Arts teacher who will have students read Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising*. Although we write for an audience of social studies teachers here, we acknowledge English Language Arts teachers might incorporate literacy-specific lessons in these units, such as about how particular genres work (e.g., how poetic language works in Lai's *Inside Out and Back Again*) or how culturally specific language is used (e.g., how Spanish words function in Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising*).

In addition to finding books on the Notable Books for a Global Society website,<sup>18</sup> teachers may examine our **Appendix** in which we share ten award-winning middle grades trade books and/or NCSS *Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People* that provide students access to historical movements from youths' perspectives. We offer a brief synopsis of each text, a rationale for why these texts can be used for teaching the global South, and historical text pairings. We will now articulate why we selected this article's focus text.

### **Rationale for Selecting Thanhha Lai's *Inside Out and Back Again***

We selected *Inside Out and Back Again* as the exemplar text for several reasons. A 2011 National Book Award winner and 2012 NCSS Notable Trade Book, this semi-autobiographical text offers students a view of various global Souths as well as an intimate view of the author's childhood. This book-in-verse reveals a type of writing rarely found in history textbooks.

The movement of the Hà family from South Vietnam to Alabama allows for an exploration of what it means to live in different global regions. Lai highlights the tension and problems associated with moving from Vietnam, which is part of the global South, to Alabama, situated in the global North. Despite the underlying perception that opportunity and prosperity only exist in the global North, the Hà family experienced struggles with racism and equal opportunity which led at least one member to question whether or not coming to the U.S.—the global North—was a good choice.

Sections/Synopsis	Historical Pairing	Rationale
<p><i>Part 1: Saigon</i> Readers meet Kim Hà, the protagonist, on the Têt in 1975, just as her life in Vietnam becomes difficult.</p>	<p>“President Ford and the Fall of Saigon, 1975”<sup>19</sup></p>	<p>This pairing allows students to explore what the end of the Vietnam War was like for individuals living in Vietnam through the eyes of Kim Hà and then explore how the Americans viewed the conclusion of the war with a guided primary source analysis activity provided by the U.S. National Archives.</p>
<p><i>Part 2: At Sea</i> Kim Hà and her family escape from South Vietnam via a Vietnamese navy boat, an American rescue boat, and refugee camps in Guam and Florida. They eventually secure a sponsor to live in Alabama.</p>	<p>“Escape from South Vietnam”<sup>20</sup></p>	<p>Pairing this section text with a White House memorandum released by President Ford’s administration allows students to see a secondary validation of Hà’s story and her family’s escape to Guam.</p>
<p><i>Part 3: Alabama</i> Hà relocates to Alabama and her family struggles to survive in a new land while not giving up who they are. Each family member makes sacrifices and some acclimate easier than others.</p>	<p>Lesson Plan on refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia<sup>21</sup> U.S. Immigration Legislation Online<sup>22</sup> “Status of Indochina Refugees - Letter from Pres. Carter”<sup>23</sup> “Vietnamese Migrants in the United States”<sup>24</sup></p>	<p>The four pairings allow students to explore the difficulty refugees faced not only when entering the United States, but also once they arrived.</p>
<p><i>Part 4: From Now On</i> Kim Hà and her family have found their footing in America and as another Têt approaches, their future, for the first time in a long time, looks bright.</p>	<p>“Words from a Vietnamese Refugee”<sup>25</sup></p>	<p>This pairing allows students to see the transformation that occurred for some refugees.</p>

**Figure 1:** *Inside Out and Back Again* and Historical Pairings for Discussions on Global Souths

This book offers middle grades students an opportunity to see Vietnam during the Vietnam War era from the perspective of a child who is likely quite different from them, an important and powerful experience given the contemporary national debate about immigration. *Inside Out and Back Again* provides teachers and students with the opportunity to explore the topics of war, colonialism, immigration, refugees, and the hegemony of the global North. Discussions of such topics will help students think critically about people who may have different worldviews, thus helping them construct their perspective consciousness. A detailed, section-by-section summary of *Inside Out and Back Again* is provided in **Figure 1**.

### Lesson Activities

In this section, we comment on what instruction students might need before starting *Inside Out and Back Again* and provide three lesson activities that teachers can use while teaching the text.

Before engaging in this text and lesson ideas, teachers should provide students with an instructionally appropriate background about the Vietnam War that aligns with curriculum and unit goals. *Inside Out and Back Again* can draw students into a unit on the Vietnam War, facilitating students' interests in the lives of individuals affected by the war, or conclude a unit of study. *Inside Out and Back Again* may be more appropriate in an eighth-grade curriculum covering U.S. history; however, it can also be used in the seventh-grade contemporary world history curriculum in a unit on Southeast Asia. Though we focus on the middle grades classroom in this piece, we think the text could also work well within a U.S. history course.

When appropriate, we have aligned our lesson activities to the C3 Framework,<sup>26</sup> which is designed to provide literacy instruction for social studies.<sup>27</sup> Using this document in conjunction with state standards can serve as a guide for teachers to combine lessons in literacy and social studies. Pairing *Inside Out and Back Again* with primary historical texts achieves all four dimensions of the C3 Framework: developing questions and planning inquiries, applying disciplinary concepts and tools, evaluating sources and using evidence, and communicating conclusions and taking informed action.<sup>28</sup> **Figure 2** outlines the connections between the C3 Framework dimensions and *Inside Out and Back Again*.

<b>C3 Framework Dimension</b>	<b>Connection to <i>Inside Out and Back Again</i></b>
Dimension 1 - Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry	Teachers may frame the reading of the text with the following question: Why is Kim Hà’s story important in today’s world? This question can guide students through the novel and the complementary historical pairings. This also aligns with D2.His.3.6-8.
Dimension 2 - D2.Geo.4-6.4-8 Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture	Teachers can ask students to compare the global Souths of the Hà family to consider the link between place and identity highlighted in D2.Geo.6.6-8, which asks students to “Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures” (p. 42).
Dimension 2 - D2.Geo.9.6-8 Human Population	Teachers can have students research the long-term effects of Agent Orange and Napalm used in the Vietnam War on the economy and geography of Vietnam, as well as the health of individuals exposed to these materials.
Dimension 2 - D2.Geo.10.6-8 Global Interconnection	Teachers can have students “analyze the ways in which cultural and environmental characteristics vary” (p. 44) among the different Souths mentioned in the text.
Dimension 2 - D2.His.1.6-8 Change, Continuity, and Context	Teachers can invite students to connect the stories and events in <i>Inside Out and Back Again</i> to the events of the Vietnam War.
Dimension 2 - D2.His.5.6-8 & D2.His.6.6-8 Perspectives	Teachers can have students discuss their perspectives of the Hà family and Vietnam before and after reading <i>Inside Out and Back Again</i> . Next, teachers can discuss with their students how the position and experiences of the individuals responsible for the historical documents paired with this text (see <b>Figure 1</b> ), such as President Ford and a Vietnamese refugee, <sup>29</sup> affect their perspectives of the Vietnam War and the flight of refugees to the United States.

**Figure 2:** *Inside Out and Back Again* and C3 Framework

Dimension 2 - D2.His.9-13.6-8 Historical Sources and Evidence	Teachers can ask students to analyze the historical documents listed in <b>Figure 1</b> in order to support their perspectives and thoughts about the Hà family and the larger context of the Vietnam War. This also aligns with D3.2.6-8.
Dimension 2 - D2.His.14-17.6-8 Causation and Argumentation	Teachers can ask students to use evidence collected from historical texts to analyze the causes and effects of the Hà family and other refugees fleeing Vietnam.
Dimension 3 - D3.3-4.6-8 Developing Claims and Using Evidence	Teachers can have students use the historical pairings as evidence to develop a claim about the Hà family and the larger context of the Vietnam War.
Dimension 4 - D4.1-3.6-8 Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions	Teachers can encourage students to use the claims and evidence they have developed to present arguments and conclusions about the Hà family and the larger context of the Vietnam War.

We cannot possibly ensure that *Inside Out and Back Again* will align with each teacher’s grade level and curriculum; however, we do hope that there are ways for teachers to either incorporate our lesson ideas about the text into their curriculum or use these lessons as mentor texts for other lessons that are more appropriate to their grade level and curriculum. Again, we offer the **Appendix** as a resource for those teachers who believe another middle grades text that highlights a differential historic event or context may be more appropriate.

**Lesson Activity 1: Historical Text Pairings  
and *Inside Out and Back Again***

We recommend pairing *Inside Out and Back Again* with historical documents, such as released government documents, newspaper articles, personal narratives and diaries, or other documents that reveal voices that are not typically heard. This pairing will help students develop perspective consciousness while also meeting state standards and engaging in several C3 Framework dimensions:

evaluating sources, using evidence to formulate opinions, and applying disciplinary concepts to fictional and historical texts.<sup>30</sup>

The Vietnam War era is often taught completely from the perspective of American families, soldiers, and protesters. Often lost are the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the Vietnamese people who experienced America's presence. The voices of the families living in Vietnam who were victims of an ideological power struggle are often ignored.

*Inside Out and Back Again* provides students with an often unheard perspective: the story of a young girl from the global South who leaves her home and travels with her family to another location—also in the global South. Although Alabama is situated geographically in the global North, as we have stated before, regions in the southeastern United States—due to economic and other factors—do take on characteristics of regions in the global South. We encourage students and teachers to have discussions about the complex distinctions between the global North and South in Lesson Activity 2 below. Pairing this text with primary historical texts written about Vietnam, the war, and refugees allows students to examine multiple sources as they develop their understanding of the Vietnam War. Although we share pairings for each part of the text in **Figure 1**, we provide an example pairing in narrative form here.

Part 1 of *Inside Out and Back Again* can be paired with a guided primary source activity via the U.S. National Archives website, which includes primary sources, questions to consider, rubrics, and skills and standards. Students can compare this U.S. National Archives activity, which explores the end of the Vietnam War from an American perspective (President Ford),<sup>31</sup> to Kim Hà's perspective about the end of the war. After engaging in this U.S. National Archives website activity and considering *Inside Out and Back Again*, students can think about the perspective within and bias of the historical documents (evaluating sources) and how the story of the end of the Vietnam War would be different if told by the people of Vietnam (formulating opinions), using their knowledge of *Inside Out and Back Again* as another source for their opinions. See **Figure 1** for more details about each section of *Inside Out and Back Again* and relevant historical pairings. Depending on the amount of time dedicated to this lesson, students can either work through all four sections on their own or divide into groups of four and collaborate.

These pairings offer a way for students to take information included in a trade book and compare it to primary sources produced during the historical event. For instance, when students complement their reading of *Inside Out and Back Again's* Part I: Saigon with primary source news articles from around the world, they are able to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for a historical event. Newspapers from the U.S. may depict the fall of Saigon and the end of U.S. troop involvement differently from other world newspapers.<sup>32</sup> Using Lai's story, students can understand the complexities of the fall of Saigon from multiple perspectives: their textbook, Kim Hà, President Ford, and other countries. Reading Kim Hà's story personalizes the war and allows students to gain another's perspective; she is similar in age to students, and her voice, the voice of a child during wartime, is often missing from history textbooks, making it difficult for middle grades students to relate to the historical moment or empathize with the people enduring particular struggles. Teachers might use these discussions to frame essential questions: How is the story of Kim Hà similar or different to the stories of refugees portrayed in historical texts? What can we learn about the global South by comparing the stories of Kim Hà and the refugees mentioned in government documents? How does your reading of *Inside Out and Back Again* and primary historical texts alter your understanding of American and Vietnamese perspectives on the Vietnam War? These questions require students to negotiate their previous understandings of the Vietnam War based on multiple, disparate voices and perspectives, serving to build their perspective consciousness.

Students begin to comprehend that their worldview on topics such as the Vietnam War or refugee situations is not the only one. After understanding the war from multiple perspectives presented in *Inside Out and Back Again* and primary historical documents, students can reconcile these diverse sources and voices to formulate their own conclusions about an important historical event. This, we believe, is one of the central goals of global education in the social studies classroom. Furthermore, pairing *Inside Out and Back Again* and primary historical texts in ways that allow students to read different—even contradictory—voices about a historical moment enables students to develop a global lens, providing them with the opportunity to embody the perspective consciousness we argue is so vital. Additionally, *Inside Out and Back Again* can help teachers

facilitate students' understanding of more recent refugee situations, such as those fleeing war and conflict in the Middle East.

In order to assess whether students are meeting C3 Framework components such as evaluating sources, using evidence to formulate opinions, and applying disciplinary concepts to fictional and historical texts,<sup>33</sup> teachers might ask students to respond to the essential questions shared above in a written response, to compare and contrast fiction and primary source documents about Vietnam in an essay or multimedia presentation, to engage in a seminar about how *Inside Out and Back Again* and the primary source documents permit them to better understand the global nature and impact of the conflict in Vietnam, or to create original texts about a modern-day global event using *Inside Out and Back Again* and the primary source documents as mentor texts. These exercises might also help students reflect on how perspectives about particular historical moments have changed, thus making evident whether students are developing perspective consciousness.

### **Lesson Activity 2: Geographic Analysis of Global Souths in *Inside Out and Back Again***

A geographic analysis of the global Souths in *Inside Out and Back Again* provides an interdisciplinary approach to helping students develop perspective consciousness. In each section of *Inside Out and Back Again*, the Hà family travels to a different global South: the family journeys from South Vietnam to Guam to Florida to Alabama. This movement across different global Souths provides a space for students to investigate the similarities and differences of each South. For instance, students can compare and contrast Vietnam and Alabama. Students can also depict Kim Hà's journey on a map so as to understand visually the magnitude of her voyage. Students can practice gathering evidence by researching each region and comparing and contrasting elements of economy and culture, such as language, fashion, educational systems, major exports and imports, and gross domestic product. After constructing a profile of each section, students will have a better understanding of the contexts from which Lai writes about her journeys. Teachers can then facilitate a conversation with students about whether or not Vietnam and Alabama deserve to be included in the global South.

In addition, teachers and students can think about how Kim Hà's relocation to Alabama is not without struggle. Providing students with a text that highlights the challenges of a child coming to America will help them understand a counter-narrative to the "America as panacea" ideology, further broadening their perspectives on children who arrive in America because of various circumstances.

There are several ways in which this geographical analysis can be used to assess students' abilities to meet the C3 Framework dimensions related to geography, economics, history, and culture. We suggest asking students to construct a print or digital map on which they depict not only Kim Hà's journey to various global Souths, but also information about each place's economy and culture—both during the Vietnam War and now (developing questions and planning inquiry, applying disciplinary concepts and tools). Students can also be asked to write or discuss how each South impacted Kim Hà's cultural identity and understandings about herself.

### **Lesson Activity 3: Gauging Perspective Consciousness Before and After Reading *Inside Out and Back Again***

One of the central points we hope to make in this piece is that using middle grades texts in the social studies classroom can complement the social studies content and build perspective consciousness. This activity asks students to ponder the Souths of Kim Hà's life and critically examine a text—before and after reading. This type of activity is one way to foster students' perspective consciousness because the passages, questions, and reflective discussions encourage students to consider Kim Hà's perspective. These passages challenge the notion that immigrating to the United States will instantaneously make an immigrant's life better.

Before asking students to begin *Inside Out and Back Again*, teachers can ask students to reflect on the two selected passages below and answer the following questions: Why would someone choose "wartime in Saigon" over "peacetime in Alabama"? Why does the speaker want to be invisible? Why is it important to consider immigrants' experiences in America—in the Vietnam era and now? In what ways does your own story reflect or not reflect the speaker's story here? What action might you take to make sure immigrants in our country do not have narratives similar to Kim Hà's?

**Passage One**<sup>34</sup>

*No one would believe me  
but at times  
I would choose  
wartime in Saigon  
over  
peacetime in Alabama.*

**Passage Two**<sup>35</sup>

*I wish  
...that I could be invisible  
until I can talk back,...  
Mostly  
I wish  
I were  
still  
smart.*

After they finish *Inside Out and Back Again*, students can return to these same questions. Asking students to then compare and contrast their before- and after-reading responses in a discussion will allow students and teachers to see whether or not students' perspectives changed as a result of reading the middle grades text.

If time allows, teachers can move in multiple directions: encourage students to research immigration patterns in war-torn areas around the world and how it affects kids their age, facilitate discussions about immigration to the U.S. and to their state in particular, or ask students to reflect on the bullying Kim Hà experienced. Perhaps the most important question to pose to students is "Why is Kim Hà's story important in today's world?" As they make connections between Hà's globally Southern story and the global world in which they live, students will develop a sense of perspective consciousness.

Gauging whether students' interpretations of the passage remain the same or change as a result of engaging in readings of both the text and historical pairings aligns with the C3 Framework's perspectives, historical sources and evidence, and context elements. We do not necessarily recommend grading students on whether they exhibit perspective. Rather, we invite teachers and students to examine together students' before and after writing samples so as to reveal which perspectives (if any) changed as a result of reading a middle

grades book featuring the global South (evaluating sources and using evidence). Furthermore, teachers and students can work together to further develop some of the students' ideas about taking action to help immigrants at their schools (communicating conclusions and taking informed action).

The lesson activities offered here (e.g., pairing *Inside Out and Back Again* with primary historical texts, engaging in a geographic analysis of the global South(s) within the text, and gauging perspective consciousness before and after reading the text) are activities we believe can help foster students' perspective consciousness. Each of these lesson activities foregrounds social studies content in the context of better understanding the global South(s), and we have exemplified how teachers might assess students according to the C3 Framework. It is our hope that these lesson activities will encourage social studies teachers to incorporate middle grades trade books that feature the global South into their curriculum. These books feature children of the global South, a silenced voice in traditional history textbooks, all while foregrounding the social studies content. Innovative and creative social studies teachers can either implement directly these lesson activities or adapt them to fit another middle grades text more appropriate for their social studies curriculum.

## Conclusion

The current educational context of the middle school social studies classroom all but requires teachers to include global perspectives. We provided several reasons to include contemporary middle grades trade books that foster understanding of the global South: they allow students to relate to characters, to encounter global perspectives missing in traditional textbooks, and to engage in interdisciplinary understandings—all while helping students develop perspective consciousness. Acknowledging the curriculum and time constraints of some social studies teachers, we suggested teachers start with small steps toward incorporating middle grades texts. We then narrowed our focus by sharing how to use a particular middle grades trade book that features the global South to build students' capacity for perspective consciousness. We offered three lesson activities that correlate with Lai's *Inside Out and Back Again*: pairing *Inside Out and Back Again* with primary historical texts, engaging in a geographic analysis

of the global South(s) within the text, and gauging perspective consciousness before and after reading the text. In addition, we shared ways for teachers to assess whether students meet C3 Framework standards as set forth by NCSS. The example lesson activities can be used as suggested, adapted to fit a particular classrooms, or used as a mentor text for other social studies lesson activities. It is our hope that social studies teachers will use the thoughts and ideas put forth in this article as a starting point for engaging students in middle grades trade books that feature the uniquely diverse global South in ways that help develop students' perspective consciousness.

## Appendix

### Middle Grades Texts and Historical Pairings

The texts in this list highlight the struggle of individuals living in the global South and the marginalization of these regions and individuals by the global North. Many of the selected texts showcase individuals from the global South who overcome barriers or give back to the global South. It should also be noted that the books included have been written by a diverse group of authors, including individuals from the ethnic groups represented in their texts.

Text	Brief Synopsis	Global South Rationale	Historical Text Pairings
<p>Ann E. Burg's <i>Serafina's Promise</i><sup>36</sup></p> <p>[2014 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People]</p>	<p>Serafina wants more than anything to go to school and to become a doctor. Set in Haiti, this novel tells the story of a young girl and her family and the hardships that they face before and after a major earthquake. Serafina makes promises throughout the novel, but none as important as her final promise to stay in school.</p>	<p><i>Serafina's Promise</i> showcases a nation of the global South in the Western Hemisphere. References to the Haitian Revolution offer teachers the opportunity to discuss colonization and the effects of globalization. Additionally, the main character in this novel does not flee the global South, but instead promises to stay and help the people of Haiti.</p>	<p>"The Haitian Revolution"<sup>37</sup></p> <p>"Jefferson on the French and Haitian Revolutions, 1792"<sup>38</sup></p>

Text	Brief Synopsis	Global South Rationale	Historical Text Pairings
<p>Laurie Halse Anderson’s <i>Chains</i><sup>39</sup></p> <p>[2008 National Book Award Finalist]</p> <p>[2009 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People]</p>	<p>Isabel and her sister Ruth are sold to Loyalists in New York during the American Revolution. Both of the girls suffer greatly. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave, she has to make a decision about whether to spy on her Loyalist masters or not.</p>	<p>Part of a trilogy, Anderson’s <i>Chains</i> provides insight into a slave’s difficult decision. Tracing characters’ geographic movement throughout the text provides an opportunity for discussions of the global South.</p>	<p>“Slavery in New York website”<sup>40</sup></p> <p>“Fighting...Maybe for Freedom, but probably not”<sup>41</sup></p> <p>“Liberty to Slaves: The Black Response”<sup>42</sup></p>
<p>Margarita Engle’s <i>Silver People: Voices from the Panama Canal</i><sup>43</sup></p> <p>[2015 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People]</p>	<p><i>Silver People</i> is a book-in-verse that parallels the stories of Mateo (from Cuba), Henry (from Jamaica), and the Panamanian Jungle during the forging of the Panama Canal.</p>	<p>Engle’s <i>Silver People</i> highlights exploited voices of the global South during America’s quest to build the Panama Canal. Alfred J. López would refer to such exploitation as a failure of globalization.<sup>44</sup></p>	<p>“In Celebration of 100 Years of the Panama Canal: West Indian Canal Employee Records”<sup>45</sup></p> <p>“Panama and the Canal” website<sup>46</sup></p> <p>“The Panama Canal and the Torrijos-Carter Treaties”<sup>47</sup></p>
<p>Margarita Engle’s <i>The Firefly Letters</i><sup>48</sup></p> <p>[2011 Pura Belpré Honor Book for Narrative]</p> <p>[2011 Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year]</p> <p>[2011 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People]</p>	<p>In <i>The Firefly Letters</i>, Engle writes of the Swedish suffragette Fredrika Bremer who comes to Cuba in 1851 and is paired with Cecilia, a pregnant slave girl fearing the fate of her unborn child. Meanwhile, Elena, daughter to Cecilia’s master, begins to understand the power of personal freedom.</p>	<p>Engle’s <i>The Firefly Letters</i> provides readers with three different women’s perspectives on the issues of slavery and women’s rights. Told via poems, the text allows teachers and students to engage in discussions of the global South by comprehending the tragedies that hide within beautiful landscapes.</p>	<p>“Letter from Fredrika Bremer to the Queen of Denmark - From Cuba, April 1851”<sup>49</sup></p> <p>“Letter from Cuba 1851” from the Skinner Family Papers<sup>50</sup></p> <p>Articles on the connection between Cuban villagers and Sierra Leone slaves<sup>51</sup></p>

Text	Brief Synopsis	Global South Rationale	Historical Text Pairings
<p>Patricia McCormick's <i>Never Fall Down</i><sup>52</sup></p> <p>[2012 National Book Award Finalist]</p>	<p>This is the true story of one boy's unbelievable quest for survival during the Khmer Rouge's control of Cambodia. Arn Chorn-Pond survives the killing fields, makes it to a refugee camp in Thailand, and eventually is adopted by an American family. This story is one of survival, but also of a man who turned his life around.</p>	<p>Often in the shadow of Vietnam, Cambodia, and the atrocities it faced following the conclusion of the Vietnam War, is often overlooked. <i>Never Fall Down</i> provides readers with a true story of one man's struggles. This story introduces readers to a voice that is often silenced.</p>	<p>White House Memorandum: "Life Inside Cambodia"<sup>53</sup></p> <p>Norman Naimark's "Ethnic Cleansing"<sup>54</sup></p>
<p>Linda Sue Park's <i>A Long Walk to Water</i><sup>55</sup></p> <p>[2011 Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People]</p>	<p>This story parallels the lives of two individuals from the Sudan: Salva, a Lost Boy of the Sudan in the 1990s, and Nya, a contemporary resident of a Sudanese village. <i>A Long Walk to Water</i> tells the story of Salva's escape from the Sudan as a war refugee and his return later in life to build wells for villages in need.</p>	<p><i>A Long Walk to Water</i> not only highlights a region of the global South, Africa, but also shows the interconnectedness of the world.</p>	<p>H.R. 3054<sup>56</sup></p> <p>U.N. Refugee Agency<sup>57</sup></p> <p>National Geographic Video/Lessons<sup>58</sup></p> <p>"Why won't the war stop?"<sup>59</sup></p>
<p>Pam Muñoz Ryan's <i>Esperanza Rising</i><sup>60</sup></p> <p>[2002 Pura Belpré Award for Narrative]</p> <p>[2001 Jane Addams Children's Book for Older Children Award]</p> <p>[2001 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People]</p>	<p>This is the story of a young girl of means from Mexico who must flee to the United States with her mother. Esperanza must work as a laborer on a farm and live in a migrant camp. This is a story of family and new beginnings, as well as overcoming adversity.</p>	<p><i>Esperanza Rising</i> showcases a different aspect of the global South. This book's setting in the global North complicates understandings of global South boundaries.</p>	<p>"Repatriation for Mexican and Filipino Farm Workers"<sup>61</sup></p> <p>"The Man from Next Door"<sup>62</sup></p> <p>"Mexican Immigration in the 1920s"<sup>63</sup></p>

Text	Brief Synopsis	Global South Rationale	Historical Text Pairings
<p>Samhita Arni’s <i>Sita’s Ramayana</i><sup>64</sup></p> <p>[2012 American Library Association Notable Children’s Book]</p>	<p>This is a graphic novel that tells of the legend of the <i>Ramayana</i> from the perspective of Sita, the queen.</p>	<p><i>Sita’s Ramayana</i> highlights an important tale in the Hindu religion and showcases India, a region of the global South.</p>	<p>“Ramayana” from the British Library’s Online Gallery of Sacred Texts<sup>65</sup></p>
<p>Marjorie Agosín’s <i>I Lived on Butterfly Hill</i><sup>66</sup></p> <p>[2015 Pura Belpré Author Award]</p>	<p>In this book, Agosín tells the story of a young girl from Valparaiso, Chile, who experiences a military coup and is sent to the United States for her own protection.</p>	<p><i>I Lived on Butterfly Hill</i> was written by a Chilean native who lived during the time of a military coup. Students can explore this South American country and also the role the United States played in the devastating effects of the coup.</p>	<p>“Chile and the United States: Declassified Documents Relating to the Military Coup, September 11, 1973”<sup>67</sup></p> <p>“Kissinger and Chile: The Declassified Record”<sup>68</sup></p> <p>“CIA Activities in Chile”<sup>69</sup></p>
<p>Don Brown’s <i>Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans</i><sup>70</sup></p> <p>[2016 Notable Books for a Global Society]</p>	<p>In this graphic novel, Brown tells of the devastation, heartbreak, heroism, and resiliency of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.</p>	<p><i>Drowned City</i> highlights the plight of an area of the global North (Louisiana) that maintains characteristics of the global South. This story can be used to introduce concepts of racism, poverty, and inequality that still exist in the United States today.</p>	<p>“What Katrina Teaches about the Meaning of Racism”<sup>71</sup></p> <p>“Hurricane Katrina: The Unnatural Disaster?”<sup>72</sup></p> <p>Hurricane Katrina Lesson Plans<sup>73</sup></p>

## Notes

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