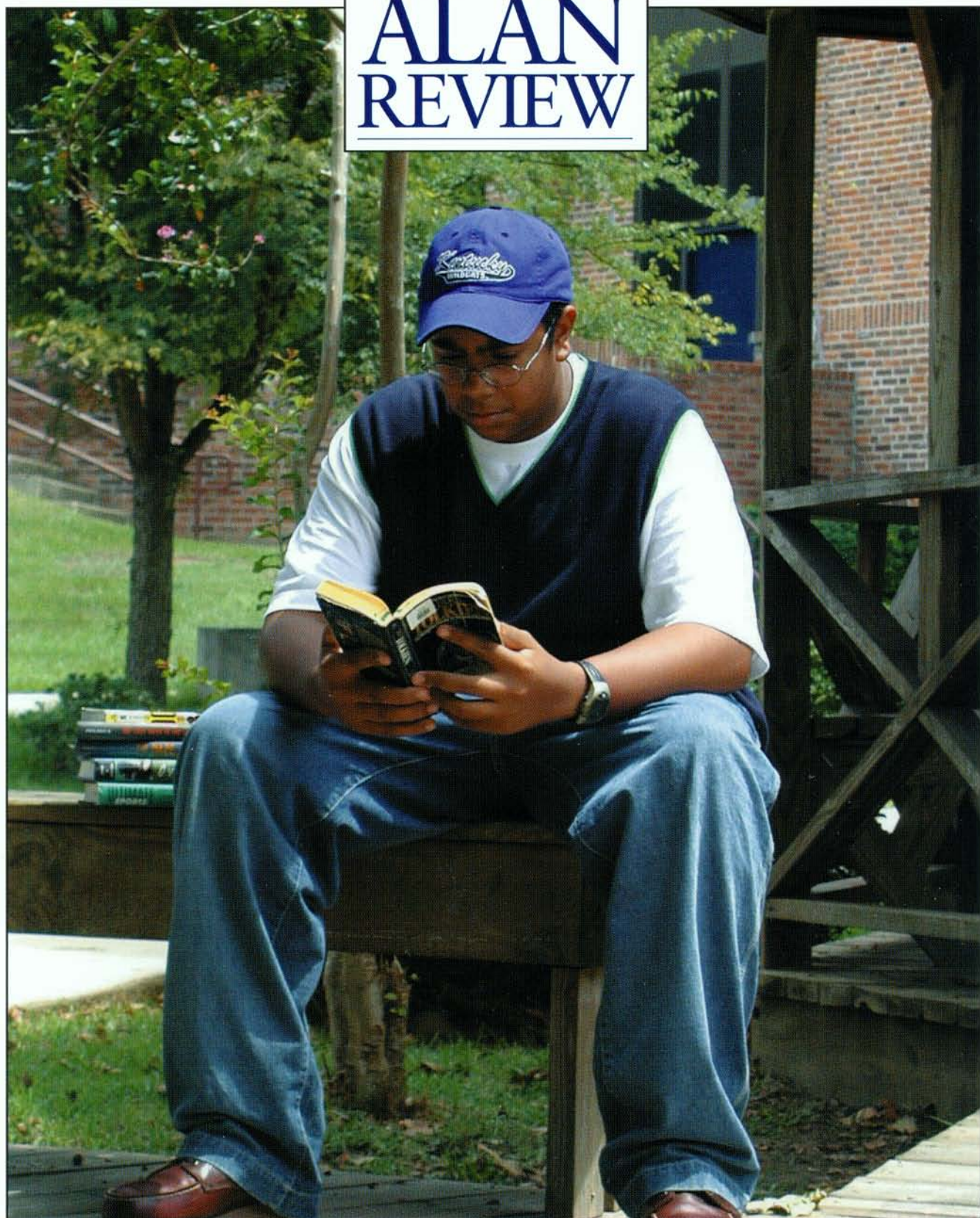


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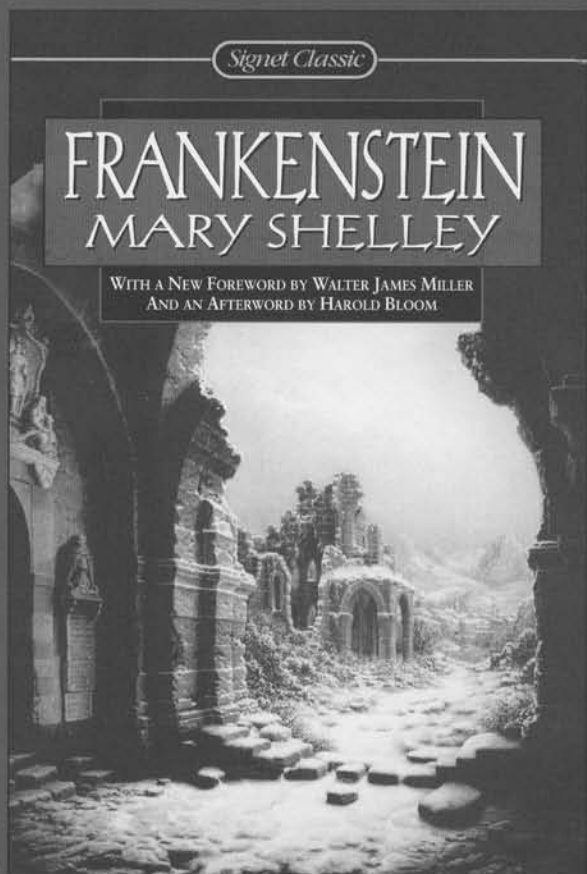
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ABOUT THE ALAN REVIEW. The ALAN Review is a peer-reviewed (refereed) journal published by the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of Teachers of English. It is devoted solely to the field of literature for adolescents. It is published three times per academic year (fall, winter, and spring) and is sent to all members, individual and institutional, of ALAN (The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE). Members of ALAN need not be members of NCTE.

THE ALAN REVIEW publishes reviews of and articles on literature for adolescents and the teaching of that literature: research studies, papers presented at professional meetings, surveys of the literature, critiques of the literature, articles about authors, comparative studies across genre and/or cultures, articles on ways to teach the literature to adolescents, and interviews of authors.

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PREFERRED STYLE. Manuscripts should usually be no longer than fifteen double spaced, typed pages. A manuscript submitted for consideration should deal specifically with literature for adolescents and/or the teaching of that literature. It should have a clearly defined topic and be scholarly in content, as well as practical and useful to people working with and/or studying adolescents and their literature. Research studies and papers should be treated as articles rather than formal reports. Stereotyping on the basis of sex, race, age, etc., should be avoided, as should gender specific terms such as "chairman."

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Original short tables and figures should be double-spaced and placed on a separate sheet at the end of the manuscript. Notations should appear in the text for proper placement of tables and figures.

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Pamela S. Carroll, Editor, *The ALAN Review*, 209 MCH, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-4490.

Include a self-addressed stamped envelope to which return stamps are clipped. The manuscript cannot be returned if the envelope and stamps are not included. Articles submitted only by facsimile or e-mail cannot be considered, except when sent from overseas.

REVIEW PROCESS. Each manuscript will receive a blind review by the editor and at least two members of the editorial review board, unless the length, style, or content makes it inappropriate for publication. Usually, authors should expect to hear the results within eight weeks.

Manuscripts are judged for the contribution they make to the field of adolescent literature, clarity and cohesiveness, timeliness, and freshness of approach. Selection also depends on the manuscript's contribution to the overall balance of the journal.

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Upon publication, the author will receive two copies of *The ALAN Review* in which the article appears. Publication usually occurs within 18 months of acceptance.

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DEADLINES. Please follow these deadlines if you wish to have your article considered for a particular issue of *The ALAN Review*:

FALL ISSUE Deadline:	JULY 15
WINTER ISSUE Deadline:	OCTOBER 15
SPRING ISSUE Deadline:	MARCH 15

Please note that the journal will be organized to reflect the following focus in each issue, but that the focus will not restrict attention to other issues:

Fall Issue: Authors, Issues, and Concerns in YA Literature for High School Readers
Winter Issue: Authors, Issues, and Concerns in YA Literature for Middle School Readers
Spring Issue: Authors, Issues, and Concerns in Using YA Literature for Interdisciplinary Instruction

A Note from the Editor

In early August, a group of teachers, staff members, and a smattering of students gathered in the media center of the School for Applied Individualized Learning (SAIL) in Tallahassee, Florida. Their reason for meeting was to discuss *Word Up!*, the school-wide sustained silent reading program. Initiated by the enthusiastic media specialist, with consent from the faculty and staff, the program is a school-wide effort to help high school students connect with books. Several teachers voiced concerns that, while students were willing to thumb through newspapers or dabble in magazines, many showed no interest in sticking with a book until they finished it. The group wanted to help those students learn what it means to enjoy a book, to get lost in it, to come to *Word Up!* Sessions eager to pick up a story at the point where they had to leave it the previous day. The teachers, staff, and students wanted everyone in the school to become people who read—and who like it.

The meeting at SAIL was similar to ones that many of you have participated in this fall, I suspect. We are all interested in bringing books and teen readers together, in helping teens find books that speak to them, about them, for them. That day, the SAIL group focused its attention on the needs of the unskilled readers at the school. They decided to promote reading in this inventive way: Each time low-skills readers finish an entire book, they write a one-page summary and critique of the book (using the Clip and File section of *The ALAN Review* as a model). They take the summary/critique with them to a book chat with their teacher. Following the chat, the teacher gives them a coupon, good for the purchase of a new paperback book. On their own time or during school lunch, they go to a local bookstore and, with coupon in hand, find a book that they think their classmates will enjoy. They use the coupon to purchase the book, and when they return to school, they donate that book to the school's media center. When the book is donated, a card that names the donor is permanently pasted into its cover. The beauty of this strategy is that students who have not been book people, previously, are now involved in reading, critiquing, selecting, and donating books for a collection to which their friends have access. They become people who read—and like it.

How many adolescents in the school and media centers where you work will have opportunities to be come

people who read—and like it—this year? In the pages of this issue, you will find attention to a wide range of multicultural and multidimensional issues that have the power to grab and hold adolescent readers' attention. Per-

haps these pages will give you some ideas about connecting your students with books that will appeal to them. Author Victoria Hanley leads us to consider the definitions of "creativity." Author Alex Sanchez, in an interview with Toby Emert, speaks out about writing a book that features gay high school students. These authors set the tone for a series of thought-provoking articles. Cynthia Miller Coffel discusses books that portray, and often stereotype, pregnant teens. Sherry York examines books that depict the experiences of migrant field workers. Jacqueline Glasgow considers the power of memory to reconcile images and events related to Japanese internment camps. Kathy N. Headley raises questions regarding the rights of White writers to create African American



Pamela Sissi Carroll

can protagonists. Myrna Dee Marler focuses on poverty, as presented in three popular YA novels. Each of these pieces encourages us to think about the world from the perspective of "other," and each nudges us toward reconsidering how we define and situate ourselves within our world, too.

Gretchen Schwarz opens the sometimes jarring pages of graphic books for us. Terry and Valarie Jensen recount the success they found when they incorporated short story collections during sustained silent reading. In the *Research Connection*, Sherron Killingsworth Roberts challenges us to find ways to bring literary theory to the study of YA literature through her examination of female rescuers in Newbery Medal books. In the *Professional Connection*, Kathleen Carico points us toward memorable YA books and articles that discuss them. M. Jerry Weiss, in the *Publisher Connection*, reminds us of the myriad choices we have as those who know, promote, teach, and enjoy YA books. All of these ideas are complemented by the collection of book reviews that Jeff Kaplan and his team have prepared for the Clip and File section.

Let's agree to begin this academic year with a promise to keep the "Word Up!" about good YA literature all year long. Let's find ways to let the adolescent students with whom we work experience what it means to be people who read—and who like it.

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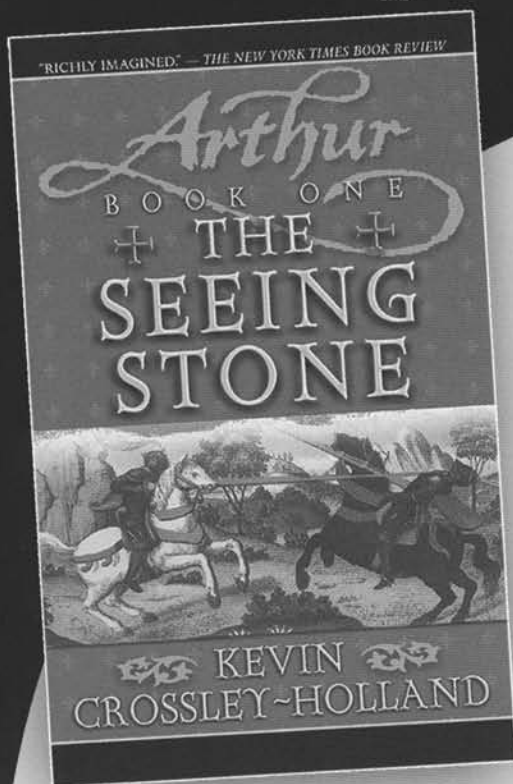
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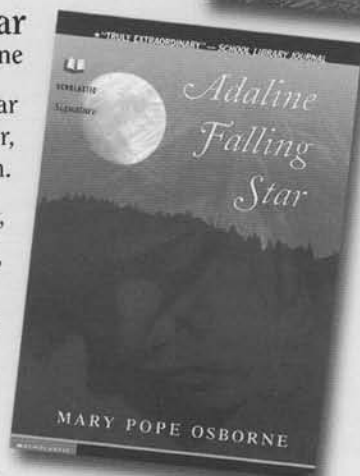


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Glorious Reality: Presidential Fretting About the ALAN Workshop

Chris Crowe, ALAN President, 2002

Reality is cruel.

When I was nominated to run for president of ALAN, I was flattered and briefly entertained dreams of grandeur. If I were lucky enough to win, I thought, my friends, family, and colleagues would be so very proud. If I won, I dreamed, I would be lavished with presidential perks and presents. If I became president of ALAN, I imagined, I would get to wallow in the glory of presiding over a glorious ALAN Workshop.

So far, this is what reality has taught me:

Proud? My local friends, family, and colleagues barely even noticed when the election result were announced. "Well," asked my 16 year-old daughter, "does this mean you're going to get paid more?" When I told her no, she said, "So who cares?" "ALAN?" asked one of my colleagues. "What's that?" In an email a friend wrote, "Congratulations on winning that election, I guess . . ."

Presidential perks and presents? As president of ALAN I get the "perk" of completing pages of bureaucratic reports for NCTE and the "present" of attending long meetings about some things I care about and some things I don't. I get to spend hours and hours and hours trying to put together a program worth the time of busy teachers and others on the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving vacation.

Presiding over a glorious workshop? Aw, well, there I'm still keeping my fingers crossed. I'm sure the 'presiding' part will come to pass, but the 'glorious' I'm going to have to wait and see. Putting together a Workshop program is much more difficult than I ever imagined. I've had to review a stack of small-group proposals, decide which ones looked most interesting, and then contact each of the presenters. What I ended up with is twelve interesting and diverse break-out presentations for our program, something for every teacher, librarian, and reader. So far, it looks good, if not even glorious.

Then I got to dream about which authors I'd like to have on the Workshop program. I felt like a weak-willed dieter at the head of a buffet table as I made up my dream list of popular YA authors. It didn't take me long to get to more than 50 names. I compared the names to the previous year's program, and dropped a few off the list to avoid redundancy with Teri Lesesne's terrific 2001 ALAN Workshop. Then I started contacting publishers, asking if they'd be willing to sponsor their authors' appearance in our program. The bad news? J.K. Rowling and Katherine Paterson won't be on the 2002 program.

The good news? Even despite these tough post-9/11 economic times, publishers once again showed incredible generosity by agreeing to sponsor more than 25 authors! 2001 National Book Award recipient, Virginia Euwer Wolff, will speak at our annual ALAN Breakfast on Saturday, November 23. 2000 Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award winner Chris Crutcher will deliver the opening keynote

address at the ALAN Workshop on Monday, November 25.

Here are the other terrific authors who will appear on our two-day program:

Arnold Adoff	David Lubar
M. T. Anderson	Carolyn Meyer
Michael Cadnum	Susan O'Keefe
Orson Scott Card	Louise Plummer
Mark Delaney	Randy Powell
Carl Deuker	Ann Rinaldi
Nancy Farmer	S. L. Rottman
Alex Flinn	Graham Salisbury
Adrian Fogelin	Sonya Sones
E. R. Frank	Vivian Vande Velde
Adele Griffin	Bill Wallace
Kevin Crossley-Holland	Will Weaver
Jeanette Ingold	Rosemary Wells
Robert Jordan	

These good people, successful authors all, make the ALAN program look glorious already. What reader of YA literature wouldn't want to spend two days listening to this line up of writers?

But the authors are only one part of the ALAN program. After months of working with publishers to line up these authors, I faced my next presidential duty: going back to these same publishers and asking them if they'd be willing to donate some books, "only 350 or so," for us to give away to our ALAN Workshop participants. Once again, the publishers stepped up and gave and gave and gave. Their generosity amazed me. Peachtree Publishers, an Atlanta (home of this year's Workshop) company, volunteered to supply book bags for all the books. They also threw in more than 350 YA books. All the other publishers also donated books, hardcover and paperback, brand new and old favorites. If you enroll in the 2002 ALAN Workshop, you'll go home with an armload of free books! Free books, what could be more glorious?

Authors and books are very important parts of the Workshop program, but there's no promise of anything glorious unless we have a good audience there. It's the 300 or so teachers, librarians, bookstore owners, university faculty, and other lovers of YA literature who add the final element to the Workshop, creating the synergy that can make it glorious, or, heaven forbid, inglorious.

This is the one presidential reality I've yet to face, and I'm hoping that you, dear ALAN member, and your friends, will join us in Atlanta in November for what I truly do hope will turn out to be a *glorious* ALAN Workshop.

Mary Warner, an Associate Professor of English at Western Carolina University, is working on an ALAN research grant. Part of Mary's research involves identifying literature that young adults might find significant in their quest for meaning or spiritual depth, and literature that fills the void many young adults experience. Mary anticipates creating an annotated bibliography, with teaching strategies that could be used by students, teachers, and parents. If you or your students are willing to participate in the survey, please review the questions given. You can do the survey online at <http://paws.wcu.edu/mwarner/input.asp>

Thank you for your input.

Survey for Adolescent Readers in the Search for Meaning

Age: Gender:

Type of High School:

Size of High School:

1. What are the major issues you face in your life? (i.e. peer pressure, separation of parents)
2. Where do you go to get advice or guidance for dealing with the issues listed above?
3. Have you ever read a book or some type of writing that helped you with the issues that challenge you? Name that book or work(s).
4. What are some books or other writings that you'd recommend to your peers to read for finding advice or guidance?

Thank you for your input on this survey. You can fill out the survey online at <http://paws.wcu.edu/mwarner/input.asp>, or mail it to the address below.

Dr. Mary Warner, Associate Professor of English/Director of English Education
English Department, 305 Coulter Building
Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC 28723
Phone: (828) 227-3931
Email: mwarner@wcu.edu
Web page: <http://www3.wcu.edu/~mwarner>

Colorado Celebrates Young Adult Literature

Marge Erickson Freeburn

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Colorado celebrates young adult literature, its authors, readers, and advocates, with an annual conference held in Denver each April. Key sponsors are the University of Colorado-Denver School of Education and the Metropolitan State College at Denver English Department. Additional sponsors include the Colorado YA Advocates in Libraries (C'YAAL), the Boulder Public Library, and the Central Colorado Library System.

The conference site is unique: the historic Tivoli Brewery Building. Authors, book sales, and a variety of workshops draw public and school librarians, college students, university faculty, young adults, and teachers from throughout the state. High school and middle school participants are welcomed, especially to "YAs ONLY" sessions with the authors. A highlight of the conference is the "YA Connection" discussion between the featured author and a panel of young adults.

For UCD and MSCD students, the conference provides real world support for the transition from young adult to

"teacher of young adults". The YA Connection student panelists are mentored by UCD interns; MSCD's English Honor Club students introduce speakers and workshop presenters. This opportunity to meet authors, attend workshops, and build classroom libraries introduces these new teachers to advocacy for young adults and young adult literature early in their professional development.

In past years, the YALC has featured YA authors Chris Crutcher, Walter Dean Myers, Gloria Miklowitz, S. L. Rottman, Avi, Joan Lowery Nixon, Lois Duncan, Mel Glenn, Rita Williams-Garcia, Norma Fox Mazer, Will Hobbs, Carolyn Meyer, and T.A. Barron. The 14th Annual Young Adult Literature Conference was fortunate to introduce Victoria Hanley, author of *The Seer and the Sword*, and a second book to be published in October, *The Healer's Keep*. Her work will please historical fantasy readers, and all of us who appreciate a well-told story. Her article, below, is based on her keynote address, "Creativity."

Saying Yes to Creativity

Victoria Hanley

As a writer of young adult literature, I'm sometimes asked to define the term "young adult." The publishing industry says, with cavalier fortitude, that young adults are readers ages twelve and up. What a range! Personally, I think of YAs as people ages twelve, twenty, or seventy-one, who want to do, and *will* do, new things. (By contrast, a number of adults, ages one hundred and down, do not want to do new things; they prefer to know beforehand what is likely to happen before doing anything.) It's natural for young people to want to do, and to do, new things; things with unknown outcomes. And as they do new things, YAs do not want to behave in tried and true ways—they want to be creative.

Imagination and Knowledge

You've probably seen the poster of Albert Einstein, printed with his famous quotation: "Imagination is more important than knowledge." But what did Einstein mean by that? Interpreting Einstein may be a bit presumptuous, but it's a new experience and I'm ready to try.

Imagination is "the act or power of forming mental images of what is not present; the act or power of creating new ideas" (Webster). Imagination essentially asks: "What if?" All the stories in our favorite books came from someone's imagination: "What if a creature known as a hobbit went on a journey with a wizard and a bunch of dwarves?" (*The Hobbit*,

by J.R.R. Tolkien) or, "What wild adventures might occur for intergalactic hitchhikers?" (*The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams). Likewise, the fabulous inventions that have become part of our lives, from word processors to email, are the result of someone asking "What if?" Imagination takes us into the unknown, and we bring back stories, inventions, art, and other gifts. One of those gifts can be more knowledge.

Knowledge asserts "what's so." It is defined as "the fact or state of knowing; the body of facts accumulated by humankind" (Webster).

Each of us dances between what we know and what we don't know. If I were to paraphrase Einstein's statement that "Imagination is more important than knowledge," I'd say "What we don't know is more important than what we know."

Creative Heights

When I was seventeen, I went to college in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The small student body came from all different parts of the United States. I had lived the previous six years in humid Wisconsin, at sea level. Santa Fe sits at seven thousand feet, and the desert dust in the air produces sunset colors that fill the sky, not only in the west, but all around the compass. Behind the college was a little mountain, a foothill of the Sangre de Cristos, named Monte Sol. It had no buildings on



Victoria Hanley

it. A makeshift trail led up it from the college grounds.

I wasn't the only one to be dazzled by the New Mexico sunsets. A group of us decided it would be a great experience to see the sunset from the top of Monte Sol. One bright evening, several classmates and I set out, climbing the steep path to the top.

The sunset was breathtaking, even more resplendent than we had imagined it would be. As the last red rays began to fade, it suddenly occurred to us that a consequence of sunset is night! We still needed to get back down. And there wasn't a flashlight among us.

With fading twilight to guide us, we found the trail and began to scramble along the pebble-strewn dirt. This was not Wisconsin dirt, which holds together quite well. This was dry, sandy dirt, which slips away, particularly when the path is steep. We stumbled along, clutching at pinon trees, while night thickened around us. Soon we couldn't see the trail at all, couldn't even see our own feet in the darkness.

Well, we made it down Monte Sol, and there were no injuries that day.

So what does that story have to do with creativity? To me, that trek up and down the mountain is analogous to what often happens when undertaking something new. Imagination inspires us, and we act on that inspiration. It's easy, when embarking on a new adventure, to be so struck by a glowing vision that darkness is forgotten. We begin boldly, climbing high on the strength of the vision. Then we encounter the darkness, and stumble through it.

The Need to Create Lives On

The world now is shaped by forces that weren't around when I was a young adult: AIDS, street-corner crack, school shootings, terrorists using satellite communications. The world has changed, but the spirit of youth lives on. The desire to explore, the need to create new things and new experiences, the urge to express, to discover, to venture into the unknown, are all still there.

Einstein also said that it's not possible to solve a problem using the same state of mind that created the problem. And he said "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."

Trying new things and being creative is part of what makes life worth living for many young people—the fact that there are so many dangers in the world doesn't change that. And creativity has the power to redeem those risk-takers. It can overcome circumstances, change lives, enliven

minds and hearts. Being creative uplifts and fulfills the spirit as nothing else does.

Perceptions of Creativity

Although creativity is so fulfilling, there's another side to it. Creativity has long been associated not only with joy, inspiration, and fulfillment, but also with darkness, pain and sorrow. The record of people following the creative life is filled with examples of drug and alcohol problems, and other hardships. Isolation and doubt seem to dog the lives of many of the artists and inventors among us. There has even come to be a sort of mystique surrounding the angst that artists feel; a deadly glamour that can be seductive. High school students who are drawn to something deeper than the normal round of homework, sports, and dating, can be vulnerable to

the attitude that being creative automatically calls for disintegration of the self. These young people need matter-of-fact mentors who are willing to address the real pitfalls of the creative path without plunging into those pitfalls headlong.

A separate notion about the creative life is the over-glorification of artistry. For example, the idea that a creative writer need only sit in a beautiful spot

and take notes for a Muse, then watch the money roll in, is a laughable distortion. False pictures such as that one only let young people in for personal renditions of the "rude awakening." Creative work is among the hardest work there is, requiring not only patience for developing the skills that will allow for successful creative expression, but also a willingness to keep going through the stark uncertainties the unknown can reveal.

Conversely, some youngsters have been told that to pursue creativity is utterly impractical, the mark of an irresponsible dreamer. They are supposed to "get real," which too often means "Do exactly as you're told." In such cases, the human need to explore or express new things is pronounced to be immature, or even punished.

Telling the Truth About Creativity

How do we tell the truth about creativity, without either over-glorifying it or denying its delights? To begin with, it may be useful to take an honest look at what people are likely to experience when they actively invite the unknown into their lives. And the following list of troublesome emotions is often par for the creative course:

- 1) Number one is *doubt*. It can take a thousand forms, but the usual is some variation of "I really can't do this," or "There's no point in trying." Feeling doubt while creating makes a peculiar kind of sense. After all, knowledge is what usually gives confidence, and creativity is all about touching the *unknown*. It may help young people to hear that while in the midst of creating, they can expect bouts of doubt, when they will be likely to question the worth of everything they are doing.
- 2) Then there's *frustration*. Many creative endeavors fall short of the vision that inspired them. Who among us hasn't looked at something we've made and thought, "This isn't what I had in mind." Also, creativity doesn't usually start flowing and keep flowing without any stops.

The Seer and the Sword

Victoria Hanley



For example, “writer’s block” has been talked over so often, it’s become a cliché. When it happens to me, I feel like *I’m* a cliché. But when the block descends, continuing to create seems impossible. And then, there are the frustrations of that ruthlessly persistent domain known as reality. Reality demands things from us—things like deadlines, jobs, school assignments, and other inconveniences.

- 3) Next on this list is *fear*. Fear attacks us unreasonably, sometimes when we least expect it. Is fear different than doubt? Yes, I think so. Fear declares that what I have written is just no good and will make other people decide to reject me.
- 4) Which brings us to number four: *rejection*. Rejection is universally recognized to be unpleasant. Tough though it is, rejection isn’t indicative of whether an individual will be successful. For example, many beloved authors had their works rejected multiple times before being accepted for publication. The first time I sent out *The Seer and the Sword*, the agent who rejected it wrote a note saying it just didn’t stand out. *The Seer and the Sword* is now in its third printing, and I’ve heard from readers as far away as Belgium, telling me how much they love the story.

This is quite a list: doubt, frustration, fear, and rejection. But knowing in advance that such emotions are not only likely, but also natural, will make them easier to get through when they arise.

Getting Through the Darkness

By learning how to support and encourage their own creativity, young people can do themselves a lasting favor. How can this be done?

Imagination, like knowledge, increases its power when given an honored place in a person’s relationship with himself or herself.

This honored place can be consciously developed and nurtured—if it isn’t, the creative self may crawl underground to get away from the buffeting criticism of the outer world.

Creative efforts by beginners can be raw and graceless, seeming to invite criticism. However, the imagination needs a place where it can be honored one hundred percent. That means dropping all criticism for a while, even the sort that is “well-deserved.” Remember what Einstein said: “Anyone who’s never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

Using Writing to Foster Creativity

The act of writing can easily lend itself to honoring the imagination. A notebook, or a password-protected file can be set aside, just for the purpose of letting the imagination run free. We can encourage young people to make an agreement with themselves that anything they write in that notebook or that file will not be shot down; will be treated like important communication coming from a friend. Developing a strong friendship with the unknown takes time, but it’s worth every second devoted to it. Once that friendship is there, it’s there for life. That way, when young adults encounter their own darkness, they’ll make it through, even when they can’t see the path.

The Magic of the Unknown and the Place of Knowledge

The unknown is mysterious. It resists control, cannot be

contained by formulae, refuses to be ruled. But it also bestows the sort of magic that can guide footsteps when knowledge cannot help.

Imagination isn’t limited by what is present, leading the way instead to what is not. When I’m confronted by a plot problem, I no longer try to figure it out according to what I know. What’s missing is what I *don’t* know. When I surrender to that, my imagination goes walking through unknown lands, and provides me with a new take on the story. The unknown is generous that way—generous and unlimited.

And knowledge? Well, Einstein said imagination is *more* important than knowledge—not that knowledge is unimportant. Knowledge can be very helpful. Landmarks and trails can keep us from getting hopelessly lost. Bringing a flashlight along doesn’t hurt, nor does having the skill to use one. It’s only when knowledge insists on a lion’s share of the mind that it becomes stifling. When we allow ourselves to be guided only by what we already know, we run the risk of staying locked on the same problems, because we can’t get beyond them to a different state of mind. We run the risk of freezing in our tracks. The risk of having no more new stories—of never wanting to do new things.

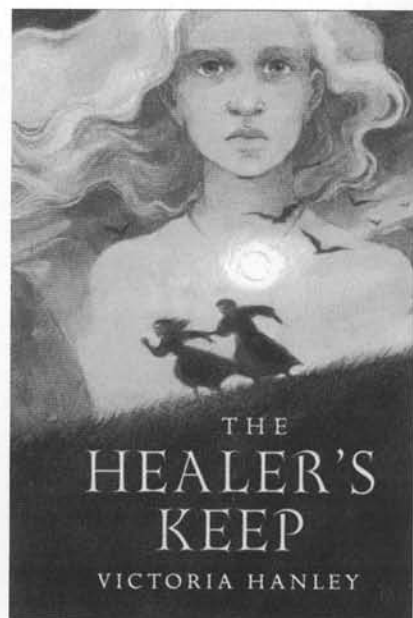
When stumbling through darkness, unable to see, it’s often tempting to try to use knowledge when imagination is what’s called for. It’s particularly tempting when the darkness is deep. At that point it’s hard to believe that what we don’t know yet will help us the most.

A Good View

The dance between imagination and knowledge continues. My daughter is seventeen now. On the spur of the moment, she and some friends decided to watch the fireworks on the fourth of July from a hilltop beside Horsetooth Dam high above Fort Collins, Colorado. They climbed up in the early evening to get a good view. They watched the fireworks with delight. When she came home she said, “Mom, on the way down we couldn’t see anything. You wouldn’t believe how dark it got.”

“Oh yes,” I answered. “I would.”

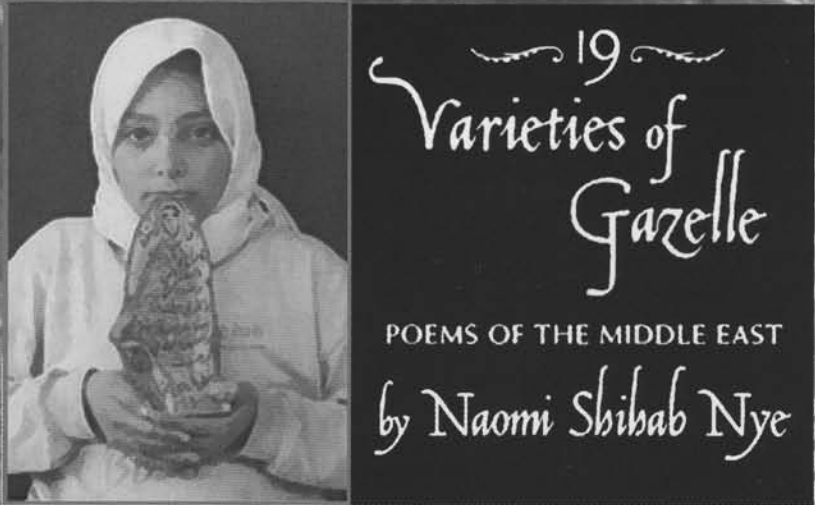
Victoria Hanley is a writer, a certified Montessori teacher, and a massage therapist who grew up without a television, and learned to love books at an early age. “Writing for young adults is a joy and an honor,” she says. Her first book, The Seer and the Sword, a fantasy novel for young adults,



won the 2001 Colorado Book Award in the YA category. It was also nominated for the Carnegie Medal in the United Kingdom, and is on the 2002/2003 master lists for the Texas Lone Star award and the Oklahoma Sequoyah Young Adult Book Award, as well as being named a New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen Age. It is published in the US by Holiday House, and is translated into eight other languages, including Spanish and Japanese. Her second book, *The Healer's Keep*, will be published in October, 2002. Hanley's adventurous spirit has led her to travel throughout the continental US by car, train, plane, bus, and bicycle. She has two young adult children—a son, Emrys, and a daughter, Rose—

and is married to a young-at-heart husband, Tim. Her website is located at www.victoriahanley.com.


Marge Erickson Freeburn is a recently retired adjunct professor at the University of Colorado-Denver School of Education, where she taught Adolescent Literature for the past 15 years. A former classroom teacher, she is currently a member of the Young Adult Literature Conference Planning Committee. For information about the 15th Annual Colorado Young Adult Literature Conference, April 5, 2003, please contact her at margaret_erickson@ceo.cudenver.edu or mpfreeburn@mho.net.



There is a language
between two languages
called Mean but who will admit
they are speaking it?
"Let's change places," the teenagers said.
"For a week, I'll be you and you be me."
Knowing if they did, they could never fight again.
Listen to them.
—From "Trenches and Moats and Mounds of Dirt"

This volume collects for the first time in one place all of Naomi Shihab Nye's poems about the Middle East, about peace, about being an Arab-American in the United States. There are familiar poems, poems that Nye's readers have cherished for years, as well as new poems being published for the first time. Nourishing, haunting, and hopeful—here is a timeless and necessary book.

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An Interview with Alex Sanchez, Author of *Rainbow Boys*

Toby Emert

Alex Sanchez is surprised by the wealth of attention his first book, *Rainbow Boys*, has received since it was released by Simon and Schuster in October, 2001. It has been called the “best gay youth book of the year” and it recently landed on the list of Best Books for Young Adults as judged by the Young Adult Library Services Association. *Rainbow Boys* chronicles the lives of three high school seniors, Kyle Meeks, Nelson Glassman, and Jason Carrillo, young men who struggle to manage their issues about sexual identity and coming out to themselves, to each other, and to the world.

Smart and athletic Kyle has an enormous infatuation with Jason, one of the most popular boys in school. To complicate matters, Nelson, Kyle’s best friend, secretly longs for their friendship to be more than platonic. Nelson is the “school fag.” He’s flamboyant, outspoken, and works hard to establish a Gay Straight Alliance. Kyle cares deeply about Nelson, but he finds himself extraordinarily attracted to Jason, who has a girlfriend and what appears

to be the perfect high school life. Jason knows that he likes Kyle, but he can’t reconcile the expectations he’s always had for himself with his growing realization that he may be gay.

Part of the appeal of *Rainbow Boys* is the novel’s compelling storytelling. Sanchez has created tight and complicated situations for his characters. From their peers and their families, they face obstacles that most gay, lesbian, and questioning youth will recognize: ostracism, bouts of confusion and self-hatred, and verbal and physical abuse. Furthermore, they have few allies or role models; they aren’t free to talk with parents or teachers or understanding friends. The conflicts are real and the stakes are high.

Sanchez, who was born in Mexico City to parents of Cuban and German heritage, and who moved to the United States when he was five, says the book has been percolating for many years. He talked to me about how this story came to life and the impact it is having on his readers and on his own life.

TE: What’s the history of *Rainbow Boys* in terms of its lifeline? How long did you work on it? How did it come to be published?

AS: Ironically, I began *Rainbow Boys* the year I left work as a youth counselor and moved into human resources. I guess I needed some perspective, but I never imagined the book would take five years to write! From what I’ve learned since, that’s average for first novels. Much of that time is spent learning HOW to write a novel.

During those five years I took workshops to improve my writing. An instructor who liked my work recommended me to her agent, Miriam Altshuler. When Miriam and I talked, she said that what attracted her—a straight suburban mom—to the manuscript were its themes of tolerance, acceptance, and personal integrity. She said it’s the type of book she hopes her kids will read when they’re teenagers. She was a huge champion of the manuscript and had the contacts to access leading publishers.

TE: Could you have written this book ten years ago? I’m thinking about how much American culture has changed in the past decade with regard to awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (glbt) issues. Is there something happening now that makes *Rainbow Boys* especially relevant? I have a feeling there is.

AS: The story lines and characters would’ve been very different ten years ago. Then, only a handful of gays and

lesbians came out as teenagers; the process was almost entirely limited to adults. But since then, a sea of change has occurred. Now, the average age for coming out in the U.S. is 15 years old.

Obviously, that’s a tremendous shift, and it is part of what makes *Rainbow Boys* so relevant. A book like it provides a vicarious emotional experience that can be tremendously valuable in helping teens navigate the transition to psychologically mature, healthy, integrated adults.

Equally relevant is how a book like *Rainbow Boys* can help non-gay readers understand and empathize with gay teens. I think the book’s selection as a Best Book for Young Adults by the Young Adult Library Services Association further reflects our culture’s changing attitudes.

TE: Where did the story grow from? What was the impetus for writing a novel that is essentially about teenagers?

AS: I think the story of *Rainbow Boys* grew out of my own internal struggle between wanting to accept myself and being afraid to. I recall Faulkner talked about writing in terms of the heart in conflict with itself. In my case, I think that internal conflict took the form of teen characters because our teenage years present such a defining time in our lives. We’re no longer children and not yet adults. It’s the period when we’re often struggling hardest to define who we are.

TE: Did you know as you were writing that you were working on a novel that would appeal to a YA audience? If so, how did that intention guide you?

AS: I didn't write *Rainbow Boys* with a particular audience in mind. As the novel took shape, however, it became apparent I was writing the book I desperately wanted and needed to read when I was a teenager, one that would have told me: "You don't have to hate yourself for being gay. It's okay to be who you are." My intention was to write an upbeat and affirming book that would inspire and encourage empathy.

TE: How did you do the research about Gay Straight Alliances in schools and what did you find out that may have surprised you about GSAs?

AS: My knowledge of GSAs came primarily from my involvement with the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). What has surprised me is how many straight students actively participate in GSAs. True to the name, they really are gay-straight alliances.

TE: Have you encountered controversies about the book? What have the reactions been like when you've visited schools, for example?

AS: Not much controversy yet. The book has received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. I think that's because educators are on the front lines of cultural change among youth. Several teachers and librarians have told me they know exactly who could benefit from reading *Rainbow Boys*. Librarians see how gay kids hide in the library to avoid harassment. That's what I did. Unfortunately, there weren't any books like *Rainbow Boys* when I was growing up.

Educators in general have become more aware of how gay kids are persecuted. They've become more knowledgeable about the disproportionately higher rates among gay and lesbian teens of alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking, absenteeism, truancy, HIV-infection, STDs, depression, suicide—just about any self-destructive and at-risk behavior you can name.

It's been exciting for me to discover how many educators now realize the harmful consequences of homophobia on self-esteem. They recognize the need to understand, protect, and accept gay youth. More and more parents, teachers, and administrators are seeing that if we want safe schools, those schools have to be safe for everyone. That includes gay youth.

TE: Authors sometimes talk about how the characters in their writing "take over" so that they begin to tell the story to the writer. Does that make sense to you? How did your characters come to life in your head and on the page?

AS: Oh, yeah, perfect sense. At first, I strive to breathe life into a character by giving him or her qualities I can iden-

tify with. That makes the character real to me and hopefully to others. During the writing of the story, at each interaction I ask myself three questions: What are the characters thinking? What are they feeling? How do they show it?

As those thoughts, feelings, and actions begin to define characters, they begin to come to life. It's exhilarating and exasperating. The characters start saying and doing things I hadn't foreseen. Writing can sorely test an author's control issues.

TE: I think readers are often interested in knowing how much of a story is autobiographical. How would you respond to that question?

AS: Though the story is mostly fiction, it definitely captures threads from my life. Each of the three central characters portrays some aspect of myself, whether it's Jason's struggle with self-acceptance, Kyle's dreamy romanticism, or Nelson's longing to find love. Although none of the characters is fully me, many of the situations they encounter sprang from kernels of my own experience, but play out in scenarios very different from mine.

TE: What were your experiences in school, as a boy questioning your sexual identity (that's assuming you were, of course)?

AS: I was 13 when I first heard the word "gay". Immediately, I knew that's what I was. And I hated myself for it. Like so many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (glbtq) teens, for the remainder of my school years I withdrew, depressed. After school, alone in my room, I would tell myself, "I'm not going to feel this way. I refuse to let this happen." The worst part was there was no one I could talk to about it.

The story lines and characters would've been very different ten years ago. Then, only a handful of gays and lesbians came out as teenagers; the process was almost entirely limited to adults. But since then, a sea of change has occurred.

There was no such thing as being out when I was in high school. I do remember one boy who was labeled queer and, consequently, got beat up every day. I watched and stood silent, afraid that if I said anything, I might be found out, too. So instead, I looked on, feeling ashamed and guilty for standing by.

There was no such thing as being out when I was in high school. I do remember one boy who was labeled queer and, consequently, got beat up every day. I watched and stood silent, afraid that if I said anything, I might be found out, too. So instead, I looked on, feeling ashamed and guilty for standing by.

I remember during one English class we read Shirley Jackson's story, "The Lottery," in which a village has a lottery each year to decide who in the community will be stoned. Afterwards, the teacher discussed scapegoats, in terms of the persecution of witches in Salem and of the Jews in the Holocaust, but said nothing of the students being made scapegoats, taunted, and terrorized in our school every day—the gay kids.

In order to get through high school, I became quiet, invisible, trying to avoid calling attention to myself. I felt so alone.

TE: How might your high school teachers have described you as a student?

AS: I was the best little boy in the world, just as in An-

drew Tobias's book of that title—a classic overachiever, trying to mask the shame I felt at being gay.

TE: How did you get started writing? When did that happen?

AS: All through school I loved to write reports and compositions, but never anything that would reveal the feelings going on inside me. I was terrified of anyone seeing what I wrote and finding out I was gay.

In college I took a children's literature class and for a project, I wrote a children's book. After college I continued to write, but I was still too afraid to write anything truly personal. Once I took a creative writing workshop and wrote a story with a gay character. But the instructor's homophobia caused him to lash out at it and reinforced my belief that writing about my feelings was too shameful. After that I didn't write for several years.

TE: I know you are working on a sequel to the book. How are you approaching that? Will the new book pick up with the same story line or will it take place at a different time in the same characters' lives? What's it been like to go back to these boys?

AS: After living with these characters for eight years, I was eager to move on. But during the publication process of *Rainbow Boys*, I'd learned to trust the judgment of my editor, Kevin Lewis. When he proposed the sequel, it took me a minute to catch my breath. But now that I've begun, it's fun watching the boys grow and mature.

The sequel takes place during the second half of senior year, as the boys face new and different challenges. The dramatic storylines explore more deeply issues about HIV, safer sex, and teen relationships told through characters that readers can care about and learn from.

TE: What advice have you been given about writing that you'd pass along to young writers?

AS: When you write, appeal to as many of the reader's senses as possible—visual images, sounds, tastes, smells, tex-

tures. Use dialogue sparingly. Actions really do speak louder than words. And above all, surround yourself with people who will give you confidence and build you up as a writer. Encouragement is so important.

TE: How has writing this book changed you? What have you learned from the "rainbow boys" that you won't forget?

AS: The book has put me at the forefront of issues regarding diversity, acceptance, homophobia, personal integrity, and gay youth. I'm enormously encouraged by my visits to schools. Teens are so much more open and accepting. I feel immense joy each time I receive an email from a reader who has found hope and courage as a result of the book. The book's tremendously favorable reception has been extremely healing for me.

One thing I've learned is how starved our society is for inspiration, for role models. Something in us longs to admire, marvel at, and be reminded that the human spirit is amazing, enduring, powerful and good. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the need is even more striking.

During the writing of *Rainbow Boys*, I was inspired by the courageous stories of gay teens coming out and challenging homophobia across the country. Those role models fed the characters of Jason, Kyle, and Nelson. Now those characters are empowering readers. It's a cycle of inspiration I hope I'll never forget.

Toby Emert is currently completing a Ph.D. in English Education at the University of Virginia. He has worked as a theater and language arts teacher in middle and high schools and as a university instructor at the University of Tennessee, The University of Texas at Austin, Longwood College, and the University of Virginia.

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THE ALAN REVIEW

T H E
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REVIEW

Strong Portraits and Stereotypes: Pregnant and Mothering Teens in YA Fiction

Cynthia Miller Coffel

In recent years scholars have brought to light the difficulties adolescent girls face in their in-school and out-of-school lives. The report *How Schools Shortchange Girls* (AAUW, 1995) summarized findings about the decline of academic achievement experienced by adolescent females. Orenstein's *SchoolGirls: Young Women, Self Esteem, and the Confidence Gap* described the great risks of stress, depression, unwanted pregnancy and substance abuse adolescent girls face, and the ways these problems are exacerbated, not addressed, by most schools.

For girls who are already mothering or pregnant these stresses must be that much greater. Whether they are studying in traditional public schools or in teen parent programs—like the program where I taught during the early 1980s—mothering and pregnant teens have needs that are difficult for teachers to address. One way to address these needs, and to encourage pregnant teens to look with a critical eye at a society that is both fascinated by them and intent on demonizing them (Luker 80-81), is to make it possible for such girls to read and discuss, with a feminist and culturally critical critique, old and new young adult literature about young women in situations similar to theirs.

What are some of the ways pregnant and mothering teens, in particular, might use young adult novels on this subject? I believe, with Meredith Cherland, that novels can be used by readers for a variety of purposes: readers can imaginatively rehearse new ways of being in the world by identifying with characters who have more power in the fictional world than the reader has in hers (Cherland 166, 167). Readers can be nurtured and cared for, in a way, by books that bring them into “another kind of female community capable of rendering the so desperately needed affective support” (Radaway 96). Readers can be helped to think critically about gendered expectations (Cherland 174) when texts are mediated through thoughtful discussion. The image of the pregnant teen and the teen mom has become a focal point where societal anxieties about female power and about poverty, sex, youth and race have coalesced (Luker 12-13). By reading and critiquing selected novels about teen pregnancy, pregnant teens can learn to critique and to complicate the stereotype of the wild, unintelligent, lower-class teen who becomes pregnant. They can also learn to challenge the stereotype of the teenaged welfare queen, thus developing, perhaps, some intellectual armor against those who see young mothers only in these stereotyped ways.

I read the texts discussed herein thinking primarily of the ways pregnant and mothering teens I've taught might respond to them, but it's clear that many of these novels were not

written for pregnant or mothering teens. Thus girls who are not pregnant and boys who are not fathers can learn from reading and discussing these young adult books, too. Having boys and girls thoughtfully read and discuss books about teen pregnancy is one way of speaking to the suggestions outlined in the AAUW publication *Girls in the Middle: Working to Succeed in School*, which calls for teachers to develop opportunities for boys and girls to explore and discuss gender issues (in Sprague & Keeling, 641). Seeing the complexities of sexual situations from the viewpoint of female teen characters could provide thoughtful boys with new ideas about relations between the sexes. Boys might be interested as well in arguing against some of the ways male characters are depicted in these novels. And since most of the novels available on this subject seem written for not-yet-sexually-experienced girls, any one of the books discussed herein, and any one of those in the annotated bibliography attached, would prove fruitful for all-girl talks about sexuality, responsibility, societal expectations, and other painful and confusing topics girls must think about as they work toward becoming women.

Choosing Focal Novels

Of the many fine YA novels on the topic of teen pregnancy and parenthood that have been published, I've chosen to look in depth at six realistic novels written between the years of 1967 and 1999. In part I've chosen these particular books to trace the ways in which presentations of the female character, depictions of relations between young men and women, and attitudes toward early sexuality have changed over the years. In part I chose some of these books because they were ones that the teen moms whom I taught particularly liked. Others I chose because I wish I'd had them to use when I taught those girls. As I read these books, I tried to imagine how my past students might respond to them. I took notes of a reader-response sort, paying particular attention to any stereotypical images of the pregnant teen the novel might present, and trying to determine who the implied reader of each novel might be.

Though about a third of the students I taught during my time working with young mothers were African American, I've found only two YA novels written by and about African American women dealing with early sexuality and pregnancy. In “Images of Black Females in Children's/Adolescent Contemporary Realistic Fiction,” Deirdre Glenn Paul indicates that young adult and children's novels featuring White heroines refer to sexuality and bodily development more than twice as often as do novels featuring African American heroines. Paul suggests that this “sexual conservatism” “might

be a backlash from previous myths about adult Black female sexuality" (62). She suggests that this conservatism might be found particularly in children's and young adult literature since that literature is intended to serve an educative function. (63). At least one of the African American writers I study here has had to defend herself against charges of feeding into this and other stereotypes of female African American teens (Porter 214).

As someone who worked in a school where issues of female sexuality were necessarily foremost in many conversations, Michelle Fine's seminal 1988 article, "Schooling, Sexuality, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire," spoke loudly to me. Fine's article examines perspectives on adolescent female sexuality embedded both in public discourse and in high school sex education curricula. Because this article spoke so clearly and so well to some of the problematic attitudes I recall my female students expressing, I use it as a frame to look at the ways three of the young adult novels that are the focus of this article—the 1967 YA classic *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* and the later novels *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt* and *Get It While It's Hot. Or Not*—describe the sexual choices and thinking of their main characters. *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* and *Don't Look and*

It Won't Hurt were books some of my pregnant students particularly appreciated reading and arguing with. Later, I show ways in which I appreciate and argue with those books still.

First, though, I look at three more recent novels—*Like Sisters on the Homefront*, *Imani All Mine*, and *Detour for Emmy*—each of which offers a complex, rich picture of a strong and thoughtful teen mom. In the reviews below, I suggest some of the aspects of these three texts that a teacher might emphasize in class discussions: I suggest paying attention particularly to images of voice and silencing in each main character's life, and paying attention to ways each author describes female communities that support the main character. A teacher could also encourage students to compare, as I have below, the ways these YA writers have used mentions of other texts, "intertextuality," to comment on the character or novel in question and on novels of the past.

Porter, the author of *Imani All Mine*, states in an interview that she sees her novel "as being a kind of bridge, a way for adult women and adolescent women to have some conversations about some issues women face" (215). I'm hoping all of the books discussed in this paper can be used in the way Porter suggests.

Three Strong Mothers

A Faith That's all Mine

The 1999 ALA Best Young Adult Novel of the Year winner *Imani All Mine* presents a brave and thoughtful African American teen mother who carefully and conscientiously tries to raise her daughter well. With Tasha, the young mother who names her daughter Imani when her friend Eboni tells her the word means faith in "some African language," (Porter 7) Porter is clearly questioning the stereotype of the teen mother. At fifteen, Tasha is a mother on welfare but she is also a girl who is on the honor roll. Tasha has strong moral sense that

compels her not to abort this baby produced by a rape, and who is contemptuous of her mother's White boyfriend in part because he was once foolish enough to take drugs (Porter 100). Tasha mothers her daughter lovingly and shows confidence in her ability: "Even though I done had her just five months, I got things down right. It's what you call a routine" (Porter 1). She bravely continues school even though almost every day there she sees the boy who raped her.

Imani All Mine offers a critique of the wider society that surrounds the neighborhood her characters live in, as well. Porter uses the technique of intertextuality to critique aspects of the society that is mass-marketed to White female teens: "They always be having them articles in *Seventeen* about how great it is to be old enough to wear makeup, how to dress for the prom, what twenty pieces of clothes you got to have to go back to school in the fall, how to tell if a boy likes you. I ain't think I was going to look like them girls in there,

all skinny and all, but I did think I might feel like them. Happy" (Porter 8).

Porter also gives Tasha powers far beyond those society gives her, powers to use her imagination to "sustain life and maintain critical awareness" (hooks 55). Tasha baptizes her daughter, turning the ritual into one of her own: "I poured [water] gentle over the

top of her head, and I say, Imani Dawson, I bless you in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Ghost. I say it to her like I have the power to say it. Like I have the right to be the one that blessed her" (Porter 80). With this phrasing, phrasing that becomes more ironic when we see that Tasha has no ability to keep her daughter safe, Porter comments on the creative, loving, and courageous ways her character and real women like her try to live good lives in neighborhoods filled with violence. A teacher, reading this book with her students, could highlight the author's respectful perspective. Porter's view could be particularly hopeful to students who are young mothers themselves.

The Complexity of Desire

Rita Williams-Garcia's very appealing 14-year-old protagonist Gayle, in the 1996 novel *Like Sisters on the Homefront*, presents a stark contrast to characters we will look at later. That Gayle is pregnant and has a 7-month-old child is presented matter-of-factly in the first few pages of this lyrical book. Unlike characters in teen novels written well before the 90's, Gayle, a smart if rather troubled character, is given command of her own sexuality. Sent away to stay with relatives, she writes to her most recent boyfriend: "I member the last time we did it. It so good" (Williams-Garcia 62). The freshness of this voice, the clear unrepentant enjoyment of the act is compelling: whether or not she's using "erection protection," (105) sex is a natural part of Gayle's life, part of her rebellion and confusion, maybe, but also part of who she is and of how she enjoys life. Gayle is a rare character in young adult literature because of her enjoyment of sex, though. As Davis and MacGillivray point out, in "Books about Teen Parents: Messages and Omissions," "Gayle's braggadocio is problematic because she was introduced to sex by an adult male at a young age" (Davis & MacGillivray 93). Gayle

The image of the pregnant teen and the teen mom has become a focal point where societal anxieties about female power and about poverty, about sex and youth and race have coalesced (Luker 12-13).

does provide readers with an “explicit example of the complexity of sexual desires” (Davis & MacGillivray 93).

Gayle’s cousin Cookie is curious about sex. When she asks Gayle if having sex hurt, Gayle replies, “ ‘I won’t lie . . . It hurted. But that goes away. I didn’t bleed much, and it felt good after the second and third go-round’ ” (Williams-Garcia 69). Here is explicit, unromantic sexual talk in a real girl’s language, and here is a girl who, like July Jones in *Mr. And Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* (discussed below) has had some disappointment with sex but who, unlike the old-fashioned July, wants to talk and think about it. Cookie vows that she’ll wait till she’s married. Author Williams-Garcia presents adolescent female sexuality as desire, with its attendant complexities, and she suggests, through her character Cookie, that sexual enjoyment must be tempered by moral choice.

In some ways this book, which celebrates female friendship as well as family, explores the problematic issue of what goodness means for girls. Cookie is a good girl if there ever was one, a talented singer wrapped up in her family life and in the life of her church. Through watching Cookie make decisions about her own first love, Gayle comes to see ways that a kind of goodness can help her live her life right—not a pleasing, conforming goodness, but a thought-out awareness of what choices are most affirming and helpful for her in the long run. By allowing Gayle to voice the pleasures of sexuality, and by creating in her such an engaging, intelligent picture of a young mother, Williams-Garcia avoids the implicit condemnation other books suggest. These questions of what goodness means, and of the complexities of desire, are ones a skillful teacher could open up for discussion with her students as they read this book. A

teacher could point out that it is not by finding a man or recovering from a love affair, but by getting to know her family better, and by becoming a valued part of that family, that Gayle grows strong.

All the Love You Deserve

The last of the three books which tell the stories of strong teen mothers is *Detour for Emmy*, which is the only one of the six novels discussed here whose implied reader may be the girl who’s just discovered she’s pregnant. Marilyn Reynolds’ character Emmy is a thoughtful, quiet, good girl who’s about to enter high school. That her friends read *Forever* and the *Joy of Sex* signals to the reader a critique of those 70’s era sex-manuals (Seelinger Trites 32; Willinsky & Hunniford 102). Though Emmy is poor and the daughter of a single mom, she becomes far more than a stereotype. As we watch her fall in love with Art, the handsome, ambitious Mexican-American senior involved in the singing group the Harmonics, and as we watch her learn about love, discover her pregnancy then struggle through the first year of her daughter’s life, Emmy becomes a full and complicated character. She is someone with strength and intelligence, a girl who is finally triumphant over her adversity.

In *Detour for Emmy*, the main character finds important support from her friends. She also finds another kind of female support through reading books, particularly Anne Frank’s diary: “My life was so easy compared to Anne Frank’s. But

in some ways, we had a lot in common. I was sort of confined, too. . . . I longed for a girlfriend I could talk with and know we would understand each other” (Reynolds 163). In this way, Reynolds “articulates a central issue of female bonds in feminist . . . adolescent novels: female community established between the characters and between the author and reader can provide a source of empowerment like no other” (Seelinger Trites 93).

Finally, through going to a Teen Moms program, Emmy comes in contact with another very important kind of female community. She meets other girls who can understand her, and she meets a tough and kind teacher who tells her things any pregnant or mothering teen needs to hear:

“Give yourself all the love you deserve, even when it feels like no one else is loving you. And never give up. Every person is different and every story is special, but I’ve heard so many stories from so many girls, some with easy lives and some with lives as tough as yours, and a few who’ve lived through hells beyond what most of us care to imagine. And the amazing thing is, so many of you girls end up doing okay” (Reynolds 128).

Detour for Emmy is in some ways a simplistic novel: Emmy’s problems are solved perhaps more easily than most pregnant teens’ will be, her alcoholic mother and troubled brother both reform rather remarkably toward the end of the novel, and Emmy discovers a way to go to college. But though the book is clearly intended to be didactic, though it is jam-packed with too-straightforward lessons, the messages never get in the way of what is a good story.

Each of these books about strong teen mothers could allow a pregnant or mothering teen to experience some “psychic nourishment” (Ricker-Wilson

59) and also let her experience a “heroic female as active agent” (Ricker-Wilson 61). Each might allow a struggling young mother, learning to get along with her child and perhaps expecting herself to be “naturally nurturant and generous . . . selfless and therefore cheerfully self-abnegating” (Radaway 94) to develop expectations of herself as a mother that are more realistic and gentle than those Radaway describes. A teacher could easily use each of these novels to help a teen mom look critically back at society as society points a blaming finger at her.

Three Pregnant Teens

Female Sexuality as Violence

Other older and less clearly positive novels can be used to help students explore their own attitudes toward teen sexuality and society’s attitudes toward teen mothers. In “Schooling, Sexuality, and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire,” Fine argues that there are few places, in most schools, where girls are encouraged to talk out—and hence, think out—their own feelings about sexuality and the expectations society has of them. Boys’ desire is acknowledged just by classroom descriptions of the biology of sex (83), but classroom instruction and discussion about girls’ sexuality is limited largely to warnings, corrections, and descriptions of ways girls can keep themselves from being victimized (77). Fine contends that girls are entitled to a “discussion of desire” (79) where they can “breathe life into positions of social critique

In part I chose some of these books because they were ones the teen moms I taught particularly liked.

and experience entitlement rather than victimization, autonomy rather than terror" (Fine 99). She bemoans the absence of such a discourse, which would help girls gain a sense of their own agency in difficult negotiations about sex. While the three books discussed above could each help a teacher make available that discourse of desire, the books I look at in the following represent three less positive attitudes toward female sexuality Fine discovers in schools and in society (Fine 77).

The ideas in Fine's article could be discussed with students in conjunction with discussions of these books about pregnant teens. Working through and discussing ways in which the attitudes Fine's article describes are reflected in the novels discussed below might help girls begin to articulate, even just to themselves, their own attitudes toward sex. Such discussions might also help boys see how girls' attitudes have been shaped by the discourses around them, and how those discourses might have affected the sexual choices both genders have made.

The first attitude Fine suggests equates sexuality with a largely metaphorical violence. This perspective on adolescent female sexuality "presumes that there is a causal relationship between official silence about sexuality and a decrease in sexual activity—therefore by not teaching about sexuality, adolescent sexual behavior will not occur. The irony, of course, lies in the empirical evidence . . . Teens who believe sexual involvement is wrong deny responsibility for contraception. To accept responsibility would legitimate 'bad' behavior" (Fine 77).

Female Responsibility in *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*

This attitude toward sexuality can be seen in Ann Head's novel, *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones* (1967). This novel is remarkable both in that it tackled this oh-so-contemporary subject thirty years ago and in that the author lets July Jones tell the story herself, encouraging readers to identify with the character and to see that though she has made a mistake, July does not fit our society's prevailing stereotype of the pregnant teen: this pregnant teen is White, wealthy, intelligent, and responsible.

July doesn't seem that interested in sex, either. During a conversation with her friend Lou, July thinks: "The truth was it scared me that when Bo Jo made love to me. I just wasn't with it after a certain point. . . . It scared me that just when I should be feeling closest to him I felt farther away than ever. But I didn't even like to think about it, much less talk about it" (Head 135).

July exemplifies a girl who never planned to have sex and never explored her own sexual thoughts or feelings. She doesn't want to think it, even now that she's married, and the subject is brought up only two times in the novel. July Jones is a girl who proves Fine's point that teens with sex-positive attitudes are less likely to become pregnant out of wedlock than are teens who think sex is not the sort of thing a good girl thinks about (Fine 77).

It is true, as Caroline S. McKinney states in "Finding the Words That Fit: The Second Story for Females in Young Adult Literature," that, caught in a "situational shift" (McKinney 3), July grows stronger as she works through some difficult choices. McKinney suggests that July begins to develop a true "inner voice" that allows her to defy her parents in the end, but since her choice to stay with Bo Jo is so much in keeping with what was expected of women of the time, it's

difficult to see July as any kind of true feminist heroine. After her baby dies, July gets a job while Bo Jo goes to college; she learns how to do laundry better and takes a course in Elizabethan drama "mainly for kicks" (Head 118). Because Head chooses to write the baby out of existence, her character doesn't have to deal with the many realities a child might bring. July doesn't have to choose to give her baby up for adoption or learn how to be a mother. She doesn't have to figure out how to love and support herself and take care of her child at the same time. She just has to learn how to deal with her husband's moods.

Because this book is structured as a romance—girl meets boy, falls in love, and gets married, with—one could say, now—the little oddity that the girl gets pregnant young, and before marriage, thrown in—it is a book best read in combination with thoughtful discussion and critique. If she reads this book alone, a girl who is pregnant out of wedlock might feel reassured that "standard female development does indeed lead to emotional rewards" (Radaway 95). It might also convince her that though she's made a mistake, being as feminine as she can be could still make her life come out all right. And if a pregnant teen reads this book without thoughtful discussion, she might be convinced that marrying could solve many problems and that teen marriage itself won't be that difficult.

Female Sexuality as Victimization in *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt*

In *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt* (1972), Richard Peck presents the reader with the "more prevalent" (Fine 78) attitude that sees female sexuality as a form of victimization. In this novel, as in many others studied, Ellen is a pregnant teen who serves more as a warning to another girl, and to the as-yet-inexperienced reader of the book, than as a character from whom the reader learns and with whom she identifies. Ellen is clearly presented as a victim. Through this portrayal, and through Ellen's sensitively rendered confusion about whether to give up or keep her baby when it comes, the reader is invited to sympathize with her. But it is Carol, Ellen's bright college-bound younger sister, with whom the reader is expected to identify. Through Carol's eyes we are encouraged to see Ellen as naïve, self-absorbed, and not very bright. Carol says that Ellen "was always smack in the center of a gang of high school hotshots who all looked like they were on the verge of flunking Remedial Reading" (Peck 35). "But now, she'd met Mr. Wonderful, so it was good-bye to the Old Life" (Peck 29).

"Mr. Wonderful" turns out not to be a worker in the fight against the Vietnam war, as he has told Ellen, but instead proves to be a drug dealer and an ex-con. Peck thus acknowledges that Ellen has been victimized emotionally and sexually, but he doesn't underline the gendered quality of the other kinds of victimization he describes in the story. Ellen's mother is a victim, too. She has suffered unfair divorce laws and an anti-female economy. She is raising three daughters by herself, and working the 4-12 shift hostessing at a restaurant in town. The run-down father whom Carol meets early in the book gives her money, but he doesn't know her little sister's name (Peck 18). There is no indication that Peck intends to combine the picture of foolish, tough, not-very-bright Ellen becoming victim of an older, lying man's sexual desires, with a critique of the society in which Ellen

and her family live. This omission points up the “problematic assumptions” (Fine 78) that underlie the view of female sexuality as victimization. Fine comments on this kind of portrayal when she notes: “Both arguments present female victimization as contingent upon unmarried heterosexual involvement—rather than inherent in existing gender, class, and racial arrangements . . . The full range of victimization of women—at work, at home, on the streets—” is not recognized in this discourse. And “while narrowly anti-sexual, these messages nevertheless buttress traditional heterosexual arrangements. These views assume that as long as females avoid premarital sexual relations with men, victimization can be avoided” (Fine 78).

A teacher, helping students see this range of victimization in the book might, by extension, help her students—who, like some of the teen moms I’ve worked with, might find much of “women’s lib” talk irritating—slowly see ways in which our culture works against women. Discussions about what has improved for women since this novel was written might be of value; discussions about the perspective this male writer brings to descriptions of these women’s lives might help boys feel freer to imagine themselves in the situations these characters face: raising children alone, facing those children’s mistakes, making the difficult choice to put a baby born out of wedlock up for adoption.

Female Sexuality as Moral Choice in *Get It While It’s Hot. Or Not.*

Fine seems to oppose the third discourse she says girls hear in the schools, that of sex as moral choice, primarily because of the way that choice is presented. Considerations of personal morality are important, Fine seems to say, and this discourse provides the female teen with some subjectivity, but still this third way of speaking about female sexuality poses it as “a test of self-control; individual restraint triumphs over social temptation. Pleasure and desire for women as sexual subjects remain largely in the shadows, obscured from adolescent eyes” (Fine 79).

Valerie Hobbs’ *Get It While It’s Hot. Or Not.* (1996) is a book which speaks to this vision of female sexuality. It is clearly a feminist book, one that emphasizes the importance of female community. The first sentences read: “What does it mean to be friends to the end? I thought I knew” (Hobbs 1). The girls in this story take care of each other: they are evidence of that “common conception of females strengthening each other” that Seelinger Trites describes in her chapter about “literal and metaphoric sisterhood” (Seelinger Trites 80).

This is another book that has been written for the not-yet-experienced girl, though, and it is one of many in which the pregnant character is not the main character, but a friend or relative of the main character. It is a book which a not-yet-experienced girl might read to help her explore her sense of agency in relation to boys and sex (Cherland 166). A middle-class White girl might find the characters in this book “continuous” with people in her own world (Cherland 170). Thus, when the narrator, Megan, a smart middle-class daughter of a lawyer, thinks out her experiences of romance with her boyfriend (“Kissing Joe is a whole-body thing, at least it is for me. But the straight little voice in my mind never quite shuts up: if he’s this good, it says, he’s had some experience. If he’s had some experience, who’s he had it with?” [Hobbs 28]), a

reader might be encouraged to think carefully about the way she manages her sexual encounters as well. When Megan eventually lays it on the line with Joe (“My mind’s not going to change. . .” [Hobbs 95]), a reader could imaginatively rehearse speaking this assertively to a boy—keeping her virginity and keeping the boyfriend—as Megan does in this book. A reader could see that some girls have sex just as an experiment and learn that “it is not something you do as an experiment” (Hobbs 82) and she could hear the arguments for and against sex education in schools. But finally, this is a book that shows that for Megan, sexuality is that test of self control Fine describes. The reader is encouraged to identify with Megan in part because we see her win that test.

A teacher could also lead her students to see that this book is troubling because, though one character says, “I mean, not to be rude, but it isn’t just bad girls who get themselves pregnant. It can happen to anyone” (Hobbs 90), the narrative distances the reader from the pregnant teen character. It presents her as “other” and in this way serves to “reassure those prejudices the reader has already seen mimicked from other sources, or perhaps the book is introducing them to these young students for the first time in such a coherent way” (Willinsky and Hunniford 102). A teacher could help students see how Kit, the pregnant teen, is in no way a character with whom the reader is encouraged to identify; she spends most of her day whining in bed, she has low self-esteem (Hobbs 4), and has had problems with drugs (Hobbs 7).

It is my hope that the books listed above, and some of the books in the accompanying annotated list, could be used in the classroom to serve three purposes. First, reading and discussing some of these books might be part of helping make a “discourse of desire” available to girls in the classroom. That is, such discussions might begin to provide safe places where girls could talk about “passion, pleasure, danger, and responsibility” (Fine 85) in their relationships with boys, and such discussions might help girls develop the beginnings of the sense of social, sexual, and vocational entitlement Fine speaks of when she describes evidence “that women who lack a sense of social or sexual entitlement, who hold traditional notions of what it means to be female . . . are disproportionately likely to find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy . . .” (Fine 96). These books could be used to stimulate discussion of relationships in sex education or parenting classes; in an English class, in conjunction with a social worker’s speech about the problems of early pregnancy; in connection with an all-class debate about the school’s role in pregnancy prevention.

Second, I hope that reading some of these novels might help both boys and girls look at and discuss our society’s gendered expectations of them, and help students begin to look critically at the stereotypes surrounding the image of the sexually active and pregnant teen. Pairing *Like Sisters on the Homefront* with *Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones*, or reading the beautiful and complicated *Imani All Mine* just after *Get it While it’s Hot. Or Not*, might encourage much fruitful discussion about stereotyping in novels and about societal expectations of girls.

Last, I hope that reading and discussing some of these novels could provide a kind of community-through-literature to girls who are already pregnant or mothers. A teacher might want to have some of these books in her personal library, to hand out in private conversation with a lone pregnant teen or

young mom. She might also want to suggest them to a girl who seems to be considering an increased closeness with a boyfriend; these books could provide a basis for continuing teacher-to-young woman talks.

Clearly many school districts, particularly in today's conservative climate, will not welcome the use of books such as these. I'd suggest that even in those districts that do allow use of these books a teacher needs to be sure to express his or her own critique of some of the books' stereotypical, classist pictures of the pregnant teen, presentations of unhealthy attitudes toward teen female sexuality, and overly romantic presentations of teen marriage and motherhood. Creating an opportunity for voicing such critiques—whether those criticisms come from teacher or student—are one of the values of using these books in the classroom.

The typical school curriculum provides little opportunity for pregnant and mothering teens to talk openly about the anxieties, difficulties, sorrows and joys that make up their lives. There are few places in schools where girls can talk openly about their sexuality or about the expectations society places on them. Through reading and critiquing young adult novels in which girls meet the challenge of pregnancy or of mothering, teachers can help pregnant and mothering teens, and boys and girls who are not yet parents, examine some of the crucial issues in their lives.

Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary, Realistic YA Novels about Pregnant or Parenting Teens

What follows is a list of a few more novels that feature pregnant teens. The titles that are starred are ones I found particularly imaginative, well-written, and pro-girl.

Anonymous. (1998) *Annie's Baby: Diary of a Pregnant Teenager*. New York: Mass Market Paperback.

Fourteen year old Annie confides in her diary from the time she discovers she's pregnant till her baby's birth. Written by the author of *Go Ask Alice*. Very popular.

Cole, Shelia. (1996) *What Kind of Love?* New York: Mass Market Paperback.

Told in diary format, this is the story of fifteen-year-old Valerie, a classical pianist who finds herself pregnant after one encounter. Though many of the characters are one-dimensional, Valerie's inability to accept that her boyfriend has left her rings true.

***Dessen, Sarah. (1998). *Someone Like You*. New York: Viking/Penguin.**

Halley's best friend, Scarlett, is pregnant with the baby of Michael, who has recently died. Halley begins a romance and struggles to understand her friend, her mother, and herself. Halley decides against sleeping with her new boyfriend and comes to appreciate her overbearing psychologist mother.

***Doherty, Berlie. (1992). *Dear Nobody*. New York: Orchard Books**

Told alternately from the point of view of the young mother and the young father, this 1992 Carnegie Medal winner presents a realistic and positive image of the pregnant teen and her parents. Sympathetic, multi-layered portrayal of the boyfriend. Beautifully written.

Eyerly, Jeannette. (1987). *Someone to Love Me*. New York: JP Lippincott.

Patrice Latta, a naïve sophomore whose divorced mother has no time for her, falls for an older boy who has sex with her, then leaves her. Patrice decides to keep the baby. Simplistic characters, stereotypical young mom, sudden plot resolution.

Fienberg, Anna. (2000). *Borrowed Light*. New York: Delacourt press.

Callista May, whose astronomer-grandmother has given her scientific/poetic language with which to describe her life, discovers she is pregnant. Interesting parents; Australian setting.

Grant, Cynthia D. (1998) *The White Horse*. New York: Simon Schuster.

A single English teacher who has always wanted a child becomes intrigued by the journal entries of a troubled, homeless student whose heroin-addicted mother has abused her. When that student becomes pregnant, the English teacher must decide whether to adopt the student's baby or not.

Johnson, Lissa Halls (1982). *Just like Ice Cream*. Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers

Didactic Christian series book. A poorly-written romance, but filled with much good information about early sexual experiences, birth control methods, sexually transmitted diseases, and what doctor visits are like for a pregnant teen.

Kaye, Geraldine (1992). *Someone Else's Baby*. New York: Hyperon Books for Children

Teresa Browning, a White, middle class, 17-year-old secretary, discovers she is pregnant after she passes out at a party. She is sent away to live with her aunt as she waits to give birth to the baby she has decided will be "someone else's."

Lantz, Frances. (1997). *Someone to Love*. New York: Avon Books, Inc.

Troubled White middle class teen gets to know Iris, the unwed mother whose baby her parents plan to adopt. Stereotypical picture of the mixed-up, poor, irresponsible pregnant teen.

Neufield, John. (1972). *For All the Wrong Reasons*.

When 17 year old Tish becomes pregnant, her boyfriend Peter refuses to allow her to have an abortion. They marry and drop out of high school. Young mother as selfless helper.

***Pennebaker, Ruth (1996). *Don't Think Twice*. New York: Henry Holt.**

Told from the point of view of a White lawyer's daughter who spends time in a home for pregnant teens in Texas. The pregnant teen's sharp, cynical voice, her growth in perspective, her courage, and the author's clear feminist message makes this look back at the late sixties both funny and moving.

***Sapphire (2000). *Push*.**

Told from the point of view of an African American young mother, this painful novel is a *kunstlerroman*; we watch as, with help from a kind teacher and female students, Precious Jones learns how to read, to write, and to stand up for herself.

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Cynthia Miller Coffel is a doctoral student in Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Iowa. She has taught English in traditional school as well as in a school for pregnant teens.

The Migrant Experience in the Works of Mexican American Writers

Sherry York

It is commonly agreed that life experiences shape a writer's literary products. Common advice for novice writers is to write about what you know. In recent years several Mexican American authors have written about the migrant experience. The results are a number of novels, picture books, poems, biographies, and nonfiction works from writers who have experienced migrant farm worker life.

These books are worthy of consideration by language arts and social studies teachers because they provide an authentic look into a segment of society that still exists in the United States today. These works of literature contain recurring themes regarding education, family, poverty, labor, immigration, and citizenship—all topics that are especially relevant in our post-September 11 society.

Migrants in Stories, Novels, and Picture Books

One of the first Mexican American writers to use the migrant experience as a primary focus in fiction was Tomás Rivera, a native of Crystal City, Texas. *And the Earth Did Not Part/ y no se lo tragó la tierra* was first published in 1971 after it won a Quinto Sol Award. The fourteen interconnected stories are based on Rivera's experiences as a migrant worker in the 1940s and 1950s. A well-known educator and advocate of Chicano literature, Rivera overcame the poverty of his childhood and youth and was chancellor at the University of California at Riverside when he died in 1984.

Today Rivera's legacy lives on at the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute in California, which "promotes the well-being of the Latino population of the United States," and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, established in 1995 at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. This award is presented annually for children's and young adult literature that portrays Mexican American culture in a positive manner. Pat Mora's *Tomás and the Library Lady* (1997) is based on the real-life experience of young migrant worker Rivera and the Iowa librarian who introduced him to the world of books. Beloved by librarians across the country, Mora's picture book is a tribute to her one-time co-worker Tomás Rivera. Fittingly it was awarded the Tomás Rivera Award in 1997.

Viola Canales, author of *Orange Candy Slices and Other Stories* (2001) and a native of McAllen, Texas, recalls her mother's sad account of picking cotton in the fields of west Texas. The recalled sadness was not about the work, but about taking her younger brother and sister to a local cafe for a hamburger and a Coke and being denied service. The

owner pointed to a sign that said, "We don't serve Mexicans." She felt like crying but didn't because as the oldest, she needed to care for her younger siblings.

Macho!, (1973), a novel by Victor Villaseñor, is a fictional account of Roberto García, a young Mexican Indian who endures the hellish conditions at Empalme, Mexico, a temporary camp and processing center where those who wanted to work in the US were legalized. Roberto eventually enters the country illegally so that he can work in the fields and send money to his impoverished family. Interspersed through the narrative are passages that provide factual information about the bracero program in the 1950s and 1960s, the effects of the program on labor conditions in both Mexico and the United States, and about "Operation Wetback," which resulted in numerous injustices. Another novel published during the Chicano movement of the 1970s is *The Plum Plum Pickers* (1971), by Spanish American writer and teacher Raymond Barrio. This account of an exploited migrant worker family was more political than autobiographical.

José Antonio Villarreal's *Pocho* (1959) focuses on changes that occur in the Rubio family after they settle in California during the depression era. Although the family does work in the fields, acculturation and loss of culture are the main themes of the novel. *Esperanza Rising* (2000), by Pam Muñoz Ryan, is one of the first Latina-authored children's books to use the migrant experience as an integral part of the story. Set in the same time period as *Pocho*, this award-winning novel is based on the life of the author's grandmother, Esperanza Ortega, who was forced by circumstances to leave her privileged life in Mexico and work in the fields of California. Readers experience with Esperanza the cruel realities of rough work in miserable conditions, and empathize with those seeking to improve conditions and also with those workers so desperate for work that they dared not support labor-organizing efforts for fear of losing the poor jobs they had. In the author's notes at the end of *Esperanza Rising*, Ryan discusses the Deportation Act of 1929, which resulted in at least 450,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans being "repatriated" to Mexico.

Under the Feet of Jesus (1995), a poignant novel by Helena María Viramontes, is told from a teenage girl's point of view. Estella falls in love with Alejo after they meet in a migrant camp. Alejo is exposed to pesticides in the fields and becomes extremely ill. Because of their desperate poverty, Estrella's family can barely afford food and gasoline and cannot afford medical treatment for Alejo, who has been

abandoned by his worker companions. In a heart-breaking scene, Alejo, who is near death, is left at a hospital and the family returns to continue their struggle to survive.

Pesticide poisoning is also a theme in *Cactus Blood* (1995), a Gloria Demasco mystery by Lucha Corpi. In this adult mystery a young woman is exposed to pesticides when fleeing through the fields after being raped. The woman survives for more than twenty years, but her health is seriously compromised. As the novel ends, she is returning to Mexico to die in the land of her birth. Other characters in the novel had been involved with farm worker unions during the 1970s.

Echoes of Gary Soto's experiences in fieldwork can be seen in his young adult novel *Jesse* (1994). Jesse and his brother have left home because of an alcoholic stepfather and are attending junior college and working in the fields when they need money for food. Inspired by the farm workers' struggle, Jesse draws a *huelga* (strike) scene about which his mother says, "These lazy people are giving us a bad name" (126). After his brother is drafted, Jesse contemplates his sad world, "fields running for miles with cantaloupes like heads, all faceless in the merciless sun" (166).

The main character in *Juanita Fights the School Board* (1994), the first novel of the *Roosevelt High School* series by Gloria Velásquez, is the daughter of farm workers. Juanita is sometimes embarrassed by her parents who do not speak English. Of farm work, Juanita says, "I hate it. My back always hurts, and it's burning hot" (10). The counselor, Ms. Martinez, shares the information that her father came to the United States to work in the fields.

In *The Jumping Tree* (2001), by René Saldaña, Jr., a classroom teacher who has experience as a migrant farm worker sympathizes with her students who miss months of school to work in the fields. While teaching a Texas history class about Martin Luther King and civil disobedience, the teacher shows the class a picture of a sign on the door of a restaurant, "No dogs, Meskins, or niggers allowed in here" (129). Rey, the main character in the novel, begins to learn about the ugliness of bigotry that he has never encountered in his south Texas community because his parents do not migrate. "Something in my chest hurt. Like I wanted to cry" (129).

Memories: Autobiographies and Biographies of Migrants

Professor Francisco Jiménez writes of his migrant worker experiences in *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* (1997). Cataloged as autobiographical fiction, the narrative revolves around Francisco's experiences as a Spanish-speaking child in English-only schools. His difficulties are compounded by the family's need to move frequently in order to find work. The sequel, *Breaking Through* (2001), is cataloged as a biography. It begins, "I lived in constant fear for ten long years from the time I was four until I was fourteen years old" (1). His fears become reality when his family is deported after his brother gets a janitor's job at school.

Two picture books, *La Mariposa* (1998) and *The Christmas Gift* (2000) are also derived from Jimenez' experiences

as a migrant worker. *La Mariposa* is based on a story from *The Circuit* in which Francisco is able to find some success in the classroom despite the language barrier. *The Christmas Gift* is based on memories of a dreary Christmas in which rain has prevented the family from working. Although there is no money for Christmas presents, Francisco desperately wishes for a red rubber ball. Both picture books clearly illustrate the desperate poverty of the farm workers and, in spite of all, the richness of the love and kindness of family and friends.

Poet Juan Felipe Herrera shares his remembrances of the migrant life in two bilingual picture books, *Calling the Doves* (1995) and *The Upside Down Boy* (1995). The first title represents the poetic viewpoint of an only child of a young migrant family in which the father speaks to the birds and the mother recites poetry. The beauty of nature and the fun of sleeping in a tent under the stars are presented from an innocent child's point of view. *Calling the Doves* ends with the mother's decision that the family must settle in one place so that the child can attend school. *The Upside Down Boy* continues Juan Felipe's story as he starts school with no

knowledge of the English language and is bewildered because he cannot understand the teacher's instructions.

Another Texan, Elva Treviño Hart, writes about her life as the baby of a migrant family in *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child* (1999). It begins, "My whole childhood, I never had a bed" (3). Hart describes her family, work in the fields, and her school years so vividly that the

reader gains a clear understanding of what life as a migrant was like for one individual. *Migrant Daughter: Coming of Age as a Mexican American Woman* (2000) is Frances Esquibel Tywoniak's story of her early life as a migrant worker and her determination to attend college. Tywoniak became a teacher and administrator in San Francisco.

Gary Soto's *Jessie De La Cruz: A Profile of a United Farm Worker* (2000), is a biography of a courageous farm worker woman who became involved in the organizing efforts of United Farm Workers union. The book is dedicated to "all farm workers, who feed the nation."

Simón Silva's autobiographical book *Small-Town Brownie: Cosecha de la Vida* is dedicated to "all past, present, and future Campesinos, anyone who has ever felt alone, frustrated, unimportant, insignificant, or invisible." Silva describes his family's migrant work experiences with humor and with sadness. "The day moved on, and we were steam-cooked like vegetables on a giant wok since the freshly irrigated field provided all the necessary moisture to keep us turning" (57). Silva's illustrations are found in the picture book *La Mariposa* by Jiménez, in *Gathering the Sun*, a picture book tribute to farm workers by Cuban American Alma Flor Ada, and on the cover of *Jesse* by Gary Soto.

Barrio Boy (1971) by Ernesto Galarza is an autobiographical account of Galarza's early life and immigration to Sacramento, California. His descriptions of life in the barrio include much about the *trabajo* (work) and *chanza* (opportunity). The author and his mother left Mexico during the Mexican Revo-

In recent years several Mexican American authors have written about the migrant experience. The results are a number of novels, picture books, poems, biographies, and nonfiction works from writers who have experienced migrant farm worker life.

lution. Because his mother was determined that he become educated, Ernesto attended a school that he describes as “not so much a melting pot as a griddle where Miss Hopley and her helpers warmed knowledge into us and roasted racial hatreds out of us” (211). His summers were spent in migrant labor camps, and he once lost a job after he took part in a protest over the death of a child that was caused by drinking polluted water in a camp. Galarza later wrote several factual reports and nonfiction books about farm workers including *Merchants of Labor* (1964), *Spiders in the House and Workers in the Field* (1970), and *Farm Workers and Agribusiness in California, 1947-1960* (1977).

Poetry

Diana García, born in a migrant labor camp where her parents met, wrote *When Living Was a Labor Camp* (2000), a collection of poems that pay tribute to her family and to other farm workers. García’s introduction mentions several themes—*la migra* (immigrations officers), pesticide poisoning, the Repatriation Act, and the spirit of the working people.

Elegy on the Death of César Chávez (2000), a beautiful picture book written by Rudolfo Anaya and illustrated by Gaspar Enriquez, pays tribute to the memory of César Chávez, the leader of the United Farm Workers who died in 1993. Beginning with a quote from Shelley’s *Adonais*, this book is a poem, an elegy to a humble man who had lived the migrant life and was presented a posthumous Medal of Freedom for devoting his life to the better the lives of farm workers. In his struggle for civil rights and non-violence, Chávez has been compared to Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. A note from Rudolfo Anaya explains how he was moved to write this elegy. A chronology of the life of César Chávez is included. The book cover reverses to reveal a poster chronology. Information for those wishing to contact the United Farm Workers Union and the César Chávez Foundation is provided.

Nonfiction

Several nonfiction books document the problems of migrant farm workers. *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* by Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez (1995) discusses the shameful disregard for the rights of Mexican Americans who “looked Mexican” by immigration officials. In *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* author Juan Gonzalez details how workers have historically been treated as “easily deportable labor” (203). Gonzalez discusses how fluctuations in the U.S. economy correlate with the *bracero* programs and “Operation Wetback” of the 1950s.

Beth Atkin’s edited collection, *Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories* (1993), features interviews and photographs of children and teens. This book presenting the thoughts, feelings, and poetry of young migrants begins with a foreword by Francisco Jiménez and ends with a poem “Tierra Prometida/The Promised Land” by well-known poet Francisco X. Alarcón.

For *Fields of Toil: A Migrant Family’s Journey* (1994),

Isabel Valle spent a year with a migrant family. This newspaper reporter accompanied a migrant family from La Grulla, Texas through a year’s work on the migrant trail. Valle wanted to “physically put myself in their shoes and get the opportunity to let others know exactly what they go through” (xi). During their travels she learned a great deal about migrants and family, children, the role of women, housing, health, job hazards, labor union, immigration, illegal alien workers, education, and language barriers—all the major concerns of migrant workers past and present.

Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail (2001) began with Rubén Martínez’s investigation into the background of three brothers killed while being smuggled across the border to work in the fields of California. The author, a news editor and commentator, began his investigation in Cherán, Mexico, where he became acquainted with the inhabitants of the small town. Later Martínez followed up by visiting former Cherán citizens who were working in the United States. *Crossing Over* documents and personalizes the cultural and economic changes being brought about in both the United States and Mexico by migrant workers.

Nasdijj, in his memoir, *The Blood Runs Like a River through My Dreams* (2000), makes the point that not all migrants are of Mexican descent when he writes, “We worked the ranches of the West and crops anywhere. My cowboy dad was white. My mother’s people were with the Navajo” (3).

Closing Thoughts

Through these books, those of us who have not known life as migrant workers can read and vicariously experience the farm worker life without dirtying our own hands. Values common in these books are a love of family, a willingness to work hard, and a desire for children to become educated and thereby lead easier lives. Sadly these books also contain numerous instances of prejudice and bigotry that caused pain to people who asked only for acceptance, respect, and the opportunity to earn a living.

Any number of interesting projects might be constructed around the migrant experience. What other ethnic groups have been employed as migrant workers in the United States? Comparisons between points of view would be appropriate. Is experience as a migrant worker necessary to produce authentic literature? What of the works of John Steinbeck, Gary Paulsen, and others? Another possibility might be to explore the concept of work migration in other countries.

Immigration and citizenship issues are concerns in many migrant stories. The issue of illegal immigrants who are victimized as they cross borders seeking work is being examined in recent fiction and nonfiction. These are especially relevant to citizens in the Southwest where it is not uncommon to hear of the deaths of men, women, and children headed north for the work they know is waiting. Manuel Luis Martínez’s novel *Crossing* (1998) is a gripping story based on a real incident in which thirteen undocumented workers suffocated in a boxcar near El Paso, Texas. *Delfino’s Journey* (2001) by Texan Jo Harper is a novel about two young Aztec boys who are tricked into working in a border slave camp with other “illegals” in horrible conditions. This

novel is also based on real-life situations.

In these troubled times, it is important for students (and teachers) to become aware that in our country are millions of citizens whose lives have been very different. These works of literature should be included in school libraries, added to relevant reading lists, and used as catalysts for discussions about the American experience from the point of view of migrant farm workers.

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Recommended Web sites

- César Chávez Foundation and United Farm Workers Union <<http://www.ufw.org>>
- Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Award <<http://www.education.swt.edu/rivera/mainpage.html>>
- Tomas Rivera Policy Institute <<http://www.trpi.org/>>

Sherry York is a retired school librarian. She has been reviewing books and writing articles for more than twenty years. She is the author of two books on Latino literature forthcoming from Linworth Publishing in 2002.

Freedom's Journeys Through *Shuttered Windows* (1938), *Words by Heart* (1968), and *True North* (1996)

Kathy N. Headley

Young Adult Literature Featuring Black, Female Protagonists

Can an author accurately and authentically write beyond her personal ethnic and cultural boundaries? This question spans across more than 60 years of literature written for adolescents. In order to examine this issue further, as well as to glean a perspective of young adult literature featuring Black female protagonists, I explored three books about Black females that are written by White women: *Shuttered Windows* (1938) by Florence Crannell Means, *Words by Heart* (1968) by Ouida Sebestyen, and *True North* (1996) by Katherine Lasky.

Florence Crannell Means' *Shuttered Windows*

Shuttered Windows by Florence Crannell Means is a period piece (Kingman 446) set in the 1930s that remains a valuable part of social history (Helbig and Perkins 338). The story introduces Harriet, a young Black orphan from Minnesota who journeys to the Carolina lowcountry's tidal islands to visit her grandmother. While there, Harriet decides to stay and attend an all-Black girls' school on the island. Her decision opens the door for Harriet and her grandmother to forge a closer relationship while, likewise, Harriet grows fonder and closer to a neighboring young man, Richie. The book reveals Harriet's inner growth and her ultimate decision to become a teacher instead of a musical composer (Rahn 106) and to remain in South Carolina with Richie. As they build their new world together, the young couple will strive to create a better quality of life for poor, southern Blacks (Hendrickson 285).

In *Shuttered Windows*, Means has created noteworthy characterizations (Rahn 104-105) that exhibit her talent in placing her characters first within the story (Kingman 446). Harriet is "strong, proud, and beautiful" (Rahn 104) while Granny and Richie, although poor and less well-educated, are kind and intelligent. Throughout the book's pages, Means expertly chisels Granny's royal persona within an illiterate frame and crafts respect for Harriet's heritage and history. Interestingly, *Shuttered Windows* seems to foreshadow the forthcoming social revolution alongside this rich heritage tapestry (Rahn 106).

Florence Crannell Means was one of the first writers to fill a new niche, books for young adults (Kingman 446). Born in New York in 1891, Means grew up in a household accepting of many nationalities. She was influenced by religious faith, strong family support, and direct experiences

with a variety of cultures and races. Primary to Mean's work is her painstaking authenticity of background (Rahn 108). By her death in 1980, Means had written more than 40 books in which she "had championed the cause of cross-culturalism in the United States" (Anderson 87). Her purpose in writing multicultural perspective books, such as *Shuttered Windows*, is "Not so much in helping girls understand their own group as in understanding another's" (Rahn 108). Similarly, Means "sees her role as interpreter of one group to another" (114), helping "readers to step into the shoes of another race" (115). Her accurate observations reflect intelligent, young Black women's thoughts and words during the 1930s (Rahn 108) and reveal their struggle for dignity, security, and education (Kingman 446).

Ouida Sebestyen's *Words by Heart*

An all-white western town in 1910 is the setting for Ouida Sebestyen's *Words by Heart*. Sebestyen's careful rendering of characterization (Greenlaw 581) introduces us to Lena, a twelve-year-old Black female who idolizes her father, Ben, and loves her stepmother, Claudie (Drew 382). Three themes intertwine within the text: striving for perfection, death and rebirth, and family, especially the father-daughter relationship which is central to *Words by Heart* (Monseau 30-33). Plot conflicts reveal Lena's struggle between the "natural inclination to rail against injustice, on the one hand, and her deep-seated desire to please and emulate her father, on the other" (Monseau 22). Some critics debate that Lena's "close identification with her father results in her being silenced as a young woman" (Monseau 25). This "disintegration of spirit" (Monseau 25) seems somewhat familiar to Harriet's acceptance of the traditional female occupation, teaching, instead of the more innovative field of music composition.

In *Words by Heart*, Sebestyen has "created a novel that combats hatred with love, that champions freedom through suffering" (Monseau 36). As a writer, Sebestyen relays stories of family and love and of people struggling to understand and accept each other, an "acceptance worth fighting for" (Greenlaw 581).

Katherine Lasky's *True North*

Katherine Lasky, an Indiana-born Jewish author of Russian decent, is respected for her well-researched books and accurate representation of theme (Garrett 373). In one of her works, *True North*, Lasky drives the tale of two girls:

Lucy, an off-spring of Boston's high-society, and Afrika, an escaped slave traveling freedom's Underground Railroad. Their two worlds collide when Lucy discovers Afrika hiding inside her grandfather's house and bravely steers Afrika through freedom's next steps. Set between Boston and Virginia, the novel portrays both the tyranny of slavery and its Northern support by self-serving industrialists. Dramatically compelling in both action and emotion, Lasky describes Afrika's quest for safety and Lucy's desire to reach past wrongdoings and reject the blindness of apathy. Even across decades, Lucy and Afrika remain indelibly linked together by the horrors and sweetness of freedom's journey.

The Power of Literature

Literature is a powerful tool for transmitting historical and ideological interpretations (Johnson 8). One purpose of reading, writing, and sharing African-American literature is to pass along the rich history, mutual respect, and cultural and social awareness. In doing so, the survival of African-American communities is ensured, building successful foundations for the youngest members (Johnson 1-2). By exposing Black youth to African-American literature, this important foundation is formed from African-American experiences and sensibilities. "We utilize children's books as agents of socialization, politicization, and of formal education" (Johnson 1). Florence Crannell Means, writing during the 1940s, pioneered efforts toward merging an understanding among the mosaic groups of America's youth (Hendrickson 282-283). Consequently, reading ethnic literature, "expands the cultural awareness of all students" (Mitchell 97).

Historical Perspective on African-American Publications

African-American literature for Black youth, by Black authors, began in 1887 with a monthly magazine, *The Joy*, founded by Mrs. A. E. Johnson (Johnson 2). A focus on books about minority characters between 1966 and 1974 resulted in four Newbery Award winners and eleven Honor recipients. By 1975, Newbery reflected a shift in attitude concerning books written about minorities by non-minority authors; such books began to disappear. Consequently, books written, praised, and honored before this shift were retrospectively targeted by harsh criticism. Florence Crannell Means, certainly controversial in her own time, is perhaps faced with even greater negativity by today's standards even though her novels, now historical, give us insights into the Black experience of the 1930s (Rahn 108).

Society as Reflected in Literature About African-Americans

According to Haskins, "being black in America has always required a strong spirit" (88) and "being born black in America also carries a greater chance of being born poor" (91). African-American youth do not expect happy endings; fairy tales are not realistic models for their world (Johnson 2). Sebestyen's *Words by Heart* challenges the misconception that extreme racism existed only in the South (Miller-

Lachmann 74). Likewise, Lasky's *True North* provides the perspective that Northern economists profited by Southern slavery (cheap labor, more profit on finished products).

Black females, victims of both a White racist society and a Black sexist community, face six challenges: invisibility, negative self-image, sexual and other violence, drug abuse and crime, lack of faith in Black men, and loss of voice (Groves 51). Negative self-image and loss of voice are prominent issues that protagonists struggle with in Mean's *Shattered Windows*, Sebestyen's *Words by Heart*, and Lasky's *True North*. At the conclusion of each book, the central Black female has an improved self-image and a greater or more stable voice.

Adolescent females, as a group, experience loss of voice and seek identification with a group. Unfortunately, African-American girls begin to lose their voice earlier than white

adolescent females. Young adult novels, therefore, are crucial vehicles for vicarious insights (Groves 62).

Authorship and Authenticity

After Barbara Rollock compiled *The Black Experience in Children's Books* in 1984, she received so many questions about the racial identity of authors that in subsequent editions she includes an index of author identities (Johnson 3). Perhaps the best known controversy over white authorship is Bob Dixon's statement about Ezra Jack Keats' *The Snowy Day*: "[The characters] are black enough, but it's only skin deep. Nothing would be affected in Keats' stories if the characters were white" (Johnson 7). Hence, an outsider's point of view results in the objectification of Black America. The need for Black novelists to speak to Black children was first answered by the 1931 publication, *Zeke* by Mary White Ovington, one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In the early 30s, however, Black writers did not have wide access to the publishing industry. Few writers followed Ovington's lead.

Rudine Sims Bishop believes that *Words by Heart* is "flawed because it presents an outsider's perspective on Black lives and fails to recognize the political, racial, and social realities that shape the Black experience in this country" (Monseau 27). Donelsen and Nilsen (in Monseau 29) label this kind of remark as a form of censorship. Bishop's argument is that "only persons from a particular culture group may write about that group" (Hade 115). Clearly, this opens the debate on whether a person can write about another culture (Harris 112). Katherine Lasky says "yes" and "warns against 'a kind of literary version of ethnic cleansing, with an underlying premise that posits that there is only one story and only one way to tell it'" (Harris 114). Lasky issues further warnings about the "self-styled militias of cultural diversity" (*To Stingo With Love* 2). Ponder those statements in light of critical receptions of Means' works and that of Mildred Taylor, an award-winning African American author of young adult books. Dorothy Broderick slashes Means' moderate approach as a way of keeping African-Americans in their place (Hendrickson 287-288) while Taylor's

Can an author accurately and authentically write beyond her personal ethnic and cultural boundaries?

By 1975, Newbery reflected a shift in attitude concerning books written about minorities by non-minority authors; such books began to disappear.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is treated as a "significant masterpiece of the twentieth-century American fiction" (Moss 410) and Taylor is praised for "her skill in representing African-American speech, her ability to write convincing dialogue, and her ability to weave social and historical information into the dramatic and emotional contexts of her narratives" (410-411).

Lingering Thoughts

In response to Lasky's warnings, Rudine Sims Bishop writes that she seriously doubts that anyone will criticize [Lasky] for daring to take on the perspective of a 14-year-old 19th century fugitive slave. Someone may, however, criticize the way in which she portrays that fugitive slave, and that is something I think any critic has the right to do (Bishop viii).

Lasky, in a counter reply, charges that Bishop's evaluative framework "has been used to ward off what some perceive as interlopers" but reflects that both she and Bishop share a common goal: "good books for young people by all artists regardless of ethnic or racial background" (Letter vii). Citing Gates, Lasky declares that "No human culture is inaccessible to someone who makes the effort to understand, to learn to inhabit another world" (Letter viii).

Perhaps, as noted by Anderson, "It is bridges, not barriers, that we need" for assisting cultures in "crossing over to each other" (90). Maybe Means knew this well as she reflected upon her own work:

The books about minority groups have had varied motivations—more than any other the desire to introduce one group of people to another, who otherwise might never know them, and so might regard them with the fear which is bred of lack of knowledge, and which in its turn breeds the hate, the prejudice which I have seen blazing out in destructive force (Anderson 90).

Our journeys across ethnic and cultural boundaries, supported by young adult authors such as Means, Sebestyen, and Lasky create pathways toward greater understandings of ourselves in the 20th century as we labor to create a safer, braver 21st that is more accepting. Using the power of young adult literature, we can learn from our past journeys and better connect our future—together.

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Kathy N. Headley is professor and coordinator of the Reading Education program at Clemson University. She has taught literacy courses at Clemson for 15 years and has ten years of public school teaching experiences. Her areas of expertise include children's/adolescent literature and writing.

The Problem of Poverty in three Young Adult Novels: *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich*, *Buried Onions*, and *Make Lemonade*

Myrna Dee Marler

Millions of adolescents living in urban America must worry more about safely navigating the streets of their neighborhoods than in pursuing the American Dream. Their available income does not meet needs as basic as health care, nutrition, sleep, personal space, and quality education. Thus, the problems associated with growing up in poverty are a relevant topic for young adult fiction. Three writers, Alice Childress, Gary Soto, and Virginia Euwer Wolff have addressed this subject, each revealing underlying beliefs about the conditions of poverty and the strategies young people can employ to overcome it. Childress and Soto both suggest that inner city poverty is the result of institutional racism. To succeed in the White mainstream, individuals must reject the values of their ethnic culture. Wolff, on the other hand, suggests that poverty crosses all racial lines and to escape poverty one must choose to take advantage of whatever resources are available, however limited they may be.

Today, poverty is associated in the American mind with urban slums. The terms *inner city* and *inner city youth* are code words for ethnic enclaves in the crowded streets of large cities. In the popular mind, the words *impoverished youth* call up images of Black or Hispanic teenagers involved in drugs, street gangs, prostitution, and murder. This widespread conception springs not only from racial stereotyping propagated by the media, but also from the civil rights activism of the sixties. To highlight the disastrous effects of systematic racial oppression, ethnic American writers of young adult literature have portrayed their characters struggling to break free of poverty against overwhelming odds. Entrenched racism made it nearly impossible for young protagonists of color to rise above circumstances designed to keep them in place.

A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich

Alice Childress' novel, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich* (1973), reissued in February, 2000, is valued as a classic; many African American students, teachers, and critics read it as one of relatively few books that reflect experiences from an African American point of view. It depicts the overwhelming forces of racism which keep the characters from escaping ghetto life. Benjie, the thirteen-year-old protagonist

living in Harlem says, it is "hard to be a chile because my block is a tough block and my school is a tough school" (9). Dangers abound in the form of sexual predators, muggers, street bums, gang members, and dope pushers. A child is forced to stay alert and grow up fast because, like rats forced into an overcrowded cage, people living with such diminished prospects turn and feed on one another. Benjie knows that he must either be tough or be a victim. However, he relies on heroin to get him through the dreary reality of his days.

Childress suggests, through the voices of her other characters, that rising above the circumstances of the ghetto neighborhood is an option available only to those who are superhumanly dedicated to that goal. Further, like Benjie's best friend Jimmy, they must turn their backs on their culture and

community to succeed in the White world. More than lack of money keeps average people like Benjie and his family in place. These individuals are enmeshed in the coils of systematic racism. Butler, Benjie's stepfather, resents social workers and school officials who blame Benjie's addiction on a troubled home life. Butler asserts that Benjie's problems go deeper than being "understood," or "misunderstood" by the family. He says, "Damn, *nobody* ever understood me! . . . I damn, for sure, don't understand bein treated like a dog cause I got a dark complexion" (17). As Butler sees it, poor Black men have three choices in life: criminal behavior, living off a woman, or working at a menial job. Butler chooses to work and doesn't expect much more than peace and quiet and a home where he can "close the door and shut the people-eaters outta [his] life" (20). Nigeria Greene, Benjie's teacher, an educated Black man, also believes that the odds are stacked against Benjie because of his race. He asserts that any Black man who succeeds in the White world must deny his own reality and give back to people in authority "all the silly answers required" because Black children "are shut off, shut out and shut up, forced to study the history of their white conquerors, this peculiar place of white facts, white questions, white answers, and white final exams" (44-45). Even Walter, the local drug pusher, insists he is only a cog in the vast machinery of capitalistic racism. He says, "If I quit pushin tomorrow, you think any junkie is gonna do without this poison cause I

To highlight the disastrous effects of systematic racial oppression, ethnic American writers of young adult literature portrayed their characters struggling to break free of poverty against overwhelming odds.

didn't show? . . . From city to city, town to town, from block to block and house to house, there is someone who will get you anything you want, if you got money" (62-63).

Childress' resolution to the problem of poverty is for members of "the [Black] nation" to work together to fight racism and overcome the institutional barriers which keep Black people poor. In pushing this agenda, she celebrates Black endurance, Black heroism, Black culture, and Black community. "It's nation time" is the war cry of the enlightened characters in the novel.

Buried Onions

Gary Soto's more recent novel, *Buried Onions* (1997), takes a similar but more pessimistic approach to the problem of poverty than Childress does. Soto's subject is the poor Mexican American community in Fresno, California. He suggests that both racism and the macho Mexican culture transposed to the slums of a big city keep the underclass in place. Eddie, the protagonist, is another average young man who finds it impossible to break out of the ghetto. He thinks of the forces aligned against him as a giant onion buried under the streets of the city. This onion releases vapors, which hang in the air over the black asphalt of the city neighborhoods. Eddie says, "The onion made us cry. Tears leapt from our eyelashes and stained our faces. Babies in strollers pinched up their faces and wailed for no reason. Perhaps as practice for the coming years" (2). The onion is a metaphor for racism, lack of opportunity, and the violent street culture, which combine to keep young men like Eddie in a perpetual cycle of despair. Eddie, like Butler Craig, doesn't want much from life, a steady job, a family, and a television to watch in the evening. However, he is prevented on every hand from achieving these modest goals. Also like Butler, Eddie's life choices are limited to criminal activity, living off a woman, in this case, his mother, or working hard at a menial job.

All of Eddie's choices are either dangerous or lead to another kind of dead end. Eddie cannot simply walk down a city street. His head swivels, continuously on the look out for the enemies who could take his life at any moment and "spill [it] like soda on the black asphalt, spill [it] before you could touch your wound" (6). Eddie knows these dangers from personal experience. His father and uncles are dead. His best friend from high school was killed in an industrial accident. His cousin Jesus was knifed at a public urinal for commenting that the fellow next to him wore yellow shoes. Eddie's aunt and Angel, Jesus' best friend, urge Eddie to kill the killer. Eddie is unwilling, mostly because he strongly suspects that Angel himself killed his cousin. In Fresno, friends can change into deadly enemies in an instant. Eddie notes that the mortuary students at the local community college are most likely to find steady work because bloodshed and early death are part of the air he breathes, in the onion vapors that rise from the asphalt.

Eddie might go to school or work hard to improve his lot in life. At the local community college, he could study air conditioning, but a future in air conditioning in inner city Fresno where the streets burn with unrelenting summer heat, and the paint blisters on the houses, is unpromising. Both his lack of education and his brown skin keep him from getting a steady or meaningful job outside the ghetto. Even those who do find steady jobs are subject, like Juan, to having their heads "ironed in those huge industrial rollers," or to being stabbed by roving bands of bored and nihilistic teenage boys.

Eddie works long hours just to live from day to day. He thinks, "If hard work is the road to salvation, heaven must be packed with a lot of people from Fresno" (18). Eddie stencils addresses on the curbs in front of houses in a part of Fresno that can afford such small luxuries. This labor allows him to stock his cupboards with Ramen, Fritos, Jello and boxes of Wheaties. He likens life in the ghetto to babies in strollers, "going back and forth, back and forth, getting nowhere" (2). Even riding his bike around White neighborhoods looking for customers exposes Eddie to sudden accusations and arrest based on racial profiling.

Eddie's friends suggest another option. He could join the armed services, which offers him both education and opportunity. All he has to do is sign away his life. Eventually, Eddie is persuaded to join the Navy. As he boards the bus for boot camp, he sees that "Larry the stoner" is also one of the recruits. He is not heartened when Larry yells, "Eddie! We're in together." Eddie thinks to himself, "Look at the company I keep. . . . It's either homies or stoners" (143). In the final images of the novel, Soto indicates that the Navy will not solve Eddie's problems. He will carry them with him wherever he goes. The bus to boot camp breaks down. Eddie goes for a walk under the sweltering sun and finds himself in an onion field. "I was overwhelmed with sorrow. I realized I had trudged over onions, acres of buried onions." He drops to his knees in tears, and a man raises him up and hands him two more onions, "one for each hand. And whether it was from the sun or the whipping wind, my eyes filled and then closed on the last of childhood tears" (146). No matter where he goes, Eddie will not escape the buried onion, "that great bulb of sorrow," all of those forces of racism that keep him in the underclass. Soto offers no overt solution to Eddie's dilemma, just the suggestion that racism is a debilitating and constant feature of Mexican-American life which closes off most opportunities for those already forced to live in poverty.

In contrast to the views of Childress and Soto, the sociologist William Julius Wilson, in *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (1978), asserts that most poverty is not caused by racial discrimination. He maintains that structural changes in American life have left people who have no other options marooned in the inner city. He cites the change in the American economy from manufacturing jobs to those providing services. The new jobs require a higher level of education and skill. Corporations grew larger, and seniority became entrenched. Thus, the best-paying jobs are the last to become available while the most menial are the first to be eliminated. Freeways, improved communications, the rise of the trucking industry, high urban taxes, and escalating urban crime rates combined to move business away from the city to the suburbs (93-108). Meanwhile, a population surge among young black people and a rising tide of immigration has filled the inner cities with the uneducated, the impoverished, and the hopeless (108-172). Wilson believes that systematic racism may have initially created urban ghettos, but now location, opportunity for work, and education play a larger role. Instead of thinking of poverty as a racial problem, he urges Americans to address it as a class, one to which all ethnicities might be subject.

Farai Chideya, in *Don't Believe the Hype: Fighting Cultural Misinformation about African-Americans* (1995), also argues against the ethnic identification of poverty. She counterbalances prevailing negative stereotypes by looking at statis-

tics about poverty from a different perspective. For example, she observes that while Blacks are *more likely* to be poor than Whites, a growing number of Whites are also poor. She notes, "Overall, 30 percent of black families and 9 percent of white families are poor; the figures for individuals are 33 percent for blacks, 11 percent for white" (18). She points out, "The reality is that in terms of sheer numbers, most poor children and poor Americans in general are white" (24). She explodes another myth by showing that 54 percent of all Blacks live in the South, not in large northern industrial inner cities. Additionally, while 56 percent of Blacks live in central cities, 26 percent of Whites also live in the central cities of this country (16).

Further, poverty is not a problem that is going away as other Americans enjoy increased prosperity. Economist Bruce W. Kimzey declares that "income distribution in the U.S. over the past 30 years has become decidedly more unequal The share of total income going to the poorest 20 percent of the population has fallen from a high of 5.5 percent in 1967 to 4.1 percent in 1994, while the share going to the wealthiest 20 percent has risen from 40.4 percent to 47 percent over the same period" ("Is There Enough?" 5). He attributes this widening gap to a "drop in relative wages for poor and unskilled workers compared to those with advanced skills and technical training, entrepreneurs, and executives." In the last 30 years, the 20 percent of people at the bottom of the income scale have seen their "average income fall by three percent" (5). These figures signal that an impoverished, angry, and despairing underclass is growing, and the government and people of this country need to view poverty as an alarming and urgent economic problem for all groups.

Make Lemonade

While the government and the American people figure out how to deal with the problem of poverty, individuals still caught in its coils can only try to escape it. Virginia Euwer Wolff, in *Make Lemonade* (1993), addresses this issue by removing all racial and geographic markers from her novel and focusing on the individual choices of her characters and on the power of friendship. Her fourteen-year-old protagonist, LaVaughn, is determined to leave her neighborhood and poverty behind by excelling in school and going on to college. With this end in mind, she works and saves all of her money. She sees college as the way out of despair (65). LaVaughn is not alone in her struggle. Although her father is dead, killed accidentally in a gang shooting, her mother is equally determined to see LaVaughn succeed. She is a formidable ally because, as LaVaughn says, "My Mom is big, a big Mom." And she got even larger after LaVaughn's father died. "She got huge. Like she multiplied. . . . I don't mean fat It's a bigness about her she got some way, not a bigness she could diet off" (13, 81). And so, even though no one in their building has ever gone to college, both LaVaughn and her mother focus on this goal. LaVaughn says, "The word COLLEGE is in my house, and you have to walk around it in the rooms like furniture" (9). LaVaughn also receives frequent encouragement and advice from teachers at school.

Problems arise for LaVaughn when she meets someone who struggles against even greater odds, someone more like Benjie or Eddie of the earlier novels. Seventeen-year-old Jolly is a single mother of two young children. Apparently abused as a child, she lived in a box under the freeway. The two men who fathered her children abandoned her. She has been beaten for trying to escape gang life, and is sexually harassed and then fired from her low-paying job. LaVaughn baby sits for Jolly and finds that she's asked to give them a lot more than her time. LaVaughn's mother blames Jolly's problems on Jolly's poor decisions: "You need to take hold, girl," she says to Jolly again and again (35). LaVaughn's mother is worried that Jolly's problems will suck LaVaughn into the cycle of continuing poverty, that in helping her, LaVaughn will not be able to focus in school. LaVaughn's sympathy for Jolly has her babysitting for free instead of earning the money she must have for college. Sometimes her mother's attitude about Jolly irritates LaVaughn, because she knows how Jolly struggles with the daily reality of "baby puke on my sweater & shoes,

and they tell me they'll cut off the electricity and my kids would have to take a bath in cold water. And the rent ain't paid like usual" (20). But, LaVaughn knows that her mother is right: friendship with Jolly is a risk, and Jolly must become more self-reliant. Jolly must make better personal choices in order to succeed, and LaVaughn, too, must decide how much time and energy she can give Jolly and

her children before giving away her own hopes and dreams. The answer lies in the responsible choices that both girls make together. Their friendship helps each of them.

Rather than suggesting that the odds are stacked so overwhelmingly against Jolly that she cannot succeed, Wolff suggests that in spite of her many burdens, Jolly, with a little help from LaVaughn and a little help from the government, social workers, and teachers, can take responsibility for her own actions and improve her life and the quality of her children's lives. In an interesting contrast to Soto's buried onion, the metaphor for this novel is the lemon seeds LaVaughn keeps bringing to Jolly's house and planting with the promise to Jolly's son that the seeds will take root and a tree will grow. Again and again the seeds fail to thrive. Jolly accuses LaVaughn of bringing phony lemon seeds that will never grow and will end up breaking Jeremy's heart (132). LaVaughn keeps trying, however, in concert with Jolly's efforts to go back to school. In a last ditch attempt to make the seeds blossom, she brings potting soil and plants new seeds once again. At the end of the novel, as Jolly begins to take hold in school and in managing her burdens more successfully, she tells LaVaughn that the lemon seeds have finally sprouted, "We got a little green thing, a little lemon thing comin' up" (199). As Jolly has earlier told LaVaughn, you can take lemons and make lemonade—even if you have been cheated out of the oranges you deserve.

While the problem of poverty persists and eliminating it from American life becomes an ever knottier issue, Wolff's novel suggests a rejection of the ethnic stereotyping of poverty in favor of seeing it for the human problem it is. As long as resources for those in poverty are limited, people must make responsible personal choices, set personal goals, en-

. . . an impoverished, angry, and despairing underclass is growing, and the government and people of this country need to view poverty as an alarming and urgent economic problem for all groups.

gage in friendships, and reach out hands to help each other live better, more productive lives. Race may well be a factor in poverty, but so are lack of education, location, crime, and an attitude of despair. Poverty can be an equal opportunity destroyer of lives but hope, effort, and friendship can cross all racial boundaries.

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Myrna Dee Marler is an Assistant Professor of English at Brigham Young University Hawaii, where she has taught young adult literature and creative writing since 1994. She is currently at work on a YA novel.

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Wild Man Island by Will Hobbs
HarperCollins, 2002, 184 pp., \$15.95

Adventure
ISBN:0-688-17473-6

Fourteen-year-old Andy Galloway is with his mother on a sea kayak trip off the coast of Alaska. After going by himself on a personal pilgrimage to see the site of his archeologist father's death, Andy is marooned on Admiralty Island. He soon discovers that he is not alone, but is being observed by a man living on the island, hoping to avoid detection. This adventure is driven by secrets only the man—who befriends Andy—knows. Together, they learn about the origins and arrival of the first Americans to land on this remote island off the coast of Alaska.

Consistent with Hobbs' other Alaska and Northwest Territory stories, readers ages ten-years-old and up will find this novel exciting to read, and historically informative. Hobbs provides much good context for his fictional narrative. A great read for all.

Edgar H. Thompson
Emory, Virginia

City of the Beasts by Isabel Allende
Harper Collins, 2002, 406 pp., \$19.99

Coming of Age/Friendship
ISBN:006050918X

Allende's debut young adult novel is packed with intense adventure and mystical elements. Alexander Cold finds himself on an adventure in the rainforest of the Amazon, where his grandmother is searching for the legendary beast that is terrorizing the native tribes. He forms a powerful friendship with Nadia, the daughter of another member of the expedition. Through his adventures in the rainforest, Alex grows as a person and comes to terms with problems he experienced at home. Suddenly, in the midst of life-and-death adventure, his everyday adolescent problems seem trivial. Not only does he gain a new perspective on his daily life, but also he learns to confront and manage the emotions he has concerning his mother's illness.

Allende does an excellent job of capturing readers from the beginning. This fast-paced novel takes readers on Alex and Nadia's adventure with them, where they meet a variety of characters and encounter great mystery and intrigue.

Jennifer S. Dail
Florida State University

Home of the Braves by David Klass defining personal values, school bullying and violence, soccer
Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2002, 312 pp., \$18.00 ISBN: 0-374-39963-8

David Klass is in a class of his own as a creator of likable, complex, believable male high school students. Joe Brickman, narrator and protagonist, is a multi-dimensional high school senior. He is proud of the soccer team that he captains, despite its poor record. He is jealous and suspicious of the new and phenomenally talented soccer player who arrives in time to take the team to the playoffs. He is stifled into inaction when he cannot figure out how to tell his life-long pal and neighbor that he longs for her. He is protective of his intelligent but geeky best friend, Ed the Mouse. He recognizes that his womanizing single father is not perfect, but respects him for trying to seek solutions to problems rather than giving in to defeats. And, although he enjoys working for his dad at the car wash, he questions the wisdom of his choice to pay little attention to his academics and to avoid applying for admission to college.

Further, Joe is intelligent enough to realize that the bullying that is allowed at his school is wrong and must stop. When Ed, who is trying to learn to stand up to the "hard guys" is harassed and humiliated by them, Joe begins to fear for Ed's mental state. Eventually, he shares his fears with Ed's dad, who acts quickly to reestablish contact with the son from whom he has become distant. Klass treats high school violence, and the conditions that breed it, subtly yet potently in this captivating novel. Ultimately, he offers hope through the power of friendships, family bonds, and promises of the future. Like his outstanding novel *You Don't Know Me* (FSG, 2001), *Home of the Braves* is sure to speak directly to adolescent readers.

Sissi Carroll
Florida State University

Young Adult Books In Review Recently Published Titles

Jeff Kaplan, Editor

3x5 inches to "Clip & File"

<p><i>The Named</i> by Marianne Curley Bloomsbury Children's Book, 2002, 332 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fantasy/History/Time Travel ISBN: 1-58234-779-4</p> <p>The present lives in this book are affected by events in an unseen world where a battle rages between the mythological forces of the Order of Chaos and The Guard. The Order of Chaos tries to change the past so the present will be altered and made chaotic. The Guard fights the forces of Chaos to preserve history and the present, to fulfill written prophesy.</p> <p>Ethan, a normal sixteen-year-old, and his fifteen-year-old friend, Isabel, are two of The Named who belong to The Guard. The Named complete missions throughout history, for example, in ancient Greece, in the time of England's Richard II, and in Colonial New England, in order to prevent The Order of Chaos from prevailing.</p> <p>Set in modern Australia, author Marianne Curley has created a powerful story that held my attention from beginning to end. If students like the Harry Potter books, or the <i>Lord of the Rings</i>, they will love <i>The Named</i>. In the same category as Lois Lowery's <i>The Giver</i>, this book has Newbery Award possibilities. I highly recommend it.</p> <p>Edgar H. Thompson Emory, Virginia</p>	<p><i>Missing</i> by Catherine MacPhail Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002, 192 pp., \$14.95</p> <p>Mystery/Suspense/Family/Bullies ISBN: 1-58234-773-5</p> <p>Since her older brother's disappearance ten months ago, thirteen-year-old Maxine Moody's life has been miserable—cutting school, losing friends, and having her parents ignore her by focusing all their attention on finding their son, Derek. After her father identifies a body as Derek's, Maxine's nightmare becomes even worse.</p> <p>Instead of accepting Derek's death, Maxine's mother resorts to psychics. Suddenly, Maxine begins receiving phone calls from someone claiming to be Derek, and she wonders – could it be a ghost? Or a prank pulled by the very same bully who tormented Derek? Or, perhaps, (no, it couldn't be), it is Derek, himself?</p> <p>Telling her father about the mysterious phone calls, though, proves to be a terrible mistake. Her father hurls harsh accusations at her that she is just vying for their attention. However, undeterred and determined, plucky Maxine, with the aid of a good friend, risks her life, and discovers the real truth about Derek's disappearance.</p> <p>Set in present-day England, this novel's action and suspense are nonstop, as the story is filled with unexpected twists and turns that are sure to keep middle school girls—and reluctant readers—turning the pages.</p> <p>Bill Mollineaux Granby, Connecticut</p>
<p><i>A Strong Right Arm: The Story of Mamie "Peanut" Johnson</i> By Michelle V. Green Dial, 2002, 111 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Biography/Women Athletes ISBN: 0-8037-2661-9</p> <p>Dreams enable a person to reach goals, and that is what happened to Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, a 5'2", 98 pound Black girl who dared to cross the boundaries of gender and race. In elementary school, Mamie had the spunk and tenacity to become the first girl to integrate a local baseball league team. At seventeen, she became one of three women who played professional baseball, becoming a pitcher for the Indianapolis Clowns, a Negro League team.</p> <p>Laced with such historical names as Satchel Paige and Jackie Robinson, the reader learns of these famous African-Americans, and others who helped break down racial integration barriers in the 1950s. As the reader comes to know, segregation during the 50s, throughout the South and North, was pervasive, but on the ball field, walls slowly crumbled. This biography—filled with great information about life in early baseball and the struggle of young Blacks to gain acceptance in a White world—will inspire readers to see people as more alike than different. And it introduce us to one unique individual—ballplayer and African American, Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, a figure who deserves our attention and admiration.</p> <p>Joy Frerichs Chatsworth, Georgia</p>	<p><i>Charlotte's Rose</i> by A. E. Cannon Wendy Lamb Books, Random House, 2002, 256 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Pioneers ISBN: 0-385-72966-9</p> <p>Author A. E. Cannon brings to the national market the tender story of twelve-year-old Charlotte, a Welsh immigrant who crossed America with a handcart company. Along the Mormon trail, Charlotte volunteers to care for the baby daughter of a woman who has died. At first, she is proud of herself, believing she has shown the adults that she is nearly a woman. But Charlotte soon realizes how difficult a task she has undertaken.</p> <p>Charlotte is frustrated by the baby's frequent crying, her own lack of sleep, and her not being able to spend the time she would like with her new friend John, a boy who wants to see her as more than just a child. Eventually, she can no longer stand her adult responsibilities, and so one day, she abandons them, leaving the baby sleeping beneath her handcart, and taking off for a walk with her admirer, John. Unfortunately, when she returns, the baby is gone.</p> <p>Frantically, Charlotte searches for the baby—only to find her in the hands a strange woman.</p> <p>This coming of age novel demonstrates that adolescents experience doubts and uncertainty, no matter the time period or circumstance, and that guidance, patience, and perseverance are the guideposts towards becoming a fully functioning adult.</p> <p>Lu Ann Brobst Staheli Spanish Fork, Utah</p>

Amy by Mary Hooper
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002, 176 pp., \$14.95

Relationships/The Internet
ISBN: 1-58234-793-X

Shunned by her best friends, fifteen-year-old Amy's loneliness leads her, as her Internet screen name Buzybee, to an online chat room and to Zed. Despite parental warnings, Amy is simply positive that the young man joining her for private messaging is her dream come true. Zed is older and successful at his job in sales; plus, the photo he attaches shows an attractive blonde guy. Filled with anticipation and excitement, Amy's own personal problems with friends, family, and school, suddenly seem irrelevant.

The plot unfolds through a series of interviews between Amy and a policewoman—and in the officer's presence, Amy tells the story of her unfortunate series of events with the mysterious dreamboat Zed. And even though the reader knows that something has occurred between Amy and Zed, the revelation of "what has really happened on Amy's innocent visit to meet Zed at his seaside town" are only revealed when Amy and a friend return to the scene of the incident.

Suspenseful and chock-full-of techno jargon, Amy's story is fast-paced and believable. The British usage and slang won't prevent understanding in this cautionary tale of possible risks in "online relationships."

Judith Hayn
Skokie, Illinois

Telling A Tale Untold by Jim Haskins
Twenty-First Century Books, 2002, 144 pp., \$26.90

Biography/Toni Morrison
ISBN:0-7613-1852-6

This biography is about Toni Morrison and her struggles, internally and externally, as a female, an African-American, a daughter, a wife, a mother, an American, and last but certainly not least, a writer. Her triumphs at college, and as a graduate student, especially in the 1950s and 60s, at a time of extreme racial injustice and inequality, are vividly told. The reader learns of her life as a book editor, at a time where there were few, if any, Blacks in book publishing, and her subsequent unimagined success as a writer. In her own inimical style, Morrison achieved fame writing about the Black experience, making her writing accessible not only to African-Americans, but Whites as well. Morrison's lyrical, mystical, and visionary style captures the imagination of all.

Biographer Haskins peppers this interesting and provocative read with references to Black victimization by Whites, and sometimes difficult vocabulary which will require guidance and instruction for readers coming to Morrison's work for the first time. Nevertheless, Morrison's life, and Haskins' interpretation of her work, will make an interesting read for mature high school students who want to know more about the African-American experience and about one of the most gifted authors in the United States.

Laura Bullock
Petal, Mississippi

The Red Rose by Brenda Woods
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2002, 136 pp., \$16.99

Historical Fiction/Civil Rights
ISBN: 0-399-23702-X

Leah and her sister Ruth, both teenagers and Black, are growing up in segregated Sulphur, Louisiana, in the 1950s, long before the term African-American became vogue. They know a world of separate schools, "white" and "colored" water fountains, and of course, distinct social classes.

Their life changes, though, when they receive the unexpected surprise of train tickets to go visit their mysterious and generous Aunt Olivia in California. Suddenly, a world of freedom opens up for them. As Leah takes off on her journey West, she begins to realize the differences in the world outside her little town of Sulphur, LA. Traveling, she sees the contrasts of how races and individuals are treated elsewhere, and begins to wonder why "inequalities between white people and Negroes," do exist, and why people cannot live together peacefully.

Leah and her sister's lives change tragically when their parents are killed in a hurricane back home in Louisiana, and they are forced to live permanently with Aunt Olivia in California. They must cope with new friends, new rules, new freedom, and a profound loss.

Middle school readers will enjoy this book. It is a good read, and is filled with enough social historical information to be of great value to any classroom discussion. Teachers can engage their students in talks about race, prejudice, and a time in America when Blacks and Whites were far from equal.

Freya J. Zipperer
Savannah, Georgia

The Shadow Place by Carol M. Tanzman
Roaring Brook Press, 2002, 178 pp., \$16.10

Suspense/Alienation/Child Abuse
ISBN:0-7613-2610-3

For fourteen-year-old Rodney, "The Shadow Place" represents an escape from reality: it is an escape from an abusive father; an escape from the pain of his mother's leaving; and an escape from the growing alienation from his classmates. However, as he grows more and more angry, Rodney's secret world begins to revolve around guns, bombs, and thoughts of violence towards others.

When Lissa, his friend and neighbor, suspects that Rodney is behind a school prank that has severely burned fellow classmates, she decides to spy on him to see what he is up to. Yet, once she discovers the magnitude of his violent side, she is torn between keeping his secret, or telling his parents. Lissa's actions save not only her life, and her classmates', but Rodney's life as well.

In her very first book, author Carol M. Tanzman successfully incorporates suspense, a good story, and the language and interests of teenagers to create a true page turner.

Lisa Scherff
Knoxville, Tennessee

<p><i>Little Chicago</i> by Adam Rapp Front Street Press, 2002, 255 pp., \$16.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sexual Abuse/Violence/Family ISBN: 1-8869190-72-3</p> <p>In <i>Little Chicago</i>, author Adam Rapp explores what happens when a sexually abused eleven-year-old, by the name of Blacky Brown, is stripped of all hope and resources.</p> <p>Quite expectedly, young Blacky Brown turns to a world of street violence, as she quickly and surely descends into a madness after enduring a hostile and indifferent family life, and unspeakable torture and torment at school. Blacky's only solace is a budding romance with a fellow outcast, which ends unfortunately and predictably, with her being hurt and hospitalized by his victimization. Author Rapp paints a bleak picture of Blacky's world—sowing no hopeful seeds, or possible alternatives to this unyielding bleak world.</p> <p>Evocative prose and realistic dialogue make this book positively gripping, and appealing especially to reluctant readers. Teens will appreciate the unflinching honesty of Rapp's writing. This is a "problem novel" with somewhat coated didactic prescriptions for success. Rapp, though, cuts to the emotional core of his characters, leaving the reader with a strong emotional impact. Some threads of the story—especially about gun control and sexual abuse—warrant more narrative comment. Still, this book will no doubt find a place with Rapp's fans.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Joshua James Keels San Francisco, California</p>	<p><i>Crossing Montana</i> by Laura Torres Holiday House, 2002, 119 pp., \$ 15.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Family Issues ISBN: 0-8234-1643-7</p> <p>Callie decides to take charge, and search for her grandfather who has disappeared. And why shouldn't she? After all, Callie has been in charge of her younger brother most of his life, and she has taken care of herself since her own father died. And now, to her dismay, all Callie's mother and grandmother seem to care about is auctioning off the family farm.</p> <p>Young Callie thinks that she knows exactly where her missing grandfather has gone—fishing in the lakes of Montana. So, Callie takes the car, some easy-to-grab-cash, and her mom's handy credit card, and heads to the very state where her father died. What Callie doesn't count on, though, is an unexpected stowaway in her car's back seat; a credit card that simply won't work; and literally hundreds of great fishing spots to search all over Montana. If ever there was a time she needed a friend to help her with her travails, the time is now.</p> <p>In the spirit of Sharon Creech's Newbery Medal winner, <i>Walk Two Moons</i>, author Laura Torres takes her readers on a journey towards self-understanding by underlining the importance of family history to uncovering who we really are.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lu Ann Brobst Staheli Spanish Fork, Utah</p>
<p><i>Warriors of Alavna</i> by N. M. Browne Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002, 320 pp., \$16.95</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Fantasy ISBN 1-58234-775-1</p> <p>Dan and Ursula are mysteriously transported from their twentieth-century school outing into what appears to be the midst of a first century Druid tribe. Along the way, Dan discovers a magic sword. He gains the powers of a Bear Sark, which transforms him into a "berserk" and ruthless, warrior. Ursula, whom the tribe believes to be a male warrior, discovers she can change gender at will, and can thus contribute, although reluctantly, to the tribe's battle success. Both take an oath to avenge the massacre of the settlement of Alavna, as Ursula uses her emerging powers to transport a legion of Roman soldiers to aid in the definitive battle.</p> <p>As a fantasy novel, <i>Warriors of Alavna</i> weaves an intricate and inventive plot that, at times, is difficult to follow. There is much graphic and bloody battle description, as Browne intertwines the fiction of Alavna with numerous historical links to first century Britain and the archeological studies of that period.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Margaret J. Ford Campbell, Ohio</p>	<p><i>A Greater Goode</i> by Amy Schor Ferris Houghton Mifflin, 2002, 183 pp., \$15.00</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Friendship/Family ISBN: 0-618-13154-X</p> <p>Twelve-year-old Addie Goode lives with her attorney father and their housekeeper in a Pennsylvania town, moving there after Addie's mother walks out. Now, Addie's world revolves around her best friend, Luke, who in her words, is "a genius."</p> <p>One afternoon, though, Addie and Luke stumble across a young pregnant girl, who has been abandoned by the "creepy guy" who left her bruised and alone inside an old church. Luke, frightened and bewildered, insists to Addie that they keep their mouths shut, and leave the young girl where she is: alone, hurt, and abandoned. But Addie cannot stand to leave a fellow human being stranded; she insists that the young woman come home with her so that she can offer her food, clothing, and friendship. Instead of accepting Addie's kindness, the young pregnant girl flees in despair.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Addie and Luke have their own problems. Addie's father announces plans to remarry, and Luke's father suffers a heart attack. In a twist of fate, Luke's father recovers in a hospital room in which the adjoining bed is occupied by the estranged, dying mother of the young pregnant woman. When Addie learns of this strange but endearing coincidence, she spends the remainder of the novel trying to find the missing young pregnant woman and her dying mother.</p> <p>In this heartwarming story, Addie does reunite the mother and her estranged daughter one last time. She learns that family, no matter the troubles, counts above all.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Michele Winship Columbus, Ohio</p>

<p><i>Bridging Beyond</i> by Kathleen Benner Duple Philomel Books, 2002, 203 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Auto Accident/Trauma/ Relationships ISBN: 0-399-23637-6</p> <p>Ann is involved in a tragic car accident after encouraging her best friend to drink and drive at a party. As her friend lies in a coma, she and her family relocate to her recently deceased grandmother's house, and attempt to build a new life.</p> <p>Shortly, though, after moving to her new home, Anna begins having unusual dreams. The characters in her dream take on an increasing familiarity to Anna. Drama builds until it is revealed that she is reliving the early life of her beloved grandmother. Through this harrowing and unusual experience, Anna helps her grandmother's dear old friends come to terms with events of their past, while Anna comes to terms with her own personal mistakes.</p> <p>The flashback to the grandmother's young life offers an original story line for this easy-to-read novel. The tone and style that will probably appeal to introspective adolescents, even those who are reluctant readers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rebecca A. Hines Daytona Beach, Florida</p>	<p><i>Mario Lemieux: Own the Ice</i> The Millbrook Press, 2002, 64pp, \$24.95</p> <p>Sports/Ice Hockey/Biography ISBN: 0-7613-2555-7</p> <p>Are you a hockey fanatic? Or, have you ever wondered what it is about hockey that fans find so attractive? If so, then rush to buy or borrow <i>Mario Lemieux: Own the Ice</i>.</p> <p>Devoted hockey fans will find a cornucopia of facts and statistics about Mario Lemieux, one of hockey's all time greats. More pedestrian readers will enjoy the riveting narrative, which chronicles Mario's development in Canada Quebec's youth hockey leagues; his emergence as a star with the Pittsburgh Penguins; his early retirement; and his recent comeback as an owner and a player. Particularly absorbing is the account of Mario's battles with back injuries and cancer, and the lessons to be learned from them.</p> <p>Although this book is likely to be enjoyed most by young readers who are already hockey or sports fans, it is so well photographed, captioned, and researched that any reader with a keen interest in human events and challenges will enjoy this good read. I did!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tom Phillion Oak Park, Illinois</p>
<p><i>Stravaganza: City of Masks</i> by Mary Hoffman Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2002, 258 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Terminal Illness/Time-Space Travel ISBN: 1-58234-791-3</p> <p>Fifteen-year-old Lucien is dying of cancer in London, England. When his father gives him an old Italian blank journal, Lucien falls asleep holding it, and suddenly finds himself transported back in time, cancer free, to the Vienna-like other-world city of Belezza, 1577. Here, as a "stravagant," or a wanderer between two worlds, he enters a realm governed by a masked Duchessa, named Silvia.</p> <p>The Belezza city and government are at risk of being destroyed by the Chiminci, a group determined to assassinate the Duchessa. They are using Lucien's mysterious journal to "stravagate" between two worlds, and steal 21st Century "magic" to control the world of 1577 Belezza.</p> <p>Inadvertently, Lucien enters this scheme of intrigue, trying to stop the Chiminci from assassinating the beloved Duchessa. Protected by a magician who is the Duchessa's lover, and befriended by adventure seeking Arianna, Lucien saves the kingdom from the impending coup. Simultaneously, he dies in his 21st century London.</p> <p>Told with page-turning intrigue, this story has richly drawn characters, interesting details, rich settings, and multiple perspectives. All of this and more will keep readers "stravagating" with Lucien as they enter the first volume of a planned adventure trilogy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cyrene Wells Machias, Maine</p>	<p><i>A Mother to Embarrass Me</i> by Carol Lynch Williams Delacorte Press, 2002, 128 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Family Relationships ISBN: 0-385-72922-7</p> <p>You can probably remember times when your parents embarrassed you. Their words, dress, and actions all combined to humiliate you in front of your friends, or, worst of all, the love of your life. And no matter what you tried to do, you could not stop them. Your parents became more embarrassing by the minute, and you thought that you would never be able to face the world again!</p> <p>In this charming and lighthearted story, twelve-year-old Laura Stephens feels the same way about her embarrassing mother. She keeps a detailed a list of all the things that she would like to change about her. Of course, Laura's mother does not mean to be embarrassing. She would do anything to keep Laura happy, but unfortunately, her best efforts all seem to be just plain wrong. After all, how could she have known that Laura's father would break his neck after she encouraged him to break dance at Laura's birthday party? And how can Laura prevent her mother from innocently talking behind her back to her best friend, Christian? And what can Laura do to prevent her mother from taking a modeling job even though she is several months pregnant?</p> <p>Author Carol Lynch Williams takes a humorous look at mother-daughter relationships in this great read for young teens who feel embarrassed at their own parents' behavior. Young people will relate to the parents' all too familiar antics, and their desire to really "relate" to their teenagers' emotion-packed lives.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lu Ann Brobst Staheli Spanish Fork, Utah</p>

<p><i>I Smell Like Ham</i> by Betty Hicks Roaring Brook Press, 2002, 133 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Family Relationships/Basketball ISBN: 0-7613-1748-1</p> <p><i>I Smell Like Ham</i> is the story of a twelve-year-old Nick Kimble's struggle to adjust to a new life.</p> <p>Nick's mother recently passed away, and Nick's father has remarried, bringing a stepmother, Miriam, and a stepbrother, Dwayne, into their home. Dwayne, a brilliant eight-year-old who seems to share none of the interests or talents that Nick has, becomes a real irritant to Nick. Nick takes his anger out on Dwayne, insulting him and avoiding spending time with him.</p> <p>Nick is unaware of the silent suffering that Dwayne is going through until Dwayne runs away. In search for Dwayne, Nick learns about how difficult the changes in routine have been for Dwayne, and how much Dwayne wants to please his older stepbrother. Nick is able to step outside of his own suffering, and recognize Dwayne's affection.</p> <p><i>I Smell Like Ham</i> is a good choice for reluctant readers; they will be satisfied by the compelling storyline and situations that are familiar to teens. This easy to read book could be used in classrooms to discuss many themes and topics, including change, conflict, character development, and of course, stepfamilies.</p> <p>Maryanne Obersinner Eugene, Oregon</p>	<p><i>Comfort</i> by Carolee Dean Houghton Mifflin, 2002, 230 pp., \$15.00</p> <p>Coming-of-Age/Relationships ISBN: 0-618-13846-3</p> <p>The small town of Comfort, Texas, does not confine the dreams of high school freshman Kenny Williams, but his family's lifestyle threatens those dreams daily.</p> <p>His alcoholic, ex-prisoner father and desperate scheming mother provide little support even though they do care about Kenny, and three-year-old Roy, Jr. in their own ways.</p> <p>Kenny works like an unpaid servant in the family's truck stop café to fulfill his mother's dream of making Roy Dan Willson, Sr., a guitar singing star. Remarkably, Kenny finds his own talent in the University Interscholastic League Poetry Contest for high school students.</p> <p>Memorable characters are revealed against a fast-paced film-like setting. This author's first novel contains tragicomic elements, and mature subject matter related to physical abuse, alcohol, guns, robbery, and abortion. And to elevate the read, there are references to renowned poets Robert Frost and Maya Angelou, among others.</p> <p>Mary Annelle Baker Overland Park, Kansas</p>
<p><i>One Night</i> by Marsha Qualey Dial Books, 2002, 170 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Drugs/Addictions/Politics ISBN: 0-8037-2602-3</p> <p>At nineteen, Kelly Ray is recovering from heroin addiction. Although clean for now two years, Kelly struggles daily with staying sober, and leading a quiet life. The most excitement she has is working for her aunt, an infamous radio talk show host. Then, she meets Prince Tomas Teronovich, and embarks on a night of adventures and confessions as she tries to keep him away from his guards long enough to give her aunt an interview.</p> <p>For one night, Kelly must admit who she is, what she has done, and where she wants to be. As a protagonist, she is witty, humorously cynical, and completely human. Tomas is not as well-characterized, but readers will be able to relate to both him and Kelly, and enjoy tension and flirting between them. <i>One Night</i> is an enjoyable read; its theme is serious, and its style engaging. This is a great addition to anyone's library.</p> <p>Jennifer York Knoxville, Tennessee</p>	<p><i>Bartlett and the Ice Voyage</i> by Odo Hirsch Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2003, 168 pp., \$14.95</p> <p>Human Nature/Adventure ISBN: 0-7475-46142</p> <p>An impatient young Queen, a ruler of seven countries, demands one thing that seems unavailable to her: a fresh melidrop.</p> <p>In this whimsical story of a long ago time, we learn that no way has yet been found to bring this most delectable of all fruits to this young Queen in an edible state. Yet this is what she desperately wants.</p> <p>Then an unpretentious explorer by the name of Bartlett is brought before the Queen. Bartlett is different from than most of the Queen's subjects: he does not fawn over her. Instead, Bartlett ignores the Queen's demands to find this "precious fruit," until she reluctantly strikes a deal with him.</p> <p>This delightful and inventive story of the adventures of Bartlett, which includes towing an iceberg by a ship, and of his challenging search for the divine edible melidrop, is a wonderful tale. Poking gentle fun at human foibles, this easy read would make a wonderful choice to share aloud with middle schoolers.</p> <p>Diana Mitchell Williamston, MI</p>

In the Shadow of Pali: A Story of the Hawaiian Leper Colony Historical Fiction/Hawaii
By Lisa Cindrich ISBN: 0-399-23855-7
G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2002, 245 pp., \$18.99

In the 1860s, twelve-year-old Liliha is sent from Oahu Village to the leper colony on Molokai. The doctors have led her to expect an organized hospital and settlement, but she and other new arrivals find chaos instead when they are unceremoniously dumped on the island's shores. The Englishman captain-in-charge does not speak Hawaiian, nor does he care about the people. Instead, brutal thugs amongst the lepers, ruled by Kalani, hoard the scant food and supplies. Liliha, alone and stunned by what has happened to her, must survive on her own. Only Manukekua, a boy who works for the Captain, helps her to find food and water, build a hut for shelter, carve wooden items to barter with, and escape Kalani's wrath.

All through this exciting tale, readers will learn about both Hawaii, and Hansen's disease. This book ends with an informative glossary about Hawaii, and a detailed historical note about this unique time in Hawaiian history.

Rebecca Barnhouse
Youngstown, OH

Ghosts at the Window by Margaret McAllister Mystery/Ghosts/Scotland
Dutton Children's Books, 2002, 119 pp., \$15.99 ISBN: 0-525-46852-8

Young Ewan Dart has moved to Scotland, and discovers that his brand new house, a huge stone mansion, has the strange habit of "playing tricks on his senses." Out of nowhere, it seems, the new home changes "centuries." For brief but startling moments, Ewan can see people from the past, and they can see him.

One night, alone in his bedroom, Ewan encounters the ghost of Elspeth, a girl who died in 1937. The young Elspeth has never been able to leave the temporal world of the living, and join her friends on "the other side." Terrified of something that lurks in Ewan's closet, and desperate to find eternal rest, the ghost Elspeth pleads for Ewan's help.

Adventure and mishap ensues as Ewan helps Elspeth escape, and overcomes his own fears about the presence of more ghosts. Middle school students will embrace this fast-paced, easy read tale of adventure and mystery, and teachers will delight in a book that reluctant readers will find historically intriguing, and delightfully engaging.

Jeffrey S. Kaplan
Orlando, FL

When the Emperor Was Divine by Julie Otsuka WW II/Prejudice
Knopf, 2002, 144 pp., \$18.00 ISBN: 0-375-41429-0

A compelling and heartbreaking story, this book is about the tragedy of Japanese Americans interned during WW II and, by understated implication, it is a powerful indictment of the kind of racism still practiced in this country, now more commonly directed at Middle Easterners. First, the father is taken for "routine questioning," not to be seen by his family for over four years. A few months later, mother, teen daughter, and ten-year-old son are sent to a fenced and guarded desert camp for three and half years.

Haunting, evocative, brilliantly written, with multiple points of view—mother, daughter, son, daughter and son ("we"), and finally, father, none of whom is given a name—this novel merits significant attention. Note: some young readers may benefit from teacher or Web explanations of the internment camps of WW II, and the treatment of Japanese Americans before, during, and especially, after their imprisonment.

Ted Hipple
Knoxville, TN

1000 Inventions and Discoveries by Roger Bridgman Non-Fiction/Reference
Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2002, 256 pp., \$24.99 ISBN: 0-7894-8826-4

The latest volume of handsome, informative, coffee table topc books published by Dorling Kindersley Limited, better known as DK, is *Inventions and Discoveries*. Completed in association with the Smithsonian Institution, this is another volume that will grace any library. This book, complete with color photos, highly informative and readable text, and easy-to-read layouts, will enhance elementary, middle and high school classrooms and lessons about the importance of humankind's most significant inventions and discoveries since the dawn of time. Reluctant readers, experienced readers, and just plain pure enjoyment readers will delight in this wonderful volume that surpasses even the best Web page for its comprehensive, "easy to download" resource of the world's most remarkable and life-improving discoveries.

Renee C. Kaplan
Orlando, FL

Reconciling Memories of Internment Camp Experiences During WWII in Children's and Young Adult Literature

Jacqueline N. Glasgow

Memories of World War II in the Asian-Pacific War take us to the shocking news of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, to the mushroom cloud rising over Hiroshima, to images of American soldiers in the trenches at tropical locations. Yet there are also events of World War II that did not become a part of our personal and cultural shared memories of these war-torn years. The forced internment of mainland Japanese American citizens after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 is an event for which history is all but silent. Why do we not know Heart Mountain, Manzanar, Minidoka, and Poston as well as Auchwitz, Terezin, and Dachau? Through censorship and control of information in media and film, the US government sought to represent life in the internment camps as a benevolent exercise in civil obedience. This limited cultural representation of the camps was compounded by the protracted silence of many of the former internees due to their sense of humiliation and shame.

In spite of the silence and strategic forgetting, the internment of Japanese Americans produced memory in the narratives of the survivors passed down from one generation to the next (Issei, first generation; to Nissei, second generation; to Sansei, third generation). The Issei generation would never have spoken of the pain, or shame, or injustice inflicted upon them—even among their own family members—and so their experiences would have been irretrievably lost with their passing. Nissei survivors such as Jeane Houston, Yoshiko Uchida, Marcia Savin, Monica Sone and Shizuye Takashima have chosen to write about these difficult experiences and tell the stories of their Issei parents through fiction and autobiography, preserving their dignity and decency in degrading circumstances. While remembering can be painful, it can also be redemptive. Uchida says she continued to remember and to write “because I want each new generation of Americans to know what once happened in our democracy. I want them to love and cherish the freedom that can be snatched away so quickly, even by their own country” (1991, p. 133). So from the Eastern tradition, painful memories that remain personal and unspoken by the individual are, in the West, shared, spoken, and preserved by literature so that memory transforms not just the individual, but the culture as well. In “Memory as Travel in Asian American Children’s Literature: Bridging Home and School” (2002), Ching and Pataray-Ching suggest four representations of memory – memory as recovery, as cultural

change, as catharsis, and as border crossing. Using this model of memory, we will examine the uprooting of Japanese Americans during World War II as portrayed in children’s/young adult literature. In this pursuit, we will discover the triumph of the spirit of the survivors and replace suppressed images with empowering ones, so that if such a tragedy is preserved in the memory of the nation, memory may keep it from happening again.

Defining Memory as Travel Across Generational Experiences in the Japanese Culture

We look to story and narrative in literature as a resource through which we might shape our understanding of the Japanese Internment Camps. Ching and Pataray-Ching (2002) suggest a model that conceptualizes memory as travel as a way to examine and understand Asian cultural experiences. They suggest that “memory facilitates travel across generational differences and connects the individual to the home community’s material past even as the individual travels to new psychic locations” (24). In addition, this model helps non-Asian readers to understand and value the cultural heritage of others. Ching and Pataray-Ching (2002) make several initial assertions about the nature of memory as travel. First, “memory becomes a form of cultural traveling by enabling ancestral recovery” (25). Remembrance of our ancestors brings a rebirth as these historical memories become personal. Memory as a form of travel, in this sense, “becomes a means of recovery, bringing ancestral memories home and, in accomplishing this, restoring one’s own” (25). Because memories are so important to the culture, it becomes the duty of progeny to preserve the memories of the community linking the past to present and future generations.

Ching and Pataray-Ching also assert that, in addition to recovery, memory as travel becomes a process of transformation: “Memory gauges the proximity and distance between our ancestry and our present cultural existence and identity” (25). It is an issue of recognizing how the role of the stories we tell ourselves about our past assists in constructing our identities in the present. According to Morley and Robins, “Identity is a question of memory, and memories of ‘home’ in particular” (1995, 91). But to Ching and Pataray-Ching, “cultural legacy, in this sense, signifies more than a record that recovers our pasts. The term legacy represents recovery of the past, present and future. Each gen-

eration travels and co-creates its cultural legacy (or memory) by passing through the memory handed down by ancestry and by appropriating this memory in the current historical moment" (25).

What is this kind of memory that is passed through generations, that is already within the child? Marianne Hirsch has used the term "postmemory" to describe those children whose lives are dominated by the memories of events that preceded their birth. She writes, "Postmemory is distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. It is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation" (Hirsch 1997, 22-23). Thus by deliberately reconstructing and reenacting memories and their absence, one can shift personal memory into the realm of cultural memory. Cultural change results from such transformation as these travelers – whether readers or writers – affirm their cultural heritage while challenging the traditional values they find oppressive.

After traveling through recovery and transformation, memory enacts a catharsis to the cross-cultural traveler. Ching and Pataray-Ching suggest that catharsis "results from the realization that through memory one may bear one's ancestors' hardship and, in doing so, save one's ancestors from strife and, even from death" (29). The belief here is that death becomes absolute only when it takes the form of the "death of memory" (Behar 1996, 42). The voices of the past speaking within the lives and stories of the present brings salvation for the ancestor and a continued and improved life for the progeny. This "duty-memory, the sense of responsibility that weighs upon the individual, 'It is I who must remember,' is as though one's salvation ultimately depends on the repayment of an impossible debt" (Nora, in Behar, 42-43). One way to realize this form of recompense is through remembering. Hence, in Asian American literature, "mourning an ancestor's death is one part of catharsis, but the emotional release accompanying this loss is not complete until the ancestor is mythologized in memory" (Ching and Pataray-Ching, 25). Once accomplished, catharsis brings both the ancestor's pardon from death and the preservation of that life in the cultural memory, uniting the past to the future.

Memory sustains travel not only within the culture, but also across cultural boundaries. "Stories are always positioned among other stories, other memories, other perspectives on history" (Ching and Pataray-Ching, 30). Therefore, as stories become intertwined and interwoven, the narratives come to represent memories that still reflect the uniqueness of the culture, but they also represent universal themes that connect diverse communities. In this way memories can transform stories and generate cultural change. "This kind of intercultural memory involves both sharing and revising why and what we choose consciously to remember personally, communally, and nationally" (Ching and Pataray-Ching, 26). From a human creativity standpoint, we learn more from people who are different from us than from those who are similar to us. At the individual level, creativity

involves a process of "taking in new ideas, of being thrown into disequilibrium and trying to reach some accommodation, achieve a new synthesis ... The same is true at the societal level. In most creative periods there has been a tremendous infusion of diversity: new ideas and cross-cultural encounters" (Goleman, Kaufman, & Ray, 1991, p. 173). With new connections, travelers may need to reinvent their identities in such a way that conforms to the values of their Japanese ancestry, yet integrates their lifestyle, marriage partner, and career goals with contemporary parts that are Japanese American. Thus, border-crossing results in the traveler developing new creations of self and change in society.

Using Ching and Pataray-Ching's memory as travel described above, "recovering ancestry and cultural heritage, transforming this heritage, staying the death of ancestry and then transforming death into the gift of life, and remapping the relationships, among cultural communities" (26), provides a model to examine Asian American literature. In this case, we will use this model to make sense of the children's and young adult literature reconciling the experiences of those youth confined in Japanese Internment Camps during World War II.

Memory as Recovery of Ancestry and Cultural Heritage

After the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, one of the most traumatic events for Japanese-American families was the sudden disappearance and imprisonment of prominent men in the community. For young children, losing their fathers with no explanation was only a prelude to losing friends, homes, and communities. In Uchida's *The Bracelet* (1976, 1993), seven-year-old Emi discovers the power of memory to hang on to her roots, the people and places that represent her heritage. After the FBI had taken her Papa to a prisoner-

of-war camp in Montana, Emi understood that she, too, would be sent to a prison camp with her family just because they *looked* like the enemy. Moments before their deportation, Emi's best friend from second grade, Laurie Madison, presents her with a gift, a bracelet,

as a remembrance of their friendship. After the painful separation, Emi and her family are transported to the center guarded by armed soldiers—a frightening scene for a young child. They are taken to Tanforan Racetracks where they would stay until sent on to a camp in the Utah desert. But in the traumatic events, Emi loses the precious bracelet that she vowed she would never take off. With the loss of the token, Emi feels she has lost the person. Mama wisely teaches her the power of memory to hang onto her heritage: "You don't need a bracelet to remember Laurie any more than we need a photo to remember Papa or our home or all the friends and things we loved and left behind. Those are things we carry in our hearts and take with us no matter where we are sent." Emi realizes that Mama was right. She doesn't need the symbol to hold fast to her friend. She knows she could travel back in her mind, recover this memory, and never forget her friend, family, home, and heritage.

Recovering an ancestor plays an even more important part in the Japanese culture, as it represents salvation and immortality. In Eve Bunting's *So Far From the Sea* (1998), the

The forced internment of mainland Japanese American citizens after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 is an event for which history is all but silent.

Iwasaki family makes their pilgrimage back to the Manzanar War Relocation Camp to visit Grandfather's grave site. Not much remains of this camp now, but in telling his story to his children, father is recovering his memorable experiences at the camp and passing them on to the next generation. He recovers a vivid memory of the day the soldiers came to their home to take them away. He recalls demonstrating his loyalty to the United States by putting on his Cub Scout uniform and saluting the armed soldiers. As the family stands before Grandfather's grave, they observe all the offerings people have left at the monument—coins, broken glass, and origami. Laura decides to place her father's old Cub Scout neckerchief to a tree root in front of the tower where Grandfather's name is painted. Laura never knew her Grandfather, but she recovers her ancestor by marking her memory with a physical gesture (Ching and Pataray-Ching, 2002, 27). By laying claim to the grave and marking the place she has made concrete what had previously been only a distant recollection of her father's stories. According to Ching and Pataray-Ching, the neckerchief, like other memorabilia, enabled memory to become tangible (2002, 27). Her gesture allowed her to say "arigato" or thank-you to her

After traveling through recovery and transformation, memory enacts a catharsis to the cross-cultural traveler.

grandfather for his sacrifice and for her heritage. Now her father's story has become a part of her cultural legacy. In recovering this memory, she more deeply understands what it means to be American and in particular, Japanese American. In making the story her own, she has connected her family experiences with her roots that originate in Japan.

Memory as Transformation Leading to Cultural Change

In addition to recovery, memory as travel becomes a process of transformation which leads to cultural change. In Ken Mochizuki's *Baseball Saved Us* (1993), we find a character who learns to play baseball during his confinement in the internment camp and then uses his ability to play to overcome prejudice against him after the war. In this story, Teddy remembers the boredom, short tempers, and listlessness of the campers until his Dad convinced the community to unite in constructing a baseball field. Women make uniforms from mattress covers, while the men haul water to pack down the dust. As equipment arrives from friends back home, baseball games begin without interference from the guard tower. Teddy's playing steadily improves and in the end he makes the winning homerun in the championship game. While baseball saves them at camp, they return home to prejudice and hatred. Even on the baseball field, Teddy finds himself alone, one of a kind. When his team comes up to bat, he hears demeaning cries from the crowd and they roar when he missed the ball. At the last moment, Teddy draws on the memory of strength and confidence that he had developed playing ball during the internment and hits a homerun. The victory brings transformation and cultural change not only for him, but for his teammates. Teddy does not resist or reject his culture, but rather participates in cultural revision and social change. He becomes part of a network of friends who accept him for who he is—a Japanese-American. According to Ching and Pataray-Ching, this critical remembrance brought the boys to a more ethical way of living in the future (29). The white boys changed

heckling to tolerance. The Japanese American boy changed from feelings of rejection to acceptance. As Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) suggest, these children became conscious of their operating world view and were successful in examining critically alternative ways of understanding social relations. They came to envision more just and inclusive possibilities for their social lives.

In Uchida's *Journey to Topaz* (1971) and the sequel *Journey Home* (1978), eleven-year-old Yuki's cultural identity is challenged and transformed by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. The FBI abruptly imprisons her father as "enemy alien" without informing the family of his whereabouts. Yuki experiences the racist rhetoric that springs up in White people that she once had considered to be her friends. For instance, the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, the boy who sat opposite her at school leaned over and hissed, "You dirty Jap!" (20). A further challenge to her ethnicity comes with the rumors of the internment camps to export all those of Japanese heritage. Eventually, she and her family are sent to the Topaz Relocation Camp in Utah after spending the summer in a horse stall at the Tanforan Assembly Center. In addition to the horrors of living at the camp in

the middle of the dust storms in the desert, Yuki comes to know the divisive positions taken by different factions in the camp. When army recruiters from the War Department arrive at camp to form a special all-Nisei combat team, Yuki's brother and his friends decide to join as a way of proving their loyalty and upholding their responsibility as American citizens. Others hotly refuse to serve in an army that has imprisoned them, and they seek repatriation in Japan. After her best friend's grandfather is shot walking with his friends too close to the barbed-wire fence along the southern fringe of camp, some internees become even more hostile toward their White perpetrators. These agitators form groups to harass sympathizers of the White administration. When Yuki's father is returned to his family at Topaz on parole, he works in the business office with the Caucasian administrators. He is a peace-maker as deacon at church, hospital committee member and block manager. As such, he is victimized by dissenting groups to the point where his family is in danger. Finally, father is granted a special clearance to go to the nearest big city to Topaz, Salt Lake City.

While free of imprisonment, Yuki's family confronts racism and hostility in their journey from Salt Lake City back to Berkeley, California, once the military revoked the exclusion order against the Japanese from the West Coast. Home is no longer the house they longed to return to, but rather a rundown hostel of their former church which had been neglected and vandalized while they were gone. Their precious belongings have been vandalized in the Buddhist Temple, so nothing remains from their former life except the bags they carried with them. There are no jobs, no places to rent. In this time of despair, Yuki remembers that her grandfathers had died in Japan long before she was born. She is proud that they had been samurai warriors, but it means that as a grandchild, she has to be brave, courageous and loyal. "It meant being strong when necessary, but still having a gentle heart capable of loving beautiful things" (1992, 19). It meant she had a past to live up to—a difficult chal-

lenge in these circumstances, especially since her grandfathers were "more like people she'd read about than anybody linked to her by blood" (20). By appropriating this memory that connected the unfamiliar aspects of her heritage, Yuki was able to endure and re-invent a new identity in the present circumstances. Eventually, the group of Japanese American families pooled their resources, bought a grocery store, moved in upstairs, and resumed their lives, in spite of the hostility directed at them. Yuki endured extreme racism against her heritage and she has been transformed by them moving her into a new understanding of her legacy. Yuki's remembrance and transformation has shown the complexities of trying to establish a dual sense of ethnicity and heritage in a world that considers them "enemy alien."

Memory as Catharsis

By reconciling the competing motives of recovery and transformation, remembrance generates a form of catharsis for the cross-cultural traveler. As the main character in the story recovered a painful experience and became transformed by it, she/he released the emotional tensions "in the realization that through memory one may bear one's ancestor's hardship and in doing so, save one's ancestors from strife, and even from death" (Ching & Pataray-Ching, 29). In *Moon Bridge* by Marcia Savin (1993), Japanese-American Mitzie Fujimoto endures the pain of racism at school, the disgraceful life of internment at Tanforan and later Arizona, then has to make decisions about her family and friends upon her return. The story takes place in San Francisco as World War II begins. Amidst the war effort and anti-Japanese sentiment, Mitzie befriends Ruthie Fox, which changes their fifth-grade year dramatically. The girls suffer the shunning and harassment of their friends and teachers at school. Their strong friendship suddenly changes when Mitzie and her family are abruptly sent to Tanforan War Relocation Camp, a former racetrack. Because Japanese culture teaches its people to accept shame in silence, there was no way for Ruthie to understand the suffering of Mitzie's life in the internment camp. The internees had done nothing wrong, but many felt shamed by being singled out, locked away, accused of disloyalty; to criticize the government might seem to prove they were in some way guilty. When the war was over in January of 1945, the camps began to close and the people struggled to find new homes, new jobs, and new lives. Mitzie wrote to Ruthie to arrange to meet her at their favorite location, Moon Bridge. The girls have been changed by the war experiences. Mitzie remains angry and silent for awhile before she opens up and tells her about the dreadful experiences in the Arizona internment camp. "Now do you see why I didn't write? I hated everyone and everything" (222). Cathartic remembrance and sharing her memories in the safety of a close friendship begins Mitzie's healing process. She is proud of her brother's return from the battle zone with a chestful of medals. She fears for her father who is angry, bitter, and ready to leave the country. She finds hope in her Uncle Joe, who although hurt and insulted, would talk to people and find a new shop to earn a living. Mitzie remembers so she can save her father and family members. By remembering and sharing her burden with Ruthie, she also saved them from silence and death of memory, and in doing so, she saved them from death itself.

Remapping the Relationships Among Cultural Communities (Border Crossings/Intercultural Memory)

In addition to looking at those who travel within the borders of culture, memory also sustains travel across cultural boundaries. In the autobiographical stories of Nisei survivors, we find travelers that cross borders of cultural communities, affirm their family connections, and remap their positions in the larger culture. For instance, in *Nisei Daughter* (1953, 2000), Monica Sone describes not only the innocence of her childhood in Seattle and her life at Camp Minidoka in Idaho, but the post-internment process of reintegration into society. When the War Relocations Authority begins opening channels for the Nisei to return to the mainstream of life, Kazuko, now Monica, is offered a scholarship to continue her schooling by attending Wendell College in southern Indiana. Then, just before Christmas of her second year in college, she receives a letter from her parents requesting her return to Camp Minidoka for the holidays, especially since her father is sick. Arriving at the camp, she is again startled by the MP's and barbed-wire fences. The camp is ghostly and the old barracks a shell of a prison since most of the Nisei children have relocated to the Midwest and East to jobs and schools. But the Issei who still want to go back to their businesses and homes in the West remain in the camps, hoping that the military restrictions on the Coast will be lifted at the end of the war. During this visit, Monica sees that her parents suffer for being her Japanese parents. Monica comforts her parents; "I don't resent my Japanese blood anymore. I'm proud of it, in fact, because of you and the Issei who've struggled so much for us. It's really nice to be born into two cultures, like getting a real bargain in life, two for the price of one... I used to feel like a two-headed monstrosity, but now I find that two heads are better than one" (1979, 236).

Monica and other Nisei come to a clearer understanding of America and its way of life. She admits her bitterness when the government failed her, but has come to understand that she is just as responsible as the representatives in Washington for her country's actions. It makes Monica value her country more. She sees that the Issei losses during the war are far greater. After this visit, Monica returns to college more confident than ever. Still looking through her Oriental eyes, she has a different outlook. "I felt more like a whole person instead of a deadly split personality. The Japanese and the American parts of me were now blended into one" (1979, 238). She has traveled across cultural borders, reconciled her ethnicities, and re-entered the world with a changed perspective.

In her autobiography, *The Invisible Thread* (1991), Yoshiko Uchida tells her story of crossing cultural borders that transformed her stories, causing her to take a new critical stance in society. Uchida confronts disturbing issues of heritage when her family takes a trip to Japan to visit grandparents. "Here, at least, I looked like everyone else. Here, I blended in and wasn't always the one who was different" (1991, 52). And yet, she is embarrassed to admit she couldn't read or speak Japanese and soon "longed for hot dogs, chocolate sodas and bathrooms with plumbing" (52). She realized she was a foreigner in both countries. "I wasn't totally American, and I wasn't totally Japanese. I was a mixture of

the two, and I could never be anything else" (52). This realization empowers her to value her cultural legacy as Japanese American in a new way.

Like Monica Sone, Uchida and her sister find a way to leave camp early. Through the National Japanese Student Relocation Council organized by the Quakers, both Yoshiko and her sister are offered graduate fellowships at Smith College and Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts, respectively. With their leave papers in hand, the girls begin their transformation and reintegration back into American society. Uchida finishes her Master's Degree in education and accepts her first real teaching position in a small Quaker school near Philadelphia. After struggling to find a homeowner that would rent to Japanese-Americans, Yoshiko and her sister are finally in a position to provide a home for their parents. "It was a joyous reunion for us in the outside world" (128). The despair and helplessness of the camp life are transformed by the empowerment of job, home, and family reunited.

Although Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston was only seven years old when her family was uprooted from their home and sent to live at Manzanar Internment Camp, the experience drastically changed her life. In *Farewell to Manzanar* (1973, 1995), Jeanne not only details her experiences during the internment, but her struggle over the ensuing thirty years in coming to terms with her experiences. She crosses cultural borders: she is the first member of her family to finish college and the first to marry out of her race. But as she comes to understand what Manzanar has meant, it fills her with the "shame for being a person guilty of something enormous enough to deserve that kind of treatment" (185). In 1972, she packed up her husband and three children to make the pilgrimage back to Manzanar Camp. When they arrive at this once biggest city between Reno and Los Angeles, the barracks and guard towers are gone. Only the gate houses, the elms planted by internees, and the rock gardens remain. They spot an obelisk off by barbed wire with the inscription in Japanese with "A Memorial to the Dead." She thinks of her mother who passed away seven years ago. She remembers that her father's life ended at Manzanar even though he lived for twelve years after leaving the camp. She feels the presence of those who had died at Manzanar. Through the spiritual experience of this pilgrimage, Jeanne is able to say "Farewell" to the Manzanar mentality that has enslaved her for so many years. She realizes that the experience has made her who she is. By reenacting these memories, Jeanne returns home with her family, Japanese heritage reconciled with her American citizenship.

Exploring Ching and Pataray-Ching's four representations of memory, we have traveled across cultural boundaries in the historical narratives of these Japanese Americans and shared in the grave injustice done to them in our country. Just as these stories have shaped their memories, may they serve to inform and reshape our remembrance of the internment years. Despite the payment of reparations, despite the attempts of national atonement, the internment continues to be treated as a regrettable step that appeared necessary for its time. These are an effort to move personal memory into the larger cultural memory of World War II. They speak both to the continuity of memories and to the crucial role

survivors have in speaking to history. As these discourses become interwoven, the memories transform, and these critical remembrances can teach us a more ethical way of living. As Uchida says, "For although it is important for each of us to cherish our own special heritage, I believe, above everything else, we must all celebrate our common humanity" (1991, 132). As we travel, let us not only affirm our own culture, but come to know and understand the experiences of cultures that differ from our own.

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Jacqueline N. Glasgow is an Associate Professor of English Education at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.



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RESEARCH CONNECTION

Jean E. Brown and Elaine C. Stephens, Editors

Weaving elements of Jungian theory with feminist criticism, Sherron Killingsworth Roberts provides an informative perspective on the archetypal patterns of Mother in three Newbery books published between 1922 and 2001. Traditionally, much literary criticism of young adult literature has focused on the adolescent search for identity. In her discussion of the female rescuer, she provides readers with an insightful vehicle for revisiting the interaction

among characters in young adult fiction. Roberts presents a convincing rationale for using literacy criticism to help students explore how cultural symbols give meaning to our lives. Using Jungian theory of the archetypes of Mother and feminist theory that analyzes gender bias based on stereotypes, Roberts presents us with a well-researched framework for applying these theories.

—JEB and ECS

The Female Rescuer in Newbery Fiction: Exploring the Archetype of Mother

Sherron Killingsworth Roberts

I've just finished rereading Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, and I am struck at how forever connected we are to the mothering we receive, and how the connection extends back into generations seemingly lost, and forward into the daily lives of subsequent generations. Tremendous power exists in mothering, whether in our lives or in literature. No wonder the archetype of Mother continues to be detected. Because revealing the archetypes present in Newbery books can allow students to examine literature on a deeper level, this essay seeks to highlight the archetypal patterns of Mother.

As part of my research, I find myself reading, rereading, and analyzing Newbery books, looking for windows into culture, families, and gender. Newbery Medal and Honor books provide an interesting avenue to view some of the most influential children's literature with publication dates spanning from the 20s to present because they are highly accessible and often recommended. I think these books offer a unique reflection of our culture's images of heroes, since they are written by the dominant sector of adults for the less powerful sector of children and adolescents. As part of a larger content analysis of Newbery books (Roberts, 1987), I coded only three books as having female rescuers of male protagonists. This essay seeks to examine the identity of female characters who rescue male protagonists in Newbery fiction, and to realize their archetypal roles of Mother. Who are these rare female rescuers? What common characteristics do they share?

Taking a Look at Female Rescuers through a Locus of Control Framework

As I updated my database to include 148 fictional works (Roberts, 1987, 2000) accorded the Newbery Medal and Honor Award, I coded only three male protagonists as being rescued by female characters. The only three female characters who rescued male protagonists in Newbery books from 1922 to 2001 are Polynesia the parrot in *The Voyages of Dr.*

Dolittle (Lofting, 1922), Charlotte the spider in *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952), and Amanda Beale in *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990). Even though these books might not be typical YA, they hold layers of deeper meaning especially when one considers the notions of archetypes, and may serve as worthy examples of the archetype of Mother. Providing excerpts or a quick reread of *Charlotte's Web* and *Dr. Dolittle*, and a reading of *Maniac Magee*, perhaps in literature study groups, might provide a more accessible and expedient route to teaching early concepts about archetypes of Mothers that are easily transferable to more advanced works.

These three strong female characters were identified out of the 148 books using the following schema based on locus of control (see Appendix A for operational definitions of each of these categories). The first four categories (a-d) collapse into *internal* locus of control by protagonists solving the central conflict through:

- a. creative reasoning or intellect,
- b. conflict ceasing to be perceived as a problem,
- c. physical means or tools, or
- d. cooperative efforts or compromise.

The last four categories (e-h) collapse into *external* locus of control by the protagonist solving the central conflict through:

- e. unrequested intervention of same sex character/s,
- f. unrequested intervention of opposite sex character/s,
- g. unrequested intervention of both sex characters, or
- h. some supernatural or natural occurrence.

Table 1 provides the results of coding 148 books using the coding scheme according to internal and external locus of control. While each category held aspects that are interesting for further study, the small number of female characters who rescued male protagonists (3) in category *f* prompted me to

initiate the study presented here.

I wanted to utilize locus of control as the conceptual framework for the coding schema because it captures how male and female protagonists resolve the conflict (Roberts, 1987). Rotter's locus of control is a dichotomy of perception that attributes both successes and failures to either internal or external causes. Those who believe that events are controlled largely by forces outside themselves such as powerful others, or luck are ascribed external locus of control. Conversely, people who rate high in internal locus of control believe that they largely determine their own situation and destiny.

As you can see, the external locus of control coding schema subsumed protagonists who were aided by outside sources and allowed me to focus on rescuing behavior because they were coded as unrequested intervention by the same or opposite sex.

*Who are these rare female rescuers?
What common characteristics do they share?*

The Process of Analyzing the Female Rescuers

Using literary criticism as the general technique, I reread the books to record the commonalities and differences among each of the three female characters who rescued male protagonists. In order to provide a baseline for rater reliability, a second reader also read each of the three books. First, our coding of all three books according to Roberts (1987) locus of control categories matched as being category *f*. Second, we separately took notes in a narrative format in order to outline ways that the three females who rescued males were either alike or different. Following Glesne and Peshkin's (1992) recommendations for analyzing narrative data, a progressive process of reading, taking notes, and sorting for patterns was used to analyze these rescuers. We both provided supporting quotations to document any patterns. These patterns were then synthesized into commonalities or themes with direct quotations from each of the books maintained as supporting evidence.

Who is This Female Rescuer in Newbery Fiction?

Who is she; who is this female rescuer? In considering the three females, the most striking commonality among the female rescuers is that they each represent the archetypal Mother. Although none of the three females who rescued male protagonists is biologically related to the protagonists, each acts as a maternal figure to the male protagonist. When the second reader and I first revealed our lists of character traits for each of the characters, I detected the pattern of the archetypal Mother. I brought the following documented character traits to the discussion table: nurturing, bossy or directive, helpful, patient, willing to make sacrifices, organizing, and facilitating maturity. Simultaneously yet separately, the second reader noted the following common traits among the three characters: practical voices or planners, unselfish and supportive, persistent and hard working, helpful in times of crisis, confident, and nurturing. These characteristics were not a priori, but emerged separately, yet the discussion noted the traits as similar. Quotations from each book supported our common character traits, and further discussion sealed our agreement that each of these three female characters possessed maternal qualities (nurturing, scold-

ing, sacrificing, etc.) to illuminate the archetype of Mother. Continued analysis revealed that not only did each of the female characters clearly reveal the archetype of Mother, but that each of the three male protagonists were parentless, homeless, abandoned, or without a mother, thereby further supporting the need for the archetypal Mother.

Furthermore, the traditional notions of rescuers or heroes are called into question as we get to know these three female characters, Polynesia, Charlotte, and Amanda Beale, who rescued male protagonists. First, let us examine archetypal and feminist criticism in regard to mothers and rescuers, and then let us investigate each female character as Mother.

Archetypal Criticism and Feminist Theory as Ways of Analyzing Rescuers

In analyzing the female rescuers as Mothers, I first applied Jungian theory (Jung, 1959; Knapp, 1984, Rowland, 1999), which highlights archetypes as

a kind of template or pattern in terms of literary criticism. Jung first linked the idea of archetypes found within primitive myths and rites (in much the same way dreams hold symbolic meaning) to offer an explanation of how symbols give meaning to our lives (Jung, 1964). Archetypes are "primordial images" formed by repeated experiences in our ancestors' lives, and inherited through the collective unconscious of the human race (Riccio, 1980). Students of YA literature can be guided to apply archetypal criticism themselves using these easier books as a stepping stone to more difficult and longer books.

In the same way traditional literature possesses archetypes, modern fictional works can hold these recurring images of universal significance as well. Jungian literary criticism detects archetypal places, journeys, or characters, such as the divine Child, the innocent Savior, the great Mother, the spiritual or wise Father, and the enchanted Prince (Chesebro, Bertelsen & Gencarelli, 1990; Knapp, 1984; Lasser, 1979, Rowland, 1999). Possible archetypes or templates that female

Table 1

Comparison of Female and Male Newbery Protagonists According to Eight Categories Reflecting Locus of Control

Categories	female freq (%)	male freq (%)
Internal Locus of Control		
A: creative reasoning	9 (15.5%)	8 (8.8%)
B: adjustment factor	18 (31.0%)	17 (18.9%)
C: physical means	4 (6.9%)	11 (12.2%)
D: cooperative means	7 (12.0%)	5 (5.5%)
External Locus of Control		
E: same sex intervention	2 (3.4%)	25 (27.8%)
F: opposite sex intervention	9 (15.5%)	3 (3.3%)
G: both sex intervention	3 (5.2%)	4 (4.4%)
H: super/nat'l intervention	6 (10.3%)	17 (18.9%)
Totals	58 (100%)	90 (100%)
Statistic	DF	Value
Chi-Square	7	25.979
Df		7
Sample Size = 148		

characters might represent are seen in the following common archetypes: (a) the sinister witch or offensive person who needs either redemption or conquering, (b) the spunky trickster who devises a way to intervene, making things happen and often resolving the conflict, (c) the innocent maiden who by her sheer association or companionship brings good fortune and resolution, and, of course, (d) the archetype of Mother who nurtures, scolds, and sacrifices to assist (Rowland, 1999). "Sometimes the good mother is dead, or dies at an early point in the story, so that the hero is doubly severed from her when he sets out on his adventure." (Hourihan, 1997, p. 163). Often, in these cases, a new mother figure arises to rescue and protect the naïve and motherless protagonist. Certainly, as young adults read these influential and highly available Newbery books, the archetypes of Mother to the motherless are readily seen in each of these three books.

In addition to archetypal criticism, feminist theory might be another means of empowering students to interpret the characteristics of these female rescuers (Gilligan, 1982; Polster, 1992; Stearney, 1994; Vandergrift, 1993, 1996). Miriam Polster argues that alternative views of what constitutes a hero should be considered rather than the "male-skewed images" which contain only physical strength and aggressive behavior (cited in Crew, 1996). Rather than traditional heroic acts which call the hero away from family and the familiar to the unknown, women's heroism (Polster, 1992) often goes undetected because it is "rooted in the particular circumstances and values of women's lives, where connection and relationship may not be quickly stated in adversarial terms" (p. 18).

By examining situational archetypes such as birth/death/rebirth, Sanderson (2001) echoes what other experts (Appelman, 2000; Bonnycastle, 1996; Probst, 1988) have recommended in encouraging secondary teachers to share the multiplicity of lenses inherent in literary theory with their students. Once junior high and high school students learn various types of criticism such as feminist or archetypal criticism, they may be brought into richer discussion surrounding questions such as: Are these female rescuers a reflection of feminist ways of thinking? Or, are they archetypes as old as time? Indeed, could these three interesting, strong, and influential female characters somehow be both? No doubt, teaching literary criticism to adolescents is a means of empowering readers in their interpretations of YA literature (Moore, 1997). Next, let us take a comprehensive look at who plays the role of female rescuers by analyzing these strong female characters individually.

Polynesia the Parrot, The Duality of Mother

The earliest novel to be coded as a female character rescuing a male protagonist was provided within the book, *The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle* (Lofting, 1922). Polynesia the parrot provided a vivid archetype of Mother. In fact, the duality of Mother as described by Bettelheim (1975) into the evil stepmother and the uncontaminated good fairy godmother that is ever-present in fairy tales, was easily seen here. Throughout much of the book, Polynesia's role is focused upon her directive, even bossy, nature.

If there is anything happening I am not quite sure of, she is always able to put meright, to tell me exactly about it. In fact sometimes, I almost think I ought to say that this book was written by Polynesia instead of me. (Lofting, 1922, p.2)

Poly also serves as a practical voice reminding the male protagonist to be on his best behavior:

Great work! But listen. I smell danger. I think you had better get back to the ship now as quickly and quietly as you can. Put your overcoat on over that giddy suit. I don't like the looks of this crowd.... I think this would be a good time for us to get away. (Lofting, 1922, p.194)

In her wise way, Poly plays the role of monitor who watches Tommy and Dr. Dolittle's behavior and reminds them to consider the real world. She reminds them to keep things in perspective and to see the long-range picture. When Dr. Dolittle is too unselfish, Poly notes,

There he goes, lending his last blessed penny...all the money we had for the whole trip! Now we haven't got the price of a postage stamp...Well, let's pray that we don't run out of food. Why doesn't he give them the ship and just walk home? (Lofting, 1922, p. 158)

Listen to the tone of voice Poly uses when she commands Tommy to obey her: "We must search the hold. If this is allowed to go on, we'll all be starving before a week is out. Come downstairs with me, Tommy, and we'll look into this matter" (Lofting, 1922, p. 163). No doubt, this is the mother we all need to help us realize the reality of day-to-day living and surviving. This practical side of the duality of Mother represents what Bettelheim (1975) refers to as the evil stepmother and even though it is helpful to children in the long run, a mother's persistence nags at us all. Psychoanalytically dividing Mother into these two sides creates a safe place for us to hate the nagging side of mothers while simultaneously loving them with equal zeal for saving us, as fairy godmothers.

The good side (as represented by fairy godmothers in fairy tales) of Poly's duality might best be illustrated by her constant unselfishness. Poly, like the stereotypical mother, makes physical and mental sacrifices for Tommy by staying awake all night to guide the ship safely in its route:

Besides that, Polynesia, who was an older sailor than any of us, and really knew a lot about running ships, seemed to be always awake-except when she took a couple of winks in the sun, standing on one leg beside the wheel. (Lofting, 1922, p. 162)

Polynesia captures the role of fairy godmother at the end of the book by intervening without any request from Tommy. Just when everything looks hopeless and Tommy Stubbins needs help the most, Polynesia the parrot comes to the rescue and plans every detail to return him home. In this role, Polynesia is the archetype of the fairy godmother who arranges everything from convincing the snail to providing transportation to occupying Dr. Dolittle. All is well after the archetypal godmother works her organizational magic to secure Tommy's dream of returning home. The directive and practical voice as well as the protective custody and unselfish nature of Polynesia exemplify the traditional archetypal Mother.

In considering the three females, the most striking commonality among the female rescuers is that they each represent the archetypal Mother.

Charlotte, the Nurturer

The second book, *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952), that contains a female character who rescued a male protagonist also involves nonhuman characters like Polynesia. The character of Charlotte the spider in *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952) provides a strong example of a female character rescuing a male protagonist. Charlotte is the archetypal Mother throughout the book. In an article focusing on "mothering," Rollin (1990, p. 44) notes that "...Charlotte the spider takes over the mothering of Wilbur—a different form of mothering." Unlike Fern who originally fed and cared for Wilbur, Charlotte never feeds Wilbur. Additionally, Charlotte and Wilbur never touch each other, either. Yet, Charlotte establishes herself as a maternal figure to Wilbur. Listen to the tone of this statement by Charlotte to Wilbur: "That remains to be seen. But I am going to save you, and I want you to quiet down immediately. You're carrying on in a childish way. Stop your crying! I can't stand hysterics" (White, 1952, p. 51). With words as fodder rather than the food at the trough, Charlotte feeds and mothers Wilbur. Throughout the book, her words carry admonishments, orders, advice, chastisements, compliments, lullabies, stories, and finally the very messages woven in the web that save Wilbur (Rollin, 1990).

Indeed, the "novel's references to Charlotte and Wilbur as 'friends' probably results from the absence of touch and feeding in their relationship, but Charlotte is no less a mother object" (Rollin, 1990, p. 44). New to the barn, Wilbur is naïve and learning about the world in the barn; he is definitely in need of a friend and a motherly one at that. Charlotte is the one who aids Wilbur in his journey to maturity. Taking maternal charge, Charlotte even patiently puts Wilbur to bed.

"May I go...see if I left any of my supper in the trough?"

"Very well," said Charlotte. "But I want you in bed again without delay." (White, 1952, p. 64)

Charlotte's steadfast caring and sacrifice is displayed throughout the book with examples such as the following:

"Tell me a story, Charlotte!", said Wilbur, as he lay waiting for sleep to come. "Tell me a story!"

So Charlotte, although she, too, was tired, did what Wilbur wanted. "Once upon a time..." (White, 1952, p. 102)

As well as showing motherly affection, Charlotte assertively stands up for Wilbur and helps him overcome difficult interactions with the other animals in the barnyard, for example, who say he is the smelliest animal: "Let Wilbur alone!" she (Charlotte) said. "He has a perfect right to smell, considering his surroundings. You are no sweet pea yourself" (White, 1952, p. 61). Even Charlotte's orders such as "...now stop arguing and go get some sleep!" (White, 1952, p. 91) all prepare Wilbur to grow into the unselfish pig who will love and care for Charlotte's babies upon her death. Charlotte's ingenuity, assertiveness, and skill in creating the web certainly saves Wilbur's life, dismissing the certainty of his slaughter. Charlotte not only rescues Wilbur, but also transforms him through her nurturing friendship. Charlotte, as the archetypal Mother, is able to lead Wilbur out of his naive world that ignores the inevitability of her death or of his becoming bacon. Charlotte, as well as mothers in the real world, prepare us for becoming the next generation and for ultimately living without them.

Amanda Beale, Androgynous Mom

The character of Amanda Beale in the story of *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) is the last book among the 148 Newbery Award winners to be coded as having a female character who came to the aid of the male protagonist. Amanda Beale, who is often cast as a "spunky heroine", is also a solid representation of the maternal archetype because she informs Maniac's naiveté, she is directive and protective, and she willingly makes sacrifices for his well being.

Amanda Beale is a recurring female figure in *Maniac Magee's* life, unlike the traditional male idea of the hero from afar. Amanda Beale, who is African American, sensitively notices a white boy who appears homeless standing in the middle of her sidewalk. Further, while Amanda is tough and savvy on the edges, she notices that he is helpless to know how to interact with Black folks in her part of town. Amanda's role as the maternal archetype expands to show *Maniac Magee* how the world works, intellectually and socially. Homeless and without parents, *Maniac Magee* is in need of someone to provide knowledge and Amanda is quickly cast into that role. In fact, one of Amanda's first significant interactions with *Maniac Magee* is symbolic in that she loans her treasured "A" encyclopedia to him: "Amanda, upon giving up her most prized possession, stopped and turned. 'Ohhh,' she squeaked. She tore the book from the suitcase, hurled it at him—'Here!' and she dashed into school." (Spinelli, 1990, p. 13). What better symbol of being the disseminator of knowledge than giving him the first volume of the encyclopedia set?

Amanda also possesses the protective instincts and drive of a mother grizzly bear. Just as a mother guards her young, Amanda attempts to protect *Maniac Magee* in various ways. In the following instance, Amanda physically saves *Maniac Magee* from the gang and the gang leader, Mars Bars, by bravely kicking Mars Bars:

"You ripped my book."

Mars Bar's eyes went big as headlights, "I did not."

"You did. You lie." She let the bike fall to *Maniac*. She grabbed the book and started kicking Mars Bar in his beloved sneakers. "I got a little brother and a little sister that crayon all over my books, and I got a dog that eats them and poops on them, and that's just inside my own family, and I'm *not* —gonna have *nobody* - -else *messin'* —with my *books!* You *under-stand?*" (Spinelli, 1990, p. 39)

Soon *Maniac Magee* comes to a physical and symbolic crossroad in his life. *Maniac Magee* never perceives the unwritten rules of his social system, as evidenced by this scene in which Amanda Beale's dad attempts to drive the homeless *Magee* to his nonexistent house:

Mr. Beale knew what his passenger (*Maniac Magee*) apparently didn't: East End is East End and West End was West End, and the house this white lad (*Magee*) was pointing to was filled with black people, just like every other house on up to Hector Street. (Spinelli, 1990, p. 43)

With consistency, Amanda is there to coach *Maniac* through the ordeal of losing his innocence in terms of crossing the color line:

About never crossing the "boundary"—why were they laughing? The Cobras werestanding at Hector Street. Hector Street was the boundary between the East and West ends. Or, to put

it another way, between the blacks and whites. Not that you never saw a white in the East End or a black in the West End. People did cross the line now and then, especially if they were adults and it was daylight. But nighttime, forget it. And if you were a kid, day or night, forget it. (Spinelli, 1990, p.32)

Throughout the book, Amanda tries to show him and tell him about these boundaries and inform him of the dangers inherent in their racist culture. Ironically, it is Amanda and her family, rather than Maniac Magee, who are the ones to reap some of the pain from crossing the line when someone spray paints "Fish Belly" on the side of her home.

While Amanda Beale portrays the maternal archetype by providing a window out of his naiveté and in her role as his protector, she also portrays a conventional heroine in the masculine tradition of employing physical power, such as kicking Mars Bars. Moreover, in the last chapter, Amanda leaves her own familiar setting (just as the masculine idea of hero suggests) to solve the conflict surrounding Maniac Magee's need for a home. In the middle of the night, with Mars Bars trailing, Amanda physically rescues Maniac Magee from the buffalo pen at the zoo and takes him to her own house, sacrificing her own room and bed.

Valuing Masculine or Feminine Heroes/Heroines or Not?

Deciding whether or not the archetype of Mother as heroine elevates or denigrates women's status is an interesting question for feminist theorists, educators, and students. While allowing female characters the freedom to assume the same sorts of power roles that a masculine view of heroism purports (i.e., physical means, from afar), traditional viewpoints that hold masculine heroes supreme may provide little validation for the long-term courageous and nurturing acts of either gender.

A sense of impartiality or fairness can be derived by educators and their students as they make this important discovery: Traditionally feminine kinds of nurturing should be valued as just as powerful portrayals of heroism as the heroism of a stereotypic knight on a steed. On the other hand, acknowledging the archetype of Mother in heroic acts may threaten to reduce women back to the stereotypical female who constantly takes care of others, rescues them, never takes care of her own needs, and is essentially confined to the home. This way of thinking may even exacerbate the problem by being what some in the 90s called "enablers." In my experience, opening up more androgynous views of males and females in the role of rescuer with young adults can enhance future discussion on this topic. No doubt, both literature and the real world need avenues that allow men to be more nurturing and women to be more physically assertive.

Lessons Learned: The Importance of Sharing Theories of Literary Criticism

"The main reason for studying theory at the same time as literature is it forces you to deal consciously with the problem of ideologies...There are many truths and the one you will find depends partly on the ideology you start with. If this situation sounds depressingly complex, it can later turn out

to be both exciting and challenging... It helps you discover elements of your own ideology, and understand why you hold certain values unconsciously. It means no authority can impose a truth on you in a dogmatic way—and if some authority does try, you can challenge that truth in a powerful way...Theory is subversive because it puts authority into question." Stephen Bonnycastle (1996, p. 34)

First, the female rescuers in these three pieces of Newbery fiction may serve as a feasible and enjoyable vehicle to highlight the power of literary criticism for secondary students. Bonnycastle (1996) notes that helping young adults understand literary theories and ideologies not only helps students uncover layers of meaning in literature, but it helps them sort through and discover who they are and how personal ideologies fit into larger world views. Appleman (2000) promotes the notion of including literary criticisms other than the traditional "cultural transmissiveness" or the more modern "reader-

response theory" (Probst, 1988). She encourages teaching high school students the following contemporary literary theories: reader response theory, Marxist literary theory, feminist literary theory, and deconstruction theory, each of which will significantly enhance students' literary experiences by exposing a range of interpretive choices.

While she did not include archetypal theory as a contemporary theory, it is another effective lens with which to view literature. Surely, teaching archetypal theory (Sanderson, 2001) as well as feminist theory alongside the three novels included in this essay would open up interpretive possibilities for students' future reading.

Lessons Learned: The Importance of Examining Female Rescuers

"Women's heroism has been equally brave and equally original as that of men. But because in some forms it differs from the traditional pattern of heroism, it has often gone unrecognized..." Miriam Polster (1992, p. 19)

First, the important, albeit rare, contributions of these female characters serve as powerful role models for readers of all ages. Second, realizing the influence, popularity, longevity (from 1922 to present), and the sheer availability of Newbery Medal and Honor books make this population of stories a valuable collection for future analyses. Fortunately, the original schema based on internal and external locus of control served as a capable filter for capturing both the traditionally masculine and feminine ideas of heroism. However, what is disturbing is the total absence of females in heroic roles other than that of Mother. In any case, both males and females are in equal need of the diversity of strong characters to provide examples of femininity and masculinity that shatter stereotypic roles.

My hope is that, this study will provide insights for educators who share the dual challenge of providing students with literature that includes the diversity of robust female characters and of teaching theories of literary criticism so students may better understand the roles of rescuers and heroes. No doubt, these books may serve as good fodder for YA readers

to begin examining literature critically. Using feminist theory and/or archetypal criticism accentuates the importance of examining relationships among gender roles, various archetypes, and stereotypic characters. Whether books contain blatant stereotypes or shatter stereotypic roles, YA readers can learn from them by discussing and defining the roles and their own opinions, hopes, and dreams surrounding them. In particular, *The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle* (Lofting, 1922), *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952), and *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) may serve readers and researchers well as either a window into our personal feminist viewpoints or as a mirror reflecting the larger culture, particularly the intense archetype of Mother.

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Appendix A

Operational Definitions of Categories in Internal and External LOC Schema

Note: Of particular interest to the readers of this essay may be the operational definitions of Categories F which highlight the rescuing behavior of other characters.

Category A: The protagonist overcomes conflict through his or her own creative reasoning or intellect. This category represents the concept of outsmarting or tricking the opposing force or forces. Quite often the plot involves using readily available resources in a clever or novel way to solve the problem. Another way the protagonist might use his or her reasoning or intellectual powers was to make a decision to overcome his or her own faults or weaknesses. This could be termed a maturity factor which is brought into play by the protagonist's decision to rise to the occasion.

Category B: The protagonist overcomes the conflict through some adjustment factor attitudinally. That is, the conflict ceases to be perceived as a problem. In this case, the central conflict or problem does not go away, not is it actively resolved. From within the protagonist, however, what once seemed a terrible source of conflict is eventually resolved within the protagonist's own mind so that the protagonist persists. Nothing else changes, except for attitude. The protagonist eventually comes to grips with a problem or conflict, reshapes or reconfigures the problem, and accepts it, usually because it is a problem that cannot easily be altered.

To code for this category, coders must ask if the conflict/problem/situation still persists, then it may be coded in this category.

Category C: The protagonist overcomes the conflict through physical means or through use of physical tools. Any involvement of bodily strength or coordination, which stops or averts the conflict, is classified within this category. The activity may range from a physical act such as pulling whiskers to a violent act such as killing. Hitting, kicking, slapping, tripping, tackling, running or biting are examples of the kinds of physical solutions to conflict, which fall under this category. Also, physical use of tools is considered part of this category. Throwing objects, creating physical barriers, the use of a bat, gun, hammer, etc. is considered using tools to resolve the conflict. This category may constitute other physical actions such as repairing a house, constructing a shelter, pulling a sword from a stone, or dragging an object or person to safety. If a question exists as to whether the book should be coded as category C or another, the coder should ask him/herself what the tone/themes of the book reflect. If they reflect the themes of physical survival, then the book should be coded as C.

Category D: The protagonist overcomes conflict through some cooperative effort or through compromise. Although this category involves more than one person, it collapses into internal locus of control because of one overriding factor: the protagonist must *request* the aid of help of another in whatever fashion is best suited. Keeping in mind that there are many forms of conflict over which humans have no real control, such as earthquake, kidnapping, or shipwreck, the protagonists (who are usually children) must show the presence of mind and of their internal strength to request help in such situations. The request must be directed toward a specific person. The request may be in written or verbal form, but to be classified in this category, it must be stated or agreed in order to constitute a request (a wish is not sufficient). Compromise is another resolution of conflict, which involves more than one person, but it necessitates agreement on both sides. In order to be coded D for compromise, remember the compromise does not have to be the protagonist's original idea. This cooperative effort must not be considered just a token concession to the other side, but is a straightforward exchange involving some give and take on both sides. If the protagonist agrees to settle the conflict through compromise and to uphold their part of the bargain, an internal decision has occurred to create this solution.

Category E: The protagonist overcomes conflict through some unrequested intervention of a character or characters of the same sex. This category was delineated from the cooperation and compromise category by the word "unrequested." Sometimes either the protagonist does not perceive the conflict or he or she was insufficient to resolve the conflict, so the author assigns another character to intervene and rescue the protagonist or solve the conflict. These characters could act together as equal partner or as helpers to each other. The most important factor is that the protagonist

was given *help without request*. Here if the protagonist were male, a male character (or characters) provides the solution to the conflict. By the same token, if the protagonist were female, then the source of intervention has to come from another female character or characters.

Category F: The protagonist overcomes conflict through some unrequested intervention of a character or characters of the opposite sex. This category differs only from the previous category because of the sex of the person or persons who intervene. These characters could act together as equal partner or as helpers to each other. The most important factor is that the protagonist was given *help without request*. If the protagonist were male, then the character providing the solution to the conflict has to be female. Conversely, if the protagonist were female, then a male character or characters are assigned by the author to intervene to resolve the conflict.

Category G: The protagonist overcomes conflict through some unrequested intervention of a character or characters of both sexes. This category was created and added after the first pilot study to provide for the intervention of a team or couple of persons who include characters of both genders. Sometimes, both male and female participants offer a solution to the conflict. Quite often, these characters are in the form of siblings, parents, and friends, or any of these combinations.

Category H: The protagonist overcomes the conflict through some supernatural or natural or non-human occurrence. Sometimes some unexpected outside happening resolves the conflict for the protagonist. An example of this category would be a conflict situation in which a protagonist cannot face up to pitching for the team finals and the game is conveniently rained out. It is important to remember that for this category, the setting of the book does not have to be a supernatural setting. Or, some protagonist receives some divine knowledge of where to find his or her lost sibling. Another example would be a case in which the protagonist is put in danger by the opposing force, but is rescued by a pet, wild animal (not a personified animal), or some magical machinery. This is termed a natural occurrence in the sense that a realistic animal or type of machinery possesses no sense of logic concerning this intervention. The happenings within this category may be termed fate, luck, destiny, providence, or God's will, but they all constitute a power or strength from outside sources.

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Sherron Killingsworth Roberts is an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

Graphic Books for Diverse Needs: Engaging Reluctant and Curious Readers

Gretchen Schwarz

Involving today's adolescent in the joys of reading is a challenge in a hyper-mediated, fast paced world of information. Just getting a teen to stop racing from activity to activity for a few minutes of quiet reading can be difficult. Adolescents are constantly occupied by the mall, movies, jobs, and their cell phones. One genre that is gaining academic respectability can help engage adolescents in reading: the graphic novel. The graphic novel, basically a "comic" in short book length, appeals to diverse readers who have come to expect visuals in the texts they encounter in their world. Graphic novels can offer well written and exciting stories, unusual information and ideas, new points of view, and stimulating art work. Graphic novels have many uses across the curriculum, as well. Everyone from the reluctant, challenged reader to the high achieving but easily bored adolescent can find an intriguing graphic novel. The graphic novel deserves a place in the classroom.

Since Art Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize for his 1986 graphic novel, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, based on the true story of his father's Holocaust survival, the graphic novel has been gaining attention and respect. Graphic novels have been reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review*, sections of national chain book stores are now devoted to graphic novels, and Nilsen and Donelson in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (2001) discuss graphic novels, legitimizing the genre as part of young adult literature. Nilsen and Donelson include the following observations that support the use of graphic novels by educators:

- 1) "Visuals are important . . . In today's books, this trend has expanded so that even with fiction, young readers fan through a book and look disappointed if all they see are pages and pages of plain type . . ."
- 2) "Authors are encouraging multiple perspectives. The "other" is being given increased space . . ." [Graphic novels are multicultural.]
- 3) "Crossover books are commonplace. Just as with television, which is viewed by all ages, more books are being published that can be appreciated by readers of different ages." [Many current graphic novel readers are adults out of school.]
- 4) "Young people's expectations for entertainment are high."
- 5) "The literary canon is expanding." (Nilsen and Donelson, 2001, pp. 107-108)

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Librarians/media specialists have been especially enthusiastic about graphic novels. See, for example, articles by Stephen Weiner (2002), Michael Lavin (1998), and Lora Bruggeman (1997) in various library journals, advising on the emergence of graphic novels for library collections. Other scholars explore graphic novels as artifacts of popular culture. Ultimately, both the written text and graphics of good graphic novels are worthy of reading and study, and students are drawn to them.

The graphic novel is short, has interesting pictures (some in color and some not), usually offers dialogue and action with little narration or description, and comes in paperback form; in short, it is not intimidating to a reluctant reader. A graphic novel can be read fairly quickly. Graphic novels come in a great variety, offering classical literature to nonfiction history, superheroes and light romance to serious current events.

Graphic Books For Teen Who Resist Reading: Superheroes, Mysteries, Contemporary Life Issues, and Histories

The following suggestions regarding graphics books that focus on superheroes, mysteries and crime, real life issues, and history are aimed especially at teens who resist reading and are not confident in their reading abilities. The superhero, the most popular subject of comics and graphic novels, can also prompt more thoughtful stories now than in earlier times. An example is *Superman: Peace on Earth* (1999) by Alex Ross and Paul Dini. This giant-sized graphic novel is long on graphic appeal with beautiful, photographic-looking realism, and the text is brief. In this story Superman wrestles with the problem of world hunger against the interference of military despots and angry mobs; he struggles with the question of what one person can do, even if he is Superman. There is enough action to satisfy a reader, but the story can also provoke deeper thought, perhaps even discussion and research about the difficult issue of world hunger. Similar works exist with Batman and Wonder Woman.

Turning from the superhero to more traditional tales, Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly have edited a fascinating volume called *Little Lit: Folklore and Fairy Tale Funnies* (2000) which includes stories by a variety of well known comic artists from Walt Kelly, the creator of Pogo, to Chris Ware, the postmodernist creator of adult comics like *Jimmy Corrigan, The Smartest Kid on Earth*. At first glance, this large-sized

hardback appears to be a children's book. But it isn't. These stories are not the usual ones, from "Prince Rooster (A Hasidic Parable)" about a prince who thinks he's a rooster to "The Leafless Tree" about a family perpetually dissatisfied even after discovering a pot of gold. The varied illustrations are interesting, and stories offer different twists on several traditional fairy tales, too. Chris Ware has even designed in the front cover a board game called "Fairy Tale Road Rage," which includes such stops as a Goldilox Pawn Shop and Grandma's House at Sunny Acres Assisted Living. This book is fun to read on one level, and worth study at a higher level. The book could open up the world of fairy tales and folklore for a reader.

A reader attracted by mysteries and crime stories can enjoy the graphic novel version of Raymond Chandler's *The Little Sister* (1997), illustrated by Michael Lark. Using pastels with a great deal of black shadowing and sharp angles, the artist has captured the film noir feeling of Chandler's work. The action, sharp dialogue, and strong characters keep the reader involved as the world weary detective, Philip Marlowe, tries to get to the bottom of things. The engaged reader might even be interested in further exploring the cinematic techniques used in this graphic novel or may want to read another of Chandler's works and compare it to the film version.

Graphic novels also speak to the real world of problems that young people may face, and one outstanding example is *The Tale of One Bad Rat* (1995) by Bryan Talbot. This novel is dramatically and yet realistically illustrated, using dominant colors to express the moods of what is happening such as the hopeful, country greens in the last section. The story traces the journey of a teen runaway in London to the Lake Country where she confronts and deals with her father's sexual abuse as she traces the real life history of Beatrix Potter. Talbot closes with his story of the research he did to write the novel. An easy to read but moving story, any reader could benefit from encountering *The Tale of One Bad Rat* which received the Eisner Award (honoring comic book creators) in 1996.

Also powerfully moving and thought provoking is *9-11: Artists Respond, Volume One* (2002, from Dark Horse Comics in Milwaukie, Oregon), a collection of pieces, some a page and some four or five pages, which consider the events of September 11. Numerous artists contributed diverse pieces which capture the courage of the rescuers, the shock of children viewing, and the costs of hatred and prejudice. The titles are revealing, including "Zero Degrees of Separation," "Arab Americans," and "Which One Is Real?" among many others. Some of the art is in color and some is black and white; one picture shows the Empire State Building weeping over the World Trade Center. All the art is strong. The proceeds of this book and the second volume are designated for relief funds. This work will affect all readers.

One more example which might appeal to students who find their regular history texts boring and difficult is the non-fiction *Still I Rise: A Cartoon History of African Americans* (1997) by Roland Owen Laird, Jr., with illustrations by Elihu "Adofu" Bey. A longer work covering centuries, *Still I Rise* takes a hard look at the oppression of Black Americans but also their resilience and many contributions to America. The black and white drawings make this history more personal

and human as well as harsh. It is not a "fun" read and not meant to be read at one sitting. Yet, it is engaging and presents American history from another point of view which many young people may welcome. There is also a short history of Blacks in comics in the Forward by Charles Johnson. *Still I Rise* is sure to initiate thought and discussion and fits well into the social studies curriculum.

For Skilled but Bored Readers: Comedy, Satire, and Different Perspectives

Reluctant readers are not the only adolescents who do not spend much time reading. Honors and AP students who often tackle difficult books for school may not read for themselves, either. Many older adolescents are short on time, are involved with many other activities, and may not be inspired to read more of what they are often force fed in school. Graphic books may re-engage them in the joys of literacy. Following are six graphic texts that may appeal to the confident and curious but easily bored reader.

Adolescents generally enjoy satire and a prime example is *The Simpsons* by Matt Groening, also in graphic novel form (with as much text as graphics). *The Simpsons' Guide to Springfield* (1998, from HarperPerennial), for example, takes on every tourist subject from hotels (the "Worst Western"), fast food restaurants ("Lard Lad Donut"), local government, and shopping ("Wicked Excess," "the place to shop for platinum lobster traps"). The Simpsons even take on American

Graphic novels also speak to the real world of problems that young people may face, and one outstanding example is The Tale of One Bad Rat (1995) by Bryan Talbot.

history and our society's strange relationship to history in the description of Old Springfield Towne:

... a for-profit historical park replete with glass blowers, candlemakers, and wig powderers. In response to recent complaints by educators that the park is "just too boring," the Towne's proprietors have given it a minor facelift and restructuring. However, scholars are quick to point out recently added anachronisms: Colonial Springfield did not use muskets with laser sights, three-cornered hats were never used as "ninja star"-type weapons, and tavern waitresses did not wear hot pants. (pp. 19-20)

English teachers teaching about satire and social studies teachers looking at economics, history, or social life could all find uses for this graphic novel, a definite change of pace from school texts.

A graphic novel that is even more strange than *The Simpsons* but not funny is *The Comical Tragedy or Tragical Comedy of Mr. Punch* (1995) by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean. This dark story of childhood memories may first need some explanation to students unfamiliar with British seaside resorts and the history of the Punch and Judy puppet shows. The narrative also demands close attention as memories and nightmares seem interwoven in the revealed fears of childhood and the uncovering of adult secrets. The art work is fascinating, a collage of drawings, odd pictures, and mostly white text on black background. Art students might be especially drawn to this graphic novel.

Graphic novels can present points of view often unheard in textbooks and the usual school materials. A wonderful example is the funny but serious *The Four Immigrants Manga* (1999) by Henry Kiyama, translated by Frederik L. Schodt. (Manga is the Japanese term for graphic novel. Mangas have

been and are widely read by adults as well as children in Japan.) Based on the author's own experiences, this novel traces the adventures of four Japanese immigrants in the San Francisco area from 1904-1924. Against the background of the San Francisco Earthquake, World War I, and other historical events, these four young men try to make a good life in an America which is unrelentingly racist. Still there is no self-pity. The characters' lives have ups as well as downs, and their attempts to meet girls, make a fortune fast, and adapt to American culture supply much humor. The translator offers a glossary and additional information, too. This novel is both fun to read and thought provoking, revealing the insider's view of being an immigrant in America.

Another historic graphic novel presenting the Japanese point of view is *Barefoot Gen: Life after the Bomb* (1999) by Keiji Nakazawa based on his own life experiences surviving the atomic bomb in Hiroshima.

The main character is a young boy, Gen, who takes care of his mother and baby sister after the rest of his family is killed in the bombing. Gen gets angry and is willing to fight for survival, but he also shows compassion to fellow survivors when others want nothing to do with them. Gen does not idealize the Japanese military, but he is horrified at the instant destruction and lingering radiation sickness which result from the bomb and outraged at America for dropping such a bomb. A stirring story of survival, *Gen* leads the reader to consider the effects of war. Other volumes of Gen's story are also available.

Turning from history to literature, young readers may be fascinated by the graphic novel *Kafka: Give It Up!* (1995), illustrated by Peter Kuper. Bizarre black and white illustrations accompany abridged versions of some of Kafka's famous stories such as "A Hunger Artist." This book would serve as a great introduction to Kafka and his themes of alienation, death, and power. The illustrations create an almost cinematic or dreamlike effect. A reader might well want to know more about Kafka, and another excellent work, *Introducing Kafka* (1993), with text by David Zane Mairowitz and illustrations by famous underground comic artist, Robert Crumb, offers an insightful biography of Kafka that includes other Kafka stories and parts of his novels. By examining Kafka in the historical context of pre-World War II Prague, Mairowitz helps the reader understand Kafka as an alienated Jew in a terrible time as well as a man terrified of his own abusive father. Kafka's use of Jewish humor is emphasized. Educators need to be aware of some nudity in the book; graphic novels are often designed for adult readers and must be used with care. However, this graphic novel is an engaging example of visual literary biography, and it is part of a series of similar books on ideas and writers such as *Introducing Camus*, *Introducing Nietzsche*, and *Introducing Cultural Studies*.

Of course, any reader may be drawn to any of the graphic novels above and many more besides. The distinction between the reluctant reader and the advanced but bored reader is rather artificial. All young readers are "on the move." All adolescents may find something worthwhile and of interest in graphic novels, and they may be drawn back into the pleasures of reading for leisure as well as learning. Clearly, graphic novels fit into English, social studies, and art courses, and others exist which would be useful in science or math. Graphic novels are useful for media literacy across the curriculum, as well, allowing students to focus on the power of images. As

Bernstein (1994) notes, graphic novels "are increasingly offering a sophisticated and often literary world The comic format allows the artist to combine the emotional subtlety of a facial expression, for instance, with the dramatic power of dialogue. It also dovetails neatly with the visual sensibilities of an audience raised on small pictures flickering on a TV screen" (p. 57).

For Teachers and Media Specialists Interested in Graphic Novels

For educators who want to know more about the medium of the graphic novel and its potential with adolescent audiences, following are five useful resources:

- 1) *Graphic Novels: A Bibliographic Guide to Book-Length Comics* by D. Aviva Rothschild. Libraries Unlimited, 1995. Although somewhat dated, this book offers plot

and critical comments for 414 books and is a good place to start.

- 2) *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative* by Will Eisner. Tamarac, Florida: Poorhouse Press, 1996. Eisner is himself

one of the great comic artists and with plenty of examples, he here explains how text, image, and reader combine for visual storytelling. Topics include symbolism, dialogue, and the influence of film on reading comics.

- 3) *Understanding Comics* by Scott McCloud. New York: HarperPerennial, 1994. This is a graphic novel that examines the inner workings of comics, everything from how sequencing is created to the use of color, establishing the artistic character of the comic format.

- 4) *Comics, Comix, and Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art* by Roger Sabin. New York: Phaidon Press, 1996. This large and beautifully illustrated volume traces comic art from British broadsheets through Superman and the Golden Age of American Comics to the underground comics ("comix") of the 1960's and today's international graphic novels.

- 5) *The 101 Best Graphic Novels* by Stephen Weiner. New York: Nantier Beall Minoustchine (NBM), 2001. This slim volume offers the best place to begin for anyone interested. Besides recommendations (rated for children, 12 and up, and adults only), Weiner offers a short history of the genre and additional references.

Many resources exist online, of course, and there is *The Comics Journal* which offers interviews, reviews, and so on. The graphic novel is growing in popularity and influence, more titles are being published, and it may well serve as an inducement to read for many adolescents today. Educators will be intrigued, too. Check it out!

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Gretchen Schwarz is an Associate Professor in the School of Curriculum and Educational Leadership at Oklahoma State University.

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Sustained Silent Reading and Young Adult Short Stories for High School Classes

Terry L. Jensen and Valarie S. Jensen

K—What We KNOW.

The Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading program (USSR) was first proposed by Lyman Hunt at the University of Vermont in the 1960's, and by the 1970's it was being implemented in the public schools system. Four decades later one can find it referenced by many different names: High Intensity Practice (HIP), Motivation in Middle Schools (MIMS), Free Voluntary Reading (FVR), Positive Outcomes While Enjoying Reading (POWER), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), but perhaps the most commonly used name is Sustained Silent Reading (SSR).

The basic premise of allowing SSR time is that students who read often will read better. Classrooms should allow every possible opportunity for this activity to take place. As Pilgreen states in *The SSR Handbook: How to Organize and Manage a Sustained Silent Reading Program*, "If students are to be fully proficient readers, . . . they eventually need to break away from the scaffolding activities that support

them in their roles as emergent readers and begin to read some materials independently" (in Anderson 1). Since its introduction, SSR has been implemented at all grade levels and according to research has been highly effective in the improvement of reading skills and the acquisition of vocabulary, not to mention the development of a positive attitude in students toward reading.

In their article "Evaluating Sustained Silent Reading in the Reading Classes," Chow and Chou list what they call "Key Elements to Successful SSR" (Chow 3). Some are that: (1) The teacher must be a role model—not just to model silent reading, but to model the enjoyment of reading as well; (2) SSR must be a long-term project—SSR appears most effective if used over a period of at least 6 months; (3) Materials must be available on a wide range of topics and readability—the importance of a wide variety is to ensure that each student will find a book that will be of interest to him/her; and (4) SSR must involve ownership and communities of readers—students need to be able to feel ownership of the reading material (Chow 3-4).

It was with these key elements in mind that we, as high school language arts teachers, convinced our faculty to implement a version of SSR, the DEAR program, throughout our school. On Thursdays at the appointed moment all activity stops, and everyone throughout the school picks up a book,

and all read. To extend this activity, the Language Arts teachers conduct SSR in their individual classes on Fridays. However, the implementation was not without snags. One major problem occurred in the school library. Students, who were unaccustomed to having a "reading" book in their possession, would make a quick trip to the library between classes. They would grab a book from the shelf, so they would have one on hand for the DEAR period and SSR. Then, when the moment passed, they would return the book to the library, overloading the staff at the circulation desk. Obviously, the students

weren't reading the books over long periods. Rather, they were just looking for something to fill the time. The library staff threatened mutiny. We suggested that reading material be provided that was more suited to the time allotted, and, in an effort to bring peace, the language arts department filed for and was awarded a grant, so that each language arts teacher could purchase a class

The teachers needed a selection of books that would catch the reluctant readers' attention and hook them on reading. A wide variety of topics and readability was needed. The solution appeared to be young adult short story anthologies.

library.

The majority of the students who failed to bring a pre-selected book to class were the reluctant readers. The teachers needed a selection of books that would catch the reluctant readers' attention and hook them on reading. A wide variety of topics and readability was needed. The solution appeared to be young adult short story anthologies.

W—What we WANTED to Know

Young adult short story anthologies would allow for a wide range of topics and readability levels for the least amount of money, but would they hook the reluctant reader and help make SSR a success? We gathered a collection of short story anthologies (See Appendix A) and made it available in the classroom. Those students who failed to bring a book to class were required to select a book from the classroom collection. At the end of the SSR period the student was then required to complete a "short story evaluation form" (Appendix B), regarding the reading experience for that period. At first, two team-taught ninth grade English classes with a large population of mainstreamed resource students were selected to participate. Then the same DEAR program expectation was extended to the two ninth grade honors classes and the two regular ninth grade English classes.

L—What we LEARNED

What the Honors Students Taught Us

In order to get feedback from the honor students, we had to solicit volunteers. Honor students rarely “forgot” to bring a reading book to class. The volunteers gladly filled out the evaluation form, and most of their comments extended to the back of the form. With few exceptions, the honor students finished the reading of the short story in the appointed time period and stated that they would go back and finish the story, had they not been able to finish it during the period. However, if given the choice to read a novel or a short story during the reading time, the majority of honor students stated they would rather read a novel during the SSR period than a short story. Many of them stated they liked the long-term commitment of a novel.

“I generally read novels because if it’s a good book I want it to go on” (Emma).

“I enjoy being immersed in a world that can only be in a novel. Short stories are just too short” (Parley).

“I would rather read a novel so I can have something to come back to read” (William).

“I really enjoy stories that have a lot of development and things happen. I also like long books. To me they are more interesting” (Brigham).

Paul, another honor student, checked that he would rather read short stories during SSR. He stated that short stories are, “more interesting, a book is long, and you read for long periods of time, a short story, you can usually finish.”

What the Regular and Team-Taught Ninth Graders Taught Us

In the hopes of inspiring some to be more responsible and bring self-selected books, the rule became that if one did not bring a book to class for reading, he / she was required to select from the short story collection available. It was a small struggle in the beginning, but attitudes changed. These students filled out the form with short answers, but the majority of them completed the short story during SSR. Most who did not finish stated they would go back to complete the story. Some were not enjoying the story they were reading and stated they would rather pick a different story to finish. Most stated that they would rather read a short story over a novel during SSR. All seemed to have a different reason for it:

“I like to read short stories during this time because it’s something you can finish” (Samuel).

“I like to read short stories because they are short and you can read them fast so you don’t get board [sic] with them” (Wilford).

“I get more than one story that way. I can enjoy the difference in all of them” (Lucy).

“I like them because they are funny” (David).

“Because I could finish a story in about 30 minutes and I will not forget parts of the story” (Oscar).

The vote was split on whether the short story would lead them to reading a novel by the same author. Many were just not interested in reading a longer work, and would not like to read a novel during SSR or any other time. These students seem to think that reading is drudgery, and the commitment required to read a longer work is overwhelming to them. The commitment, up to this point, has been a deterrent to their reading and, therefore, has interfered with the progress these students could have made in this area. By introducing them to the idea of using a short story during SSR, teachers have opened a door for these students, and the possibilities for growth have been greatly increased.

What the Faculty Members Teachers Observed

Once students adjusted to the program, the reluctant readers seemed to gain some success from SSR. The students, who usually had been caught just staring off into space during reading time, actually read and completed a short story. The real success was that they enjoyed it. Students, who at one time would ask if they could work on homework from another class during SSR, now asked to borrow a short story collection, knowing that they can find something they might enjoy and be able to finish it. The whining from students and teachers was greatly diminished, as both were experiencing more success and enjoyment in SSR. The teachers who were involved in this pilot program felt very excited about SSR and its possibilities, and they discovered that a collection of short story anthologies in the classroom proved to be a great way to motivate reluctant readers. Most of the teachers indicated that they would continue to expand the young adult short story libraries within their classrooms, as well as adding enriching magazines, so that students could continue to experience success in their reading, as well as growth and progress in their skills and strategies as readers. Ultimately, we believe that young adults who enjoy reading will become adults who enjoy reading, and that adults who enjoy reading will be lifetime learners, thus creating a more literate society.

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APPENDIX B: Short Story Evaluation

Student Name _____ Class Period _____

Title of Book _____

Title of Short Story _____

Author of Short Story _____

1. Were you able to completely read the short story you selected during the sustained silent reading time?

- Yes No

2. If you were unable to finish the reading, will you come back to this story and finish it at a later date?

- Yes No

3. Is this a story you would recommend to others?

- Yes No

Why? _____

4. During sustained silent reading time from which type of book would you rather read?

- Novel Collection of Short Stories Other

Please explain (Write on back for more space)

5. Now that you have read a short story by this author, would you be interested in reading a novel by this same author?

- Yes No

Please explain (Write on back for more space)

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Terry Jensen earned his BA in English Education from Brigham Young University in 1988 and began teaching in secondary education in a residential treatment center. He is currently teaching 11th and 12th grade students in the alternative high school in the Jordan School District in Sandy, Utah.

Valarie Jensen earned her BA in Humanities Education from Brigham Young University in 1985. She taught English and Humanities to 11th and 12th grade students in a private school for one year and then a residential treatment center until 1991, at which time she began teaching in the Alpine School District in American Fork, Utah. She is currently teaching ninth grade English.

Dissertation Award: Literature SIG of AERA

At the April 2002 meeting in New Orleans, the members voted to establish an annual Doctoral Dissertation Award to be presented each year at the AERA Literature SIG business meeting. The purpose of the dissertation award is to recognize an outstanding recent doctoral student (Ph.D. or Ed.D.) whose research contributes significantly to an understanding of some aspect of educational research on the teaching and learning of literature. Nominations for the award should take into account the following:

1. The award is presented to the outstanding dissertation in the following areas:
 - Topic: research that foregrounds the teaching, learning, and/or writing of fiction, poetry, drama, narrative, mythology, folk tales, songs, biography, autobiography, literary criticism, religious texts, belles lettres, and/or other forms of writing characterized by imagination, creativity, and language use through which a writer conveys ideas of personal, durable, or universal importance.
 - Focus: research that focuses on teaching and learning processes, curriculum and assessment, and/or social and cultural traditions in the teaching and learning of literature.
 - Site: research that is conducted in any educational context, including any level of school site from pre-kindergarten through adult education and any site of teaching and/or learning (e.g., prison, book clubs, parent/child interactions, etc.); or research that examines the documents through which literature is taught and learned (e.g., content analysis of curriculum documents, literature anthologies, etc.). The award is not presented for literary criticism itself unless that scholarship contributes to a better understanding of the teaching and learning of literature.
2. The award consists of a plaque to be presented at the Literature SIG business meeting at the annual AERA meeting and payment of the winner's conference registration fee. At the business meeting the award winner will make a brief (15-minute) presentation of the research.
3. Those eligible for the award should have completed their doctorates (as indicated by date of graduation) within two calendar years prior to the year in which the award is presented; e.g., 2002 entrants must have completed their degrees in 2000 or 2001. Nominations may be submitted for each of the two years in which the candidate is eligible for the award.
4. The award is not restricted to Literature SIG members, members of AERA, residents of the United States, or scholars in the field of education. Award winners and their sponsoring professors will be encouraged to join AERA and the Literature SIG if they are not already members.
5. Calls for nominations will be announced in the Literature SIG newsletter and via e-mail distribution lists.
6. The nomination should adhere to the following specifications:
 - The manuscript should not exceed 50 pages including text, references, tables, and figures.
 - The paper should be written in English in a publication format.
 - Three copies of this manuscript must be delivered to the award chair with a postmark of no later than January 1 of the year in which the award is presented. Alternatively, a manuscript may be submitted as an email attachment by January 1.
 - Faxed submissions will not be considered.
 - The manuscript should be accompanied by a letter not to exceed 2 pages from the nominator summarizing the strengths and significance of the dissertation.
 - If the nominator is not a member of the nominee's dissertation committee, the nomination should be accompanied by a supporting letter from a member of the dissertation committee.
 - The application should include a cover sheet with the title of the paper, the author's name, address, phone, and email address; and the name, address, phone, and email address of the author's research advisor/mentor.
7. The award will be judged by members of an award committee appointed by the award chair, who is identified at the previous year's Literature SIG business meeting.
8. The award committee will base its decision on the following criteria:
 - Importance of the topic to advancing theory and/or practice relative to the teaching and learning of literature
 - soundness of methodology
 - organization and clarity of the presentation (regardless of genre: APA 4-part presentation, narrative, etc.)
 - quality of data
 - excellence in meeting scholarly standards
9. In the event that the committee decides that none of the submitted dissertations should be recognized, no award may be given that year.

Nominations for the award should be sent to:

Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, Ed.D.
Chair, AERA Literature SIG Doctoral Dissertation Award
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PROFESSIONAL CONNECTION

Column Editor Kathleen M. Carico

Professional Journal Articles and the Novels they Illuminate: A Resource for YAL Courses

Kathleen M. Carico

Articles related to young adult literature are currently many in number and wide in the range of topics they cover. They can be used by teachers in a number of ways: to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for a novel; to consider specific issues related to novel; to learn about strategies for teaching; to connect literary theory and the classroom. For someone teaching a young adult literature methods on the college or university level, it is entirely possible to construct a syllabus from the body of articles in *The ALAN Review* alone, and there are many other journals that focus on young adult literature, as well. For this column, I selected journal articles that feature young adult novels and, in the commentary, cover a topic of importance in the teaching of adolescent literature: theory, social issues, history, exposition, practice. The column is divided by the novels under consideration, and each segment contains a summary of the novel, a summary of the accompanying article, as well as information about the journal and the article topics.

Park's Quest, by Katherine Paterson

This is the story of Parkington Waddell Broughton the Fifth (AKA Park), whose father died in Vietnam when he was three months old. While Park was growing up, his mother talked very little about his father, and when Park would inquire, she relied on the cliched response, "You're too young to understand." When Park reaches adolescence, and it becomes clear that he is still "too young to understand," he begins to take his quest for information matters into his own hands. When he hears about the dedication ceremony for the Vietnam Memorial, and learning his mother will not attend or take him, he goes himself. The experience of touching his father's name etched on the Wall only spurs him on to learn more about his father. Buoyed by remembrances of the Arthurian legends that captured his imagination at school, his journey begins with a trip to his father's home in southwest Virginia. The rest of the book tells the tale of his personal quest and its unforeseen conclusion.

Article: "Validating the Personal in Katherine Paterson's *Park's Quest*," by Robert Lockhart. *The ALAN Review* (See inside front cover of this issue for information.) (Full citations are provided in the reference list at the end of this column.)"

Topics: A transactional theory of reading; pedagogical implications

Summary: Robert Lockhart's article provides readers with an excellent foundation for understanding a transactional

theory of reading. Lockhart does this by first explicating the theory and then by illustrating it with *Park's Quest*. His is the first article I assign in my young adult literature methods class, and my goal of teaching pre-service teachers the nature and importance of transactional reading is made attainable through the description of Lockhart's own powerful transaction with the novel.

That *Park's Quest* would evoke a very personal response from Lockhart seems inevitable because his experiences so closely mirror Park's. Lockhart describes the day he and his mother watched the Marine Corps officers approach their house to tell them his father had been killed in Vietnam. And the feelings Park later experienced as he searched for information about his father were similar to Lockhart's as he looked through his mother's memorabilia for clues about his father's life. He and Park shared the same anger at their loss and confusion at the questions surrounding it. Most poignant is the double vision of Lockhart and Park, as Lockhart describes his reaction when he read about Park's trip to the Vietnam Memorial: "So when Park reached out to touch the wall, I was not dispassionately reading the story of someone to whom I could not relate. ... As Park reached out and touch the black wall, my heart raced because my hand, too, was reaching out" (p. 12).

Lockhart's story deeply affects my students and me when we read and discuss it, but the point he makes with the story is no less powerful in its context: "When we enter the literary discussion of the novel as human beings, we can understand the personal nature of the event of reading" (p. 14). Without an understanding of the personal nature of reading, transactional theory cannot be appreciated, and a pedagogy informed by it impossible. If the meaning of literature is even in some part dependent on the reader, then our teaching will reflect the reader's importance. From that foundation, we can lead students to a deeper, more meaningful experience with literature.

I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This, by Jacqueline Woodson

Marie is the young adolescent narrator in this story of her brief but momentous friendship with Lena, a poor White classmate who is new to Marie's predominantly Black 8th grade class at Chauncey Middle School. At first seemingly opposite in ways beyond the color of their skin, the two girls form a bond based initially on the fact that neither of them has a mother living with them: Lena's died from breast cancer; Marie's left her and her father two years ago in what

was clearly a state of depression and out of a desperate need, as her mother would say, to breathe. The death of Lena's mother put Lena at the mercy of her father, who began to abuse her sexually. When Marie's mother left, her father retreated into his grief and, though it is clear he still loves Marie and cares for her financial and physical needs, he distances himself emotionally from her, no longer hugging and kissing her as he did when she was a younger child. Thus, both girls suffer, not only from the loss of their mothers, but from the hurt and confusion caused by their fathers as well. Gradually, the friendship between Marie and Lena deepens as they get to know each other and begin to offer each other emotional support.

The numerous personal and social issues in the book come together convincingly through the story of the friendship. First there is the poverty that disadvantages Lena, and the wealth that privileges Marie and makes it difficult initially for her to see past Lena's outward appearance. Second, negativity toward interracial relationships characterize both fathers' attitudes as well as the attitudes of many in the student body of Chauncey Middle School. Third, the challenges of adolescence are significant, as both girls must navigate motherless through the changes, with Lena's problems exacerbated by the abuse. Finally, when Lena's father begins his assault on her younger sister, Lena is forced to make a decision that will forever change her life and her friendship with Marie.

Article: "Who's Protecting Whom? *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, A Case in Point in Confronting Self-censorship in the Choice of Young Adult Literature," by Freedman and Johnson in *The Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, a publication of the International Reading Association.

Topics: Censorship and the importance of developing school or district policies; ideas for handling discussions of controversial issues; the difference between self-censorship and selection; the richness of conversation that is possible when students are allowed to spend time responding to literature.

Summary: This article focuses on the outcomes of a study of teachers' and students' responses to *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*. 15 in-service middle school teachers and 11 middle school girls discussed the book in terms of its attention to racism, sexual abuse, and friendship. Their responses revealed that the study raised awareness of the deeper issues of the novel. For example, the participants discussed the significance of Marie's decision to act independently from her peer group by being Lena's friend. Independence was also a characteristic they ascribed to Lena and one they admired. In another example, both groups discussed the issue of sexual abuse, even while seemingly reluctant to name it as "sexual," instead describing it as "the problem Lena had" or "improper attention." What may have been most important in this conversation, however, was the discovery that neither group was confident that they knew how to handle this kind of topic in their own school environments.

Only one student participant referred to controversy in relation to the book, but it was used to describe the issues affecting Chauncey, Ohio, not to describe a potential problem created by the use of the book in schools. However, though the teacher participants saw the importance of the issues the book raises—controversial and otherwise, nearly all of them admitted their unwillingness to use the book in

the classroom. The authors describe this paradox:

"It is distressing that all of the teachers (with one exception) were willing to self-censor this book when it is the controversy in it that makes it a powerful tool to equip young adolescents with the kinds of understandings and critical thinking that allow the "Lenas" in our classrooms to speak up. Through reading and discussing this book, the teachers and students could truly begin to grapple with solutions to the problems of racism, classism, and abuse of various kinds that currently plague U.S. society" (p. 364-365).

Their observation brings us to the major focus of the article: teachers' self-censorship and the resulting withholding of educative experiences for the students through reading and responding to literature such as *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*. Having illustrated the benefits found in discussing weighty issues through samples of the participants' responses, the authors make their case against censorship—and self-censorship in particular. While censorship is carried out by outside forces, and, though affected by outside forces surely, self-censorship is a decision the teacher makes herself. And while the issue is complex, the authors offer compelling reasons to tackle it again.

The Giver, by Lois Lowry

In this now-classic novel, author Lois Lowry details a utopian society through the eyes of Jonas, an eleven-year-old boy on the verge of adolescence. In this particular society, becoming twelve means Jonas will leave his childhood behind at the Ceremony of Twelve and embark on specialized training, as will the other "twelves" in his community. This Ceremony, involving a Ceremony of One, a Ceremony of Two, and so on, is attended by all in the community, and moves each child below the age of 12 into the next stage of life, with its accompanying duties and privileges, all uniform, and all to be observed assiduously. In the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas is assigned to be the next Receiver of Memory, and his training will reveal to him that life he had known in his community, an experience he believed to be universal, was a carefully constructed and scrupulously controlled world, beyond which lay an Elsewhere, where life was very different.

The current Receiver, who with Jonas' selection is now referred to as The Giver, shows Jonas these differences through the physical transmission of Memory. As The Giver lays his hands on Jonas, memories accumulated from the world before Sameness—the condition of uniformity and conformity that characterizes Jonas' community—reveal to him color, climate changes such as snow and heat, live animals rather than artistic representations of them, and the personal experiences absent from his former life: love, pain, and choice. As time goes on, Jonas continues to "see beyond," not just beyond the gray sameness of his community to a colorful world of difference, but beyond the seemingly benevolent and fair practices of his community. With a life and death struggle looming, Jonas and The Giver reach a decision that will put Jonas at great risk and will alter the course of the future for each of them and for the entire community.

Article: "Learning to 'See Beyond': Sixth-grade Students' Artistic Perceptions of *The Giver*," by Jessica Whitelaw and Shelby Wolf, *The New Advocate: For Those Involved with Young People and their Literature*, published by Christopher Gordon.

Topics: Aesthetic responses to literature; processes involved in responding through the visual arts; comprehension, interpretation

Summary: This article focuses on a 6th grade teacher's attempts to enhance the reading experiences for her students through aesthetic responses to literature. The authors begin with a helpful theoretical background in a section entitled, "Literary Interpretation and the Visual Arts." Drawing on the works of Eliot Eisner, Jeffrey Wilhelm, Kathy Short, Jerome Harste, Patricia Enciso, and others, they outline a process for using visual arts in reader response. The process begins with *envisioning*, or "calling on [the] bank of stored visual imagery in order to understand the words on the page" (p. 58). The second component is "composing," which, in the context of producing an aesthetic response, means putting the images on paper. The third component is interpretation, in this case, as a group or in small groups, using the artistic representations to inspire and guide a discussion of the novel.

In the second half of the article, the authors share Whitelaw's process of teaching aesthetic responses to her sixth grade class. The segments in this half are artfully framed (as befitting an article on aesthetic response) with *The Giver*. Each begins with a title and a quote which express a theme both of the novel and of the work the students will be asked to do. For example, the first section is entitled "Envisioning Utopia," named after a major theme of the novel, and the excerpted dialogue centers on The Giver's attempts to educate Jonas about his world and community. From there, the authors describe strategies to help the students explore the concept of utopia, from brainstorming to the creation of a visual to illustrate their explorations and to use as prompts for composition and discussion throughout the rest of the unit.

As a result of this unit, the students demonstrated a deeper understanding of the novel, an understanding created in a social process that encourages dialogue and exploration:

"...[T]he arts slowed them down, and in this decrease in pace they listened to, argued, and consulted with one another. In addition, by drawing attention to the elements of art, students were able to more ably imagine the possibilities for visual responses. In this way, the group's own Capacity to See Beyond was extended and enhanced" (p. 67).

Speak, by Laurie Halse Anderson

This novel deals with the subject of rape and recovery from it. As the title indicates, this novel is also about voice, and although Melinda is the narrator who gives voice to her story, this ability to speak about her ordeal comes only after a dark year of struggle to survive the trauma of rape.

The novel begins with the onset of Melinda's ninth grade year, and it becomes clear quickly that something has happened to her. Exactly what that is, the reader does not know until halfway through the book. What we do know is that in the middle of a summertime drinking party—the first one of its kind Melinda has attended—she, inexplicably, it seems, calls the police, who naturally come, raid the party and arrest a teenager. Thus she begins her year ostracized from her former middle school friends and carrying a secret that she cannot tell.

The book is divided into sections representing each of the four marking periods in a school year. As I read *Speak*, I was reminded of Matt Groening's cartoon collection, *School*

is Hell (1987). The majority of the cartoons focus on ineffective schools, the elements of which are vivid in one called, "High School: The 2nd Deepest Pit in Hell" (Junior High being the first): meaningless rhetoric; unhappy, unfulfilled teachers; empty activities; and irrelevant classes. These things are what Melinda sees as she struggles to survive the shock and confusion of her ordeal, and she begins to withdraw. As she becomes less and less involved and increasingly less visible in classes, the close of each marking period shows a steady drop in her grades. And as she finds no true friends in whom she can confide, and as the adults in her life seem to miscue at every encounter with her or stay consumed with their own needs, she begins to speak less and less as well.

Her sole emotional outlet and opportunity for at least intermittent success is art class, and the one person who presents an opportunity for making meaning and sense out of her life is the art teacher, Mr. Freeman. He stands out in the group of teachers portrayed in this book, not because of his positive attitude—he, too, is discouraged and frustrated—and not because of his appealing good looks and personality. Mr. Freeman stands out because he believes in the power of art, as he shares on the first day of school in what will be one of many frequent rants: "If you don't learn art now, you will never learn to breathe!!!" (p. 11). And it is largely through a year-long project he creates that Melinda is able to express the feelings she cannot speak out loud to anyone.

The novel is a look at high school from the perspective of a teen in trouble, and it is a look at the teen herself. It is not a pretty picture, but the author manages, partly through Melinda's witty commentary, to bring humor to what is a desperate situation. And Anderson does it without sacrificing any of the honesty of that situation. *Speak* is a powerful novel for teens as well as for teachers, guidance counselors, principals, parents.

Article: "Between Voice and Voicelessness: Transacting Silence in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*," by Elaine J. O'Quinn, *The ALAN Review*.

Topics: The power of story; expectations for girls and women; agency

Summary: In a thorough analysis, author Elaine O'Quinn offers a feminist interpretation of *Speak* as she relates the messages of agency she uncovered in Melinda's story. Melinda's silence, though imposed by outside forces, eventually becomes a means to recover, and, in many ways, to begin life anew.

"...Melinda, by story's end, refuses the frequently implied directive which says women must silently adjust their behavior rather than strengthen their presence to fit the crisis of experience" p. 55.

Melinda had to invoke silence in order to "strengthen her presence." Appropriating silence, which for centuries has connoted powerlessness and acquiescence, is one more choice women can make, O'Quinn suggests. And though for women in Melinda's circumstances, there is always the possibility that their enforced silence will be lethal, or, at the very least, damaging emotionally, O'Quinn's analysis shows how it can also be redemptive. The difference, according to O'Quinn, is "between being silent and being silenced" (p. 54), and it is clear in *Speak* that Melinda's experience could have easily resulted in her being silenced. Instead, Melinda ultimately listens not to the voices around her that attempt alternately to shame, ridicule and patronize her, but to her own inner voice. And she struggles to hear that voice as she moves

alone through painful encounters with friends, teachers, and family, who are ignorant of the truth of her circumstances. In the light of those circumstances, however, the folly and patent injustice of their demands that she live by social prescriptions for feminine behavior are made all the more prominent to the reader. Witnessing the power of this oppression, it is frighteningly clear that Melinda's was a very close call. O'Quinn's article and the powerful book she analyzes make it clear how much is at stake for our children and students.

Night, by Elie Wiesel

This is the now famous and tragic account of Wiesel's imprisonment in Auschwitz and Birkenau from 1944 until his liberation in 1945. As Hungarian Jews, Wiesel's family were forced into a ghetto in their hometown of Sighet and later transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he and his father remained together until their transfer to Buchenwald. While in Sighet, Elie had been a very religious, observant Jew, but the experiences he encountered in the ghetto and in the camps gradually rob him of his faith. His father's death in Buchenwald left him alone with no more will to live, and if liberation had not occurred soon after, it is doubtful that Elie would have survived.

His is a small volume—in fact, many students choose to read it because it is thin—but it is a very difficult one to read because of the darkness of the deeds that other humans inflicted on Elie and his fellow sufferers in the camps. In the article summarized below, Alexander Hernandez (2001) responds the question so often asked about this and other novels dealing with horrific acts of human oppression: Why teach this to young people?

They need to understand that the seeds of prejudice and racism still lie just below our thin veneer of civilization, that racism and prejudice know neither color nor gender, and that acts of genocide are still being committed today, more than fifty years after the defeat of Nazi Germany. (p. 59)

Article: "Telling the Tale: Sharing Elie Wiesel's *Night* with Middle School Readers," by Alexander Hernandez, *English Journal*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English.

Topics: teaching an historical novel, professional development

Summary: Author Alexander Hernandez describes a nine-week unit on issues related to tolerance and prejudice, in which *Night* is central. This article is valuable for pre-service teachers because of the details Hernandez provides about the structure of his unit plan. Due to the dark and troubling issues of the Holocaust and of *Night* itself, it is important to pay special attention to how the unit is approached and how students are led through it. Hernandez's introductory readings on the themes students will encounter and his focus on the events leading up to the Holocaust provide an important context for what is to follow. For example, his study contrasting the Nuremberg Laws to the Bill of Rights could be a powerful way for American students to both grasp the terrible loss of freedom the Jewish people endured before the war began in earnest and gain a new appreciation for their own freedoms and responsibilities. His journal assignments are carefully chosen to move his students together toward an in-depth exploration of the books' topics and structure: loss of faith, the issue of "truth," binary oppositions, figurative language and symbolism, and the role of the narrator (p. 57). The unit ends as students gather stories of intoler-

ance from other historical eras and from the present to share and discuss.

As helpful as the unit summary is, the more striking part of the article is the story of the author's journey to "the gates of hell" (p. 55), as he describes his trip to Birkenau with a group of teachers studying the Holocaust. Reading about the effects of his trip on his teaching allows pre-service teachers to consider the value of outside experiences as a way to enhance teaching. The translation of Hernandez's experiences to his classroom, what he sees as bearing witness in the way that Wiesel exhorts, sets the study of *Night* in a context a bit closer to reality than is often possible in schools.

Spite Fences, by Trudy Krisher

It is 1960, and thirteen year old Maggie Pugh lives as imaginatively as she can in an oppressive home environment and in a Georgia community sharply divided between the rich and the poor, between White and Black. At home, her mother continually berates her soft-hearted salesman father for what she sees as the poor business skills that keep them on the edge of poverty. She is verbally and physically abusive to Maggie, while fawning over Maggie's beautiful sister Gardenia, in whom her hopes and ambitions rest. The next door neighbors, the Boggs family, are coarse and racist, the vilest of whom appears to be the son Virgil, an increasing threat to Maggie's safety. There are a few bright spots in Maggie's life: the love of her father and Gardenia; her friendship with Pert Wilson and with Zeke, the black peddler in town; and her camera, traded to her by Zeke and through which she is learning to see the world.

Knowing that Maggie is steady and mature beyond her years, Zeke gets her a job cleaning house and making deliveries for her employer to the post office, to the Black minister in town, and sometimes to Zeke. Maggie doesn't immediately realize that her deliveries are part of an information pipeline for a growing civil rights campaign in her town, until she discovers that her employer is himself Black and at the center of the movement. Meanwhile, the Boggs continue to be a thorn in the side of the Pugh family, and when Maggie narrowly escapes being raped by Virgil, Mama has the family erect a tall wooden fence between the two properties. What Maggie understands is Mama's decision to fence out the Boggs comes out of a reservoir of spite and hatred rather than concern for Maggie. Mama's bitterness grows, and when she eventually learns that Maggie has been working for a Black man, her anger boils over and Maggie knows she must leave or suffer severely at Mama's hands. Tension is also increasing among the townspeople, and soon Maggie finds herself right in the middle of the conflict.

Article: "Teaching Social Justice through Young Adult Literature," by Jacqueline N. Glasgow, *The English Journal*.

Topics: Social justice, integrating technology into literature study, audience

Summary: In this article Glasgow uses social identity theory to provide a framework for a unit addressing oppression in society and young adult literature. Glasgow considers the ways oppression impacts the development of adolescents in the novels through a series of questions about the characters, e.g., What is the naive stage? Is there evidence of acceptance of the dominant values? What events trigger resistance to the identity embedded in the dominant culture? (p. 57). During the unit, her university students,

paired with local high school students, were to choose from a list of nearly 40 books featuring some form of oppression (see p. 55), and correspond through e-mail about the novels chapter by chapter. In addition, they each were to develop Power Point presentations on the social justice issues in the novel, with the option of using excerpts from their best exchange related to social justice issues, an original metaphor to illustrate and explain, an illustrated quote from the novel, or some other device to interpret the issues in the novel.

Although a number of novels were included in her unit, Glasgow focuses on *Spite Fences* to illustrate her students' and their cyber-pals' responses to the assignments. These samples show the important conversations between the pals as well as a deep understanding of the racism, abuse, and hope that co-exist in Maggie's life. The article also shows how electronic media as simple as e-mail and Power Point (which is becoming more and more versatile as a multi-media tool) can be effective learning tools. In addition, the list of questions to determine the social identity development of the young adult protagonists is an excellent framework for understanding oppression as well as agency.

Plain City, by Virginia Hamilton

Plain City's main character is an adolescent with a burning desire to know her father. Making up an implausible fantasy that he is missing in Vietnam when the war ended five years before she was born, Buhlaire Sims is trying to fill in the gaps in a life that feels incomplete. Even though she is supported by the love of her aunts with whom she and her mother live, by her extended family in the town, and by the principal of her school, a man Buhlaire once declared was her father, she feels like a misfit. Part of the reason lies in her appearance. Though African American, her light skin and eyes and the honey-orange colored Rasta hair that frames her face make her feel she stands out from the other black students and teachers in her school. Her home in the projects makes her even more self-conscious, and, even worse, her mother's job as a singer and fan-dancer in a local club puts her clearly, she fears, in a lower class of people. As she searches for her father, she searches for herself and her place in the world, and the inner dialogue she carries out reveals both her personality and her struggle.

Article: "Remembering, Knowing, and Imagining: Writing under the Cold Eye of Toodie, the Witch Lady, My Muse," by Virginia Hamilton, *SIGNAL (Special Interest Group - a Network on Adolescent Literature)*, published by the International Reading Association.

Topics: a writer's process; life reflected in fiction

Summary: I include this article, not simply because it refers to *Plain City*, but because it represents an important genre for our students to encounter: author commentary. In *SIGNAL*, as in *The ALAN Review*, authors' speeches or interviews with them are often featured, and through them, we may get a better understanding of their works. (Hamilton's article was taken from a speech delivered at the IRA Young Adult Literature Institute in April, 2000.) However, what may be equally valuable is the glimpse we are afforded of a writer's process, which can serve as a partial demystification of the writer and writing, for us and for our students. Thus, we are given a view of writing as work done by real flesh and blood creatures who, as Hamilton declares in this article, simply from what they know. Hamilton states that after publishing her twentieth book, "...I looked back

and discovered that every novel of mine has a core of true happening." Additionally, we can discover the work of the muse in an writer's life. Hamilton named her muse "Toodie":

"Toodie lives. She is where I come from, what I was, how hard it was, how I learned, what I never had time to figure out, what I loved and hated. Toodie, the shadowy herstory of my personal bloodline and the skinny of my being and becoming. Toodie is generations, the past, present and future, pursuing, prowling, snooping, always tracking me, helping me figure out how it all works" (p. 10).

Thus, according to Hamilton even a muse comes partly from what and who a writer is and knows.

I also include the article as a tribute to Virginia Hamilton, who died last year. Her words, whether in speeches or in one of her numerous award-winning books, deserve to be remembered and read.

Concluding Remarks

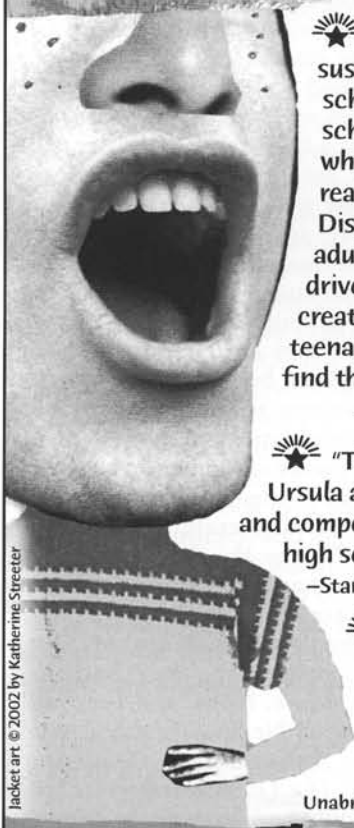
Matters of theory and pedagogy are often made salient when set in the context of a novel that speaks to the students. Reciprocally, the novel that heretofore may not have seemed particularly special often takes on new relevance when supplemented with an article that illuminates in it some way. I've touched on only a few articles in this column. There are hundreds more, many in other fine international, national, and state journals, just waiting to be discovered!

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THE PUBLISHERS' CONNECTION

Column Editor M. Jerry Weiss

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M. Jerry Weiss

Drama and Audiobooks

As a high school teacher of English and teacher at the college/university level, I have often used audiovisual materials to show students the relationships between print and media. (I still believe in Marshall McLuhan. I can thank NCTE for the indoctrination.) Even though times have changed, I know that the use of good media, such as the *BFA American Folklore Series*, and well performed audiobooks can enhance teaching and motivate students to read and write critically and more creatively.

Random House Audiobooks deserves special recognition. They have produced unabridged versions of some of this year's prize-winning books:

A Single Shard, 2002 Newbery Medal novel by Linda Sue Park, read by Graeme Malcolm;

The Land, 2002 Coretta Scott King Award novel by Mildred Taylor, read by Ruben Santiago-Hudson;

True Believer, 2001 National Book Award novel by Virginia Euwer Wolff, read by Heather Allicia Simms;

The Golden Compass, *The Subtle Knife*, *The Amber Spy Glass*, novels by Philip Pullman, performed by the author and a full cast in wonderful dramatic versions.

I feel assured that playing any of these tapes while students listen will motivate students to explore the books. It's also a great way to have students discuss the talents necessary for being effective storytellers. I would have no qualms in having students sign up to become storytellers themselves. They might begin by reading stories for younger readers, no abridging allowed. If some want to attempt a dramatization for *See You Later, Gladiator* by Jon Scieszka, they can get on the Website for Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, <http://www.chucklebait.com/>, and request information about the script that Jon has adapted on this funderful Time Warp Trio adventure. Students should feel free to select any books they want to read or dramatize. The Tower High School adventures created through the poetry of Mel Glenn are also good for readers' theater. Hooray for a little drama in the classroom.

I have found the Drama Book Shop, 250 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018, to be my most valuable source for any materials on any phase of the performing arts. Its toll free number is 1-800-322-0595, and its Web address is www.dramabookshop.com. It is a valuable resource; I have found copies of plays I have wanted to use as part of various themes. How many recent plays have you used recently?

Some Random Thoughts

Not too long ago I was asked to be a visiting professor to teach a course on young adult literature to students who were getting a Masters Degree in Teaching. These were students who had degrees in English as undergraduates and had since decided they wanted to become teachers. They matriculated in this special program which would lead to certification and also give them a master's degree. This program did require student teaching.

The students, for the most part, were young and bright. They had undergraduate degrees from a number of different colleges and universities. None had had any experience with young adult literature. Some even assured me they would never use young adult literature since they were going to become teachers of honor classes in various senior high schools, and therefore had little use for these materials. A couple thought they might wind up in middle schools. None of these students was thinking seriously about the possibility of getting jobs in urban areas where the reading interests and abilities are quite diverse. I still required them to read twenty-five books and wouldn't relinquish any of the oral and written assignments I had made.

Several students challenged me with this comment: "If these books are so important, why didn't our undergraduate professors mention them or advise us to take a course in young adult literature?" I replied that I didn't have an answer. Maybe the department had no one to teach such a course or anyone who had a particular interest in such books. How are we to answer?

I should add that most of these students admitted that the only course that they had in dramatic literature was Shakespeare. None, and I repeat NONE, had ever heard of Eugene O'Neill. A few had read Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. "If we wanted to read plays, we would have majored in drama, not English." I questioned how they could compartmentalize literature. We know we study literature by various periods in history, and the arts often reflect on the ideas and creativity of that period. Wouldn't it be important to know about the contributions of dramatists, as well as the novelists and poets, in the 20th century? Aren't there young adult books that reflect the various times of this past century? See Don Gallo's excellent anthology, *Time Capsule: Short Stories about Teenagers Throughout the Twentieth Century*. Each author has taken a different decade as the setting for the story. (For young adult

literature that focuses on the future, please see Michael Cart's anthology, *Tomorrowland: 10 Stories about the Future*).

And I Thought, "Where or When or Once Again"

Now let's look at one more scene. It was a meeting of a state affiliate of the NCTE. About 60 people attended a late afternoon, early evening session, highlighted by a speaker talking on the current state assessment tests and what techniques might be helpful in preparing students for such exams. Four workshops followed, and I was invited to speak on what's happening in young adult literature. While most of the participants in this workshop were interested in hearing my ideas about thematic teaching and using a mixture of classics with young adult literature, there were two young women, both in their 30's, who assured me that I was not responsible in recommending books by such writers as Robert Cormier, Chris Crutcher, Avi, Mildred Taylor, Walter Dean Myers, Suzanne Fisher Staples, Paul Zindel, among others. They asked me if I think such authors as these should replace Thomas Hardy, and that *Fade* or *Stotan!* should replace *The Return of the Native*. They continued by asking, "How can you compare the rich use of language one gets through the study of the classics?" I assured the women that I was not against the classics. I was suggesting literature that could be used with the classics. As it turned out, their argument for "the rich language" made me wonder if their English classes were places for vocabulary development. I tried to get them to see the variety of historical fiction available which could enhance vocabulary as any novel could. No such luck. Other teachers tried to make suggestions to them, but to no avail.

So, the problem continues. I find many high school teachers reluctant to use young adult literature. They talk about "standards." I tell them that the books I'm talking about have been written by very good writers who have standards also. I go on to talk about books that deal with real social issues that seem to reach many teenagers. For example, I mention *The Counterfeit Son* by Elaine Marie Alphin, winner of an Edgar Allan Poe Award. This book is a shocker with a focus on child abuse, a serial murderer, and a plan by a boy who tries to take the place of a missing son and who has to live constantly with the fear of being found out. The boy has suffered much from physical abuse; now he is finding the genuine pain of psychological fear. The author has done a brilliant job in creating this character of Cameron Miller/Neil Lacey.

Other students could read *America* by E. R. Frank, the story of an abused child now in a psychiatric setting who fights and needs his therapist. He has set his home on fire, and a man who was abusing him died in the fire. What is a kid to do? How do you get over the shame and the pain of years of abuse?

When Jeff Comes Home, by Catherine Atkins, is the story of a teen who is kidnapped, abused, and returns home after having disappeared for two and a half years. It's not easy picking up the pieces. How does one adjust to returning to school after missing two and a half years and not wanting to talk about the humiliating experiences? In this novel there is a challenging situation involving a so-called best friend's reactions to what Jeff has gone through. Yes, it hurts.

And then there is the novel by Susan Beth Pfeffer, *The Year*

Without Michael. This story is as perplexing as the others by its conclusion. How do you resolve a story about a missing child, not knowing what happened to him? My students asked Susan, "What happened to Michael? Is he OK? Will he return?" Susan threw the questions back to them, asking, "What do you think?" But the readers were deeply touched and concerned. Isn't that the involvement one wants?

A number of years ago, I had the assignment to develop the Teacher's Guide for Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* in conjunction with the release of the movie which starred Gregory Peck. In many schools this book is used to teach about prejudice and the thwarting for justice. Now we have a few more books that provoke thought about law and order in the South. Chris Crowe's *Mississippi Trial, 1955*, shows the impact of the murder of a young black man on a young white man and his observations of a community and a grandfather he is trying to understand. Karen Hesse's *Witness* shows the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in a small Vermont town and the threats to a young Jewish girl and a young Black girl. The story is told completely through poetry, and it is interesting to see what is in the minds of those who inhabit the small town.

harvey says:

the ku klux klan are here, vi.

there's not a thing to stop them. we might as well join them.

why not?

they're not low-down, like some folks say.

they're good men,

100 percent good american men.

and they might bring us some business. (p. 24)

Suzanne Fisher Staples, in *Dangerous Skies*, opens with two thirteen-year-old young people, best friends, a Black girl, Tunes, and white boy, Buck, who discover a dead body in the water while they are out fishing. Staples draws the characters into her web of intrigue as the reader tries to figure out how justice will result in this Virginia community. Tunes knows more than she wants to admit, even to her best friend.

I (Buck) turned to Tunes. She just stood there, her arms out at near shoulder level, like she was balancing on a high wire, her breath all sucked in. "Hold on to this so's I can get a line on him. We got to tow him back to the dock."

Tunes looked at me like I was crazy. Without a word she jumped over the gunwale. The chilly water poured over the tops of her rubber fishing boots, but she seemed not to notice or mind. She stood looking at me for a long moment over the angle of her shoulder. Then without a word she turned and slogged through the marsh, knee-deep in the thick marsh grass and sucking mud. "Tunes, come back here! Where you going? Tunes, I need you!" (pp. 26-27)

While Tunes hides out, Buck continues to come to her, to try to help her. It isn't until late in the novel that the pieces come together. Tunes is a hunted person. But is she the killer or responsible for the killing? Who else knows? How will a Southern jury react to the testimony of a young black girl? Great story.

9/11/01 – One Year Later

The grim tragedy that struck these shores in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001, has led at least three publishers to publish books for young

adult readers. Each is quite different and unusually good.

Cricket Books has published *9/11: The Book of Help*, edited by Michael Cart. Here is a collection of essays, short stories, poems, and a short play by well-known authors. One entry is by Katherine Paterson, who describes the pains she went through in writing *Bridge to Terabithia*. When David, one of her sons, was in second grade, he came home from school with the news that he and Lisa Hill, his good friend, were going to make a diorama of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods*. The two children really enjoyed each other, playing games, laughing at each other's jokes, and in the spring they both turned eight. Then one night the phone rang. Lisa was dead; she was killed by lightning on a bright sunny afternoon. David seemed convinced that Lisa died because God had made a list and was going to kill of everyone he loved. Ms. Paterson explained that this was one of the toughest books for her to write. Yet, it was an important book. "I couldn't comfort my grieving child. So I would do what I could. I would write a story that would somehow help me make sense of this senseless tragedy." And she did. The book is 25 years old in 2002 and has sold millions of copies. She concludes her entry by stating:

"I believe this is the task of all the arts—of literature, music, dance, theater, the graphic arts—to sustain us with illumination, to heal us, to repair our devastated spirits. Art takes the pain and chaos of our broken world and transforms it into something that brings forth life." (p. 12)

Russell Friedman describes in detail "A Candlelight Vigil At the Fireman's Monument" at 100th Street and Riverside Park in New York City. The event took place on September 14—three days after the terror attack. Several hundred people participated, holding candles, speaking softly with friends and hugging each other. When someone began to sing "We Shall Overcome," the crowd joined in. And then they sang "God Bless America." Then the crowd moved slowly up 100th Street to the local firehouse, and when they saw the firemen, they called out, "Thank You," "God bless you," "You're all our heroes!" And then they belted out "God Bless America," singing for those who lost their lives, those who were injured, and those who were the many heroes of the day. A very moving piece.

Jim Giblin describes "Three Crises," Sept. 11, the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. How did he react to the three events and the following days? How did people help each other?

Other writers in Cart's collection include Virginia Euwer Wolff, Sonya Sones, Marion Dane Bauer, Arnold Adoff, Nikki Giovanni, Joan Bauer, Avi, Jim Murphy, Kyoki Mori, Susanne Fisher Staples, Walter Dean Myers, Margaret Mahy, Sharon Creech, Chris Raschka. This an important book for students to read and to discuss.

Scholastic has published *The New York Times A Nation Challenged: A Visual History of 9/11 and Its Aftermath—Young Readers Edition*. The photographs and text by The New York Times reporters are outstanding. The book is divided into four parts: "September 11, 2001," "The Days After," "Meeting the people, the clean-up process, the response by President Bush in launching a "war " in Afghanistan, and reactions to new threats, indicated what people are doing and can do to sustain America the Beautiful. This is a significant book of memories and reminders of what we all can do in these days of continued crises.

Harper Tempest has published *With Their Eyes*, edited by Annie Thoms, an English teacher and theater advisor at Stuyvesant High School, New York City. The school is near ground zero and had to be evacuated for several weeks. Ms. Thoms knew she was going to be responsible for the Winter Drama. "What if, I thought, we created a play in which Stuyvesant students were able to tell their own stories, and the stories of others in our community, about our experiences on September 11?"

After choosing a student director and two student producers, the group sent out word to all students that they wanted to assemble a cast that reflected the diversity of the school, 50 percent Asian, 40 percent white, and the rest made up a Black and Latino students. After the cast was chosen, students were given tape recorders, and they were to go out and interview two or three people. (They were following the dramatic techniques and performances of Anna Deavere Smith, who is well known for her performances and plays *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and other Identities*; *Twilight, Los Angeles, 1992*; and *House Arrest*.) The play focused not only on September 11th, but also covered reactions and events days, weeks, and months that followed. After recording the interviews, the students had to transcribe the interviews, word for word, with pauses, repeating of words, changing of thoughts a people spoke. The motions and gestures of the people had to be captured, also. Then the monologues had to be put into some order that built as the play went along. There was humor in the remarks, and this was a protective coating for the seriousness of the drama. Some of the real names of the students were used, and other preferred to be anonymous. The actors realized it was important they portray the individuals as realistically as possible and to make sure their performances were not caricatures. (Some special education students were interviewed also and their remarks were included in the play.) Ten actors played all of the parts, changing costumes right on stage and becoming the different characters. The play was performed on February 8 and 9, 2002, before friends from outside Stuyvesant. Several media organizations covered the performances also. The productions received standing ovations.

The text of the play includes many reactions to the tragedy, the fears and tears in the closing of the school and having to go on a split session at Brooklyn Tech, the volunteer work of many students, the remarks heard within and outside the school. What a production!

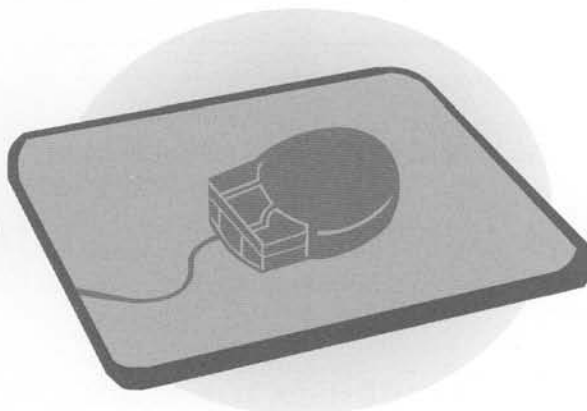
Yes, the authors of many young adult books and the publishers are producing relevant reading—and audio—materials for today's students. Here is a challenging cry to mix the best of today with the best of yesterday. Students need to know that there are many good writers penning poems, stories, nonfiction, novels, and plays today. Not all good writers are dead or from other time periods. Let's give students a balanced curriculum.

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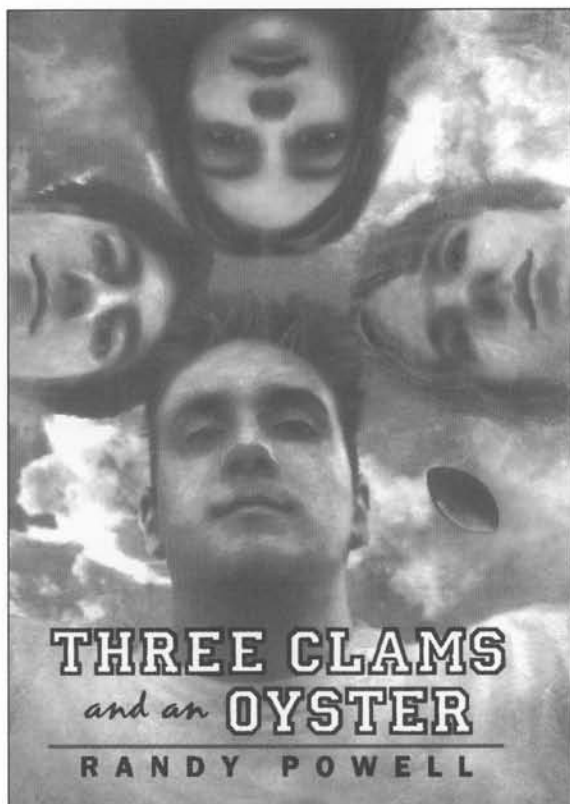
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