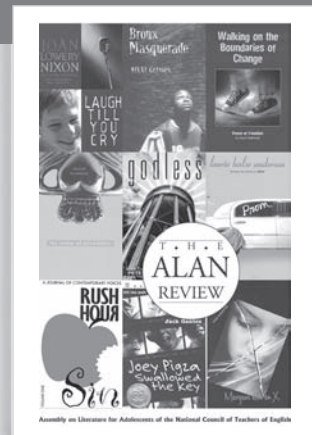


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Instructions for Authors

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.

AUDIENCE. Many of the individual members of ALAN are classroom teachers of English in middle, junior, and senior high schools. Other readers include university faculty members in English and/or Education programs, researchers in the field of adolescent literature, librarians, authors, publishers, reading teachers and teachers of other related content areas. ALAN has members in all 50 states and a number of foreign countries.

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."

MANUSCRIPT FORMAT. Manuscripts should be **double-spaced** throughout, including quotations and bibliographies. A **title page** with author's name, affiliation, address, and a short professional biographical sketch should be included. The author's name should not appear on the manuscript pages; however, pages should be numbered. Short quotations, as permitted under "fair use" in the copyright law, must be carefully **documented within the manuscript** and in the bibliography. Longer quotations and complete poems or short stories must be accompanied by **written permission** of the copyright owner.

Author interviews should be accompanied by **written permission of the interviewed author** to publish the interview in *The ALAN Review*. Interviewers should indicate to authors that publication is subject to review of an editorial board. The title of *The ALAN Review* should not be used to gain an interview.

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.

The ALAN Review prefers the use of the Publications Manual of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

A 3 1/2-inch IBM compatible disk in a recent version of Word format must accompany all manuscripts. Disks must be clearly labeled with author's name, manuscript title, disk format, and file title.

SUBMITTING THE MANUSCRIPT. Send three clear copies and a disk of the manuscript to:

Dr. James Blasingame, Co-Editor, *The ALAN Review*, Department of English/English Education, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, P.O. box 870302, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85287-0302.

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.

PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES. *The ALAN Review* assumes that accepted manuscripts have not been published previously in any other journals and/or books, nor will they be published subsequently without permission of *The ALAN Review*. Should the author submit the manuscript to more than one publication, he/she should notify *The ALAN Review*. If a submitted or accepted manuscript is accepted by another publication prior to publication in *The ALAN Review*, the author should immediately withdraw the manuscript from publication in *The ALAN Review*.

Manuscripts that are accepted may be edited for clarity, accuracy, readability, and publication style.

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.

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

FALL ISSUE Deadline:	MAY 15
WINTER ISSUE Deadline:	OCTOBER 15
SUMMER ISSUE Deadline:	FEBRUARY 15

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From the Editors

Young adult literature continues to provide a voice for young people. And, as our nation's young people come from more and more diverse backgrounds, authors of young adult literature are ensuring that their works reflect that growing diversity.

In this issue, we share some of those voices and their stories with our fall theme of “The Many Ways to be Human.”

Leading off this issue is—most appropriately—one of young adults' favorite storytellers—Laurie Halse Anderson. Anderson uses her own magic of storytelling to share how such tales connect one heart to another. Taken from her address at the 2005 ALAN Workshop, Anderson encourages teachers to continue their efforts to help young people find stories that speak to them.

Marlinda White-Kaulaity examines the role of Native American voices in the lives of all young people and Native American literature as a valuable part of an education. This article also focuses on the necessity for an authentic, meaningful approach that allows all readers to develop an understanding and appreciation of Native American voices and includes a sidebar with thoughts about the article from Simon Ortiz, Laura Tohe and Cynthia Leitich Smith.

In The Library Connection, guest columnist Lisa Bowen details a survey of young adults regarding leisure reading. She goes on to provide a variety of lively approaches librarians and educators can implement to help keep reading at the forefront for teenagers in today's fast-paced, electronics-driven world.

Asian-American voices are highlighted in Virginia Loh's discussion on the need for culturally authentic trade books. Including an interview with Cynthia Kadohata, Loh documents the under-representation of Asian Americans in literature for young people and calls for a more substantial collection of authentic books addressing the Asian American experience.

In their article ““Today I'm Going to Meet a Boy:’ Teachers and Students Respond to *Fifteen* and *Speak*,” Marsha M. Sprague, Kara K. Keeling, and Paul Lawrence compare the two novels—written 43 years apart—but both detailing the lives of high school girls. The authors illustrate the varied responses when both books were read by a group of teachers in a graduate class on young adult literature and students in a tenth-grade honors class.

Kaavonia M. Hinton-Johnson visits with author Angela Johnson regarding her recurring theme of the search for self. In an accompanying article, Hinton-Johnson provides a look at the award-winning author and her successful approach to writing for young adults.

In “Rough Flight: Boys Fleeing the Feminine in Young Adult Literature,” Soofia Khan and Patricia Wachholz examine how masculinity is sometimes represented to young men and how teachers may help their students to question and challenge these representations.

In The Publishers' Connection, M. Jerry Weiss shares his thoughts on *No Child Left Behind* and what testing actually demonstrates about students' learning. He provides a list of quality young adult books organized by specific themes to help educators turn

their students into engaged readers rather than test-takers. Additionally, don't forget to read through our regular Clip and File section, featuring reviews of 31 young adult books published in 2006.

As you turn the pages of this issue, we believe you'll realize the voices of diversity that are speaking to all of us—and reminding us of “The Many Ways to be Human.” Young adult literature attempts to take us one more step toward understanding and acceptance.

Editors correction: On page 67 of the 2006 Summer issue, in “Growing Up Female around the Globe with Young Adult Literature,” at the top of the right hand column under “NOTE,” the text should read as follows: “. . . but none of us could find any book that addresses this issue in another country OUTSIDE OF THE WEST.”

Call for Manuscripts

2007 Winter theme: Young Adult Literature: Key to Open Minds

The theme for our 2007 winter issue will reflect the theme of the 2005 ALAN Workshop: “Young Adult Literature: Key to Open Minds.” This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics; in addition, articles about any of the authors scheduled to appear at the 2006 ALAN Workshop in Pittsburgh, as well as general articles on any topic dealing with young adult literature and its use, are welcome. October 15 submission deadline.

2007 Summer theme: Seeing Myself in the Story

This theme is intended to solicit articles dealing with the relationships between young adult readers and the characters in their reading. The theme is meant to be open to interpretation, but might, for example, deal with what kinds of protagonists individual readers find appealing and/or identify with, the effects this kind of reading may have on young readers and how teachers use this to help students on the path to making meaning of their reading and their lives. General submissions are also welcome. February 15 submission deadline.

2007 Fall theme: Young Adult Literature: No Genre Unwanted

This theme is intended to solicit articles about the many genres within young adult literature and the approaches teachers take in addressing them, from poetry to plays, from autobiography to horror. This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics, but some possibilities include choosing and using the best of young adult drama, helping students make the connections between their own lives in the present day and the lives of characters in historical fiction, creating a thematic unit on mysteries, performance poetry and more. The sky is the limit! We welcome and encourage other creative interpretations of this theme. General submissions are also welcome. May 15 submission deadline. 2008 Winter theme: TBA theme of 2007 ALAN Workshop. October 15, 2007 submission deadline.



The Mystery and Magic of Story:

A Spell that Connects One Heart to Another

Adapted from a presentation at the 2005 ALAN Workshop, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

A couple of months ago, I went home again. I moved back to northern New York State. To understand the significance of this, you need to know that I fled the region at age 18 at a full gallop. I vowed never, ever, ever, ever to return again.

And then God chuckled.

After a lifetime away, I moved home to marry my childhood sweetheart, a carpenter, and join him in the house he built on a hill covered with maple trees. Our home has too many books to count, a collection of oil lamps, and two fireplaces. This is a good thing because we average twenty feet of snow each winter. We often lose our electricity.

I love it when the power goes out. Scot lights the fires and I light the lamps. We sit close and watch the flames flicker. We talk, read—I write. If a bottle of wine is opened, we often end up singing. Thank goodness the neighbors live far away.

I don't like it quite as much if the power goes out when I'm alone. Coyotes run along the bottom of our hill yipping and calling. My German shepherd paces in front of the dark windows. The wind blows and house creaks. I see ghosts in every corner and anxiously wait for the sound of the familiar truck engine that means my beloved is coming home.

The best thing to do when you are alone, in a storm, in the dark, is to watch the fire. Let the light dance for you, soothe you, warm you. The dark is a deep and scary place. It can seem without end or shape. That's why you have to concentrate on the

light—the firelight, the lamp's flicker, the eyes of a loved one . . .

. . . or a book.

When an author moves to a new home, there is a shift in the Earth's tectonic plates. The accumulated weight of all of the books is staggering. Before I moved, I weeded my collection down to the bare minimum and made truckloads of donations to libraries and friends. Still, my step son developed an impressive set of muscles hauling all those boxes up to my third floor office.

What didn't get weeded out were the letters. Like the other authors here, I get hundreds and hundreds of letters; assigned, unassigned, blog responses, and emails.

People are surprised to hear about the unassigned mail that pours in. Why would a kid take the time to write to me if they don't have to do it for a grade?

If the letter comes from a sexual assault survivor, an outcast, or a depressed kid, usually, she read *Speak*. If it's a driven academic star who is burning out and frantically trying to hide it, she read *Catalyst*. If the writer is a teen who is not sure what the point of school is and what to do after graduation, he stumbled across *Prom*.

(One of my daughters has promised to create an online quiz: "Which Laurie Halse Anderson book are you?")

When the letters started coming in I was confused, too. Why were they writing to me? Why would any teenager write to an author?

It's quite simple. In story there is magic, words wound in a spell that mysteriously connects one heart to the next. Katherine Paterson says that literature "has a healing quality, a quality that enlarges our human spirits." She also says that "a great novel is a kind of conversion experience. We come away from it changed."

There is magic on the page—words strung in sequence to create worlds that have loves and losses and bad jokes and truth and characters who feel alive. That magic works in the soul of a reader and helps focus him, helps him see the world a little clearer. The reader feels as close to the author as he does to his best friend, to the person who knows the secrets of his heart and still likes him.

I've gotten letters from every state, from England, from Germany, from Italy, and Slovenia. From jail cells. From houses that feel like jails. Many of these letter writers insist that they hate reading, that they hate books, and that my book was the first one they've finished since (fill in the blank) fourth, fifth, sixth grade.

These letter writers usually mention their teachers. Did you know that? They tell me about you, the teacher who assigns books that have meaning to students, who hands books to kids that are not part of the curriculum, who use their own money to replace the books that are stolen over and over again from their classroom collection. I get letters from the kids who pretend they're not listening.

Your best students, your most troubled students, and all the kids in-between are connecting to the literature that you are working so hard to share with them. You are passing along the light of our collective experience, our wisdom and magic. It's working.

If you are here today, you are a great teacher or you will be a great teacher. Not because you're smart, though you are. Not because you keep up-to-date with the latest research, though you do.

It's because you give a damn. You are not content to phone it in. You don't hide in the faculty lounge or your car during break. You give your all, you give every ounce of patience, honesty, hard work and discipline to your students. You leave each night as exhausted as a professional athlete because you leave

**In story there is magic,
words wound in a spell
that mysteriously connects
one heart to the next.**

it all on the field. Pro athletes only play 20, 30, 60 games a year. You play 185.

Authors are granted the ability to transfigure words into story—into poetry, novels—epics, even. (Fantasy authors always write the epics. Why is that?) But the ability to twist characters together with plot is worth absolutely nothing

without a reader.

The author tends the tree that grows into story and provides the fuel. Anyone who has tried to camp on a rainy day knows that it is not much fun sitting around watching a pile of wet logs turn moldy. You need the spark, the persistent flame that will catch the wood and bring it to life in all of its heat and glory and light—illuminating the faces of the cold, wet campers, illuminating the lives of the millions of teenagers who are desperate for that glow.

It is very easy to get caught up in the changes of our society, in the stupid "evils" that silly people like to attribute to teenagers. They are allegedly oversexed, undereducated, immoral, drug and technology-addicted, disrespectful, tattooed, pierced, branded, illiterate, overweight, anorexic, celebrity-addled, half-naked, spoiled, undisciplined little brats.

You and I both know that is ridiculous. Today's teens exhibit fine, righteous qualities. They are smart and funny. They form friendships across lines of gender, race, class and ethnic background. They enjoy community service. They are artistic, adventurous, and optimistic. They are stepping up to the plate and preparing to make this world a better place.

Gifted, dedicated teachers like you have an awful lot to do with that. You fight for education in the face of ignorance, you battle for literacy and justice and morality and peace.

Robert Cormier said, "My heroes are the ordinary people who do their duty quietly, without fanfare, whether it's fighting a war or going to work every day. I feel that we are surrounded by heroes and saints in our daily lives."

He's right. We are surrounded by heroes and saints in our daily lives. We are surrounded by teachers who burn in the darkness, who offer comfort

to the cold and weary, who brighten hearts and minds with enlightenment and illumination.

I'm headed north in a little while. Headed back home, where we've already seen snow a couple times. We're renting a splitter this weekend because we have a mountain of logs in front of the garage that need to be split and stacked. Our son who built his muscles hauling books this summer will be hauling firewood on Saturday. (Please do not tell him this.)

The next time you see a fire in a fireplace, or you light a candle, think of me holed up on a stormy night, scratching by the light of an oil lamp. Think of all of us authors scribbling, typing, crossing out, revising,

muttering, revising again. Think of the editors who counsel us, prod us, do their own muttering, some cursing, and shepherding. But mostly, think of your own role in the storytelling process.

You are the light. You are *their* light. A world of grateful readers thanks you for teaching them.

So do I.

We are surrounded by teachers who burn in the darkness, who offer comfort to the cold and weary, who brighten hearts and minds with enlightenment and illumination.

ALAN Foundation Research Grants

Members of ALAN may apply to the ALAN Foundation for funding (up to \$1,500) for research in young adult literature. Proposals are reviewed by the five most recent presidents of ALAN. Awards are made annually in the Fall and are announced at the ALAN breakfast during the NCTE convention in November. The application deadline each year is September 15th.

Gallo Grants

The Gallo Grants were established in 2003 by former ALAN Award and Hipple Award recipient Don Gallo to encourage educators in their early years of teaching to attend the ALAN Workshop for the first time. The grants provide funding—up to \$500 each—for two classroom teachers in middle school or high school each year to attend the ALAN Workshop. (The amount of a grant may be less than \$500 if the applicant lives within commuting distance of the convention location where airfare and housing would not be necessary.) The Workshop is held at the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English on the Monday and Tuesday prior to Thanksgiving Day. Applicants must be teaching full-time; must have been classroom teachers for less than five years prior to the year in which they are applying; and must not have attended an ALAN Workshop previously. Membership in ALAN is not required for consideration, though applicants are expected to become ALAN members if they receive this grant.

Each applicant must fill out the attached grant application form and submit an essay of no more than 750 words explaining their interest in Young Adult Literature, what they hope to gain by attending this year's ALAN Workshop, and how they hope to use the experience in their classrooms in the future. A letter of support must also come from the applicant's school system. The deadline for submission is September 1. Applicants will be judged on their ability to articulate their understanding of the value of Young Adult Literature as well as their explanation of how they intend to use YA books and the information they gather at the Workshop in their own classrooms.

For further information about this grant, contact ALAN Executive Secretary Gary Salvner at g salvner@ysu.edu or 330-941-3414. Information about the ALAN Workshop may be obtained from the ALAN Website—www.alan-ya.org. Information about the NCTE Convention may be obtained on the NCTE Website—www.ncte.org—or by writing to NCTE Headquarters at 1111 West Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

The Voices of Power and the Power of Voices:

Teaching with Native American Literature

The weight and thickness of Mike's new literature book in English class intimidated him. He opened the book searching for Native American writers whose work he loved to read. Sherman Alexie was his favorite. As he fingered through the table of contents, all he found was a poem about Hiawatha, two stories in the mythology chapter, and one short story in the "Other Literatures" chapter in the back of the book. Sighing heavily, he gazed out the classroom window feeling bored and knowing that this English class would be more of the same. He closed his eyes and his mind, questioning the system and wondering to himself, "Why can't we read the good stuff in English class?"

Some teachers may view including other voices, particularly Native American voices, as a new approach to teaching Language Arts. Others already include these voices since the multiculturalism movement was espoused decades ago. Too often, however, the Language Arts curriculum still excludes the Native American voice in favor of the "voices of power," the works of dominant culture. When certain voices are excluded, students never hear and experience the "power of voices," and thus teachers deprive young readers of one purpose of literature: to read and learn about themselves and others in life.

"The Power of Voices and the Voices of Power" is a title from 1998 conference proceedings, and a presentation given by [Elsa Auerbach](#), from the University of Massachusetts in Boston. She contends that "current educational practices actively exclude the voices of those who are not from the dominant cultural group" (2). In using the phrases related to

Native American Voices

After reading this article, Native American writers, Simon Ortiz, Laura Tohe and Cynthia Leitich Smith, shared their thoughts on the importance of Native American voices in the lives of all young people and in the high school curriculum.

Simon Ortiz: "It is vastly important and necessary that Native (or Indigenous) American literature be a basic part of high school education for three reasons:

1. Indigenous cultural knowledge is an essential part of the cultural community of the present American world.
2. Land, culture, and community are intrinsically the binding elements of overall cultural connection to the natural landscape of the environment and the world as a whole.
3. The power of the Indigenous voice comes from the cultural connection to the world. Native American literature is an expression of that connection."

Cynthia Leitich Smith: Many of today's Native writers are among the very best. Bernelda Wheeler's (Cree/Ojibwe/Métis) gentle humor makes a point in "Where Did You Get Your Moccasins?" The Birchbark books by Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Band Chippewa) show a

different perspective than could be viewed from a certain little house and inspire a generation to cheer for Omakayas, a strong Native girl. Few novelists rank with Sherman Alexie (Spokane-Coeur d'Alene) or poets with Joy Harjo (Muskogee). They say, the greater the adversity, the greater the hero. Read Native literature for its quality and because, boy, do we have some heroes for you.

Laura Tohe: At the heart of Indigenous belief come expression of songs, prayers, and stories that bring us to learn where we came from, who we are, and our paths toward greater knowing. The voices of long ago and the voices of today's Native writers are crucial and an essential part of a curriculum that strives to understand and appreciate the rich literary and cultural heritage of America's first nations. To see one's self in a writer's words is powerful and freeing. To see Native American writer's books alongside other classic works is affirming and beneficial to all students.

“voice,” Auerbach states: “I’ve quoted these two voices because they seem to me to represent two different and sometimes conflicting responses to dominant pedagogies” (2). With this concept in mind, I borrow the “voice” phrases to discuss language arts pedagogy and the importance of including Native American Literature. This means using the novel, short story, poetry, and essay by Native American writers. It also extends to other texts such as film, websites, narratives, and historical documents

Native Americans Can Speak For Themselves

In her article, “When the First Voice You Hear is not Your Own,” [Jacqueline Jones Royster](#) discusses cross-boundary discourse and her own need “to understand human differences as a complex reality” (611). She asserts that those who are members of a particular community should speak for themselves. She contends that “subject position really is everything” (611) and “voice” is the “central manifestation of subjectivity” (612). Despite the fact that ethnic and minority communities can speak for themselves, too

often someone else speaks for or about them. Time and time again, this has happened with Native American people. [Barbara J. Kuipers](#) informs us:

Very few non-Native writers have bothered to acquire the knowledge to produce meaningful work about our history, cultures and lives—although this ignorance does not stop them from doing the books, and getting published In fact, Indians are the only Americans whose history has been set down almost exclusively by those who are not members of the group about which they are writing. (Kuipers 140)

This underscores the need for Native Americans to speak for themselves, for teachers to invite these voices, and for our students to read and hear what they have to say. It is also important to recognize diversity among Native American nations by telling which tribe(s) a writer belong to. I have done so following the first mention of each writer's name.

Simon Ortiz, Acoma poet and writer, explains that in his pueblo community, “You formally announce your intention to speak and when you do so respectfully, you are recognized for what you have to offer.” Community members then stand up and give voice to their Self. He continues, saying, “Now it is my turn to stand. I’m rising to stand and speak...,” ([Ortiz xi](#)), as he writes for himself and for other Native American writers who have literature to share. Native Americans have much to say and have done so in various genres. They speak eloquently, creatively, intelligently, and honestly. Who is their audience? The many young people in the language arts classrooms can be their audience. However, the teacher's invitation is the only way into the classroom.

Meeting Current Curriculum Demands

While some educators feel that high stakes testing influences and interferes with what schools teach (or don't teach), others take a more positive view and find ways to make education meaningful while meeting state standards. A Mohawk woman, Dr. L. Rosa Minoka, cites a family maxim, and says: “Don't let school interfere with your education” (qtd. in [Ortiz 80](#)). Indeed, school has done exactly that when today's language arts teachers focus more on preparing for standardized tests and overlook what many feel is “real education.” Schools should also teach students about the world—the people they live with, the stories and messages of others, the diversity of

Schools should also teach students about the world—the people they live with, the stories and messages of others, the diversity of cultures. Our students need cross-boundary knowledge, interaction, and experiences to learn how to live in an interdependent world.

indication of content taught in language arts classrooms, the Native American voice is largely missing. Just as my students do, I also look in a literature textbook's table of contents for Native writers included among the other authors. I yearn to see Native writers like Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso (Navajo), Linda Hogan (Chickasaw), and Simon Ortiz, to name a few, but usually they are absent. What does this selectiveness and exclusion of voices teach our students? What does it maintain and perpetuate? Students do not get "the whole picture" of what literature and language arts can be if they hear only the voices of power.

Many voices in multicultural literature are speaking, but not all are seen as "powerful" in the social, economic, and political sense. Native Americans fall into this narrow vision. Although they are a small population, they have influenced and contributed much to this country. They embody an ancient history and they flourish today as unique nations. They were not killed off by John Wayne, and they do not live in cupboards or only in Disney movies. Indian people inhabit every region of this country and their voices resonate strongly and proudly. This diverse population represents many voices and experiences,

cultures. Our students need cross-boundary knowledge, interaction, and experiences to learn how to live in an interdependent world. Literature can help achieve such goals. Education should require that students read, recognize, and appreciate literary contributions not only of white Americans and European writers, but also of other ethnic groups. Here, I am especially referring to the literature of more than 250 Native American nations that are indigenous to this land.

Too often textbooks drive the curriculum, and if textbooks are any

and their power resonates in voices of knowledge and wisdom.

Esther G. Belin, American Indian writer of the Dine (Navajo) Nation, tells about her 1990 university experience when she and other students raised concerns about diversity, expressing their wish for the power of voices in their schooling. Her statement also informs about the expansiveness of Native American identity and existence. She says:

My voice and the voices of other Natives on campus were not simply our own. We spoke the voices of our nations, our clan relations, our families. To tell or re-tell our story is not pleasant. And it is not short. It did not begin with the civil rights movement. It is not as simple as the word *genocide*. It is every voice collective. It is mixed-blood, cross-blood, full-blood, urban, rez, relocated, terminated, nonstatus, tribally enrolled, federally recognized, non-federally recognized, alcoholic, battered, uranium-infested (Belin 62).

Her eloquent statement reveals that there is no one-size-fits-all "Indian" or "Native American," an important point to understand for anyone choosing to teach Native American Literature. Many teachers may feel that using Native American voices is too complex, too controversial, too risky, too time-consuming, too political, too painful, and too many other things. It may seem easier to leave them out of the curriculum, stick with the literature textbook, concentrate on the big test, and stay in the comfort zone. If such attitudes are prevalent among language arts teachers, my hope is to change this way of thinking.

Ah, but we always come back to the tests! *How can we teach with Native American Literature? Why? We have standards to cover. Reading that kind of literature is not specified in the curriculum guide. What if my superintendent catches me [teaching Native American Literature]?* I have heard all these before. They are legitimate concerns in the wake of high-stakes testing and teacher accountability. Theodore Sizer, professor of education, talks about standards and confirms these teachers' worries in his book *Horace's School*. He says, "A familiar argument shoved at those who teach students in a variety of ways is that standards will be compromised." He goes on to say:

Wise schools do not vary the standards of accomplishment when they are clear. What they vary is the means to the ends, in ways that respect the particular differences of par-

ticular children. Such is not a compromise of academic standards. Indeed, it is a modeling of good scholarship, an example of the use of knowledge in practice: it takes serious account of what we know about human learning, about the availability of ways of learning, of making sense of the world. (33)

Using Native American Literature is one means to help students think, ask questions, and make sense of the world. In addition, teachers can find and select diverse literature that has literary and social elements appropriate for teaching required standards.

Education's Larger Purpose

Beyond high-stakes testing and test-driven instruction, teachers hold a larger purpose and responsibility to students. In *Horace's Compromise*, another book by Theodore Sizer, the author realistically describes the balance teachers must find between curriculum and instruction and the young lives in the school classrooms. He states:

There are many influences on the development of a young person's personality, of course, and school is only one. But it can be a powerful one . . ." (122).

Teachers play a huge role as decision-maker, change agent, and as determiner of whose voices are heard and experienced in the classroom. Essentially, pedagogy rests on values, and "Value issues infuse every classroom" (Sizer 123). In relation to choices and young minds, author John Gaughn says in his book *Cultural Reflections*, "School is a controlled environment. We condition children to behave in certain ways, to assume certain attitudes, to become certain kinds of Americans" (23). Will our students learn to be thoughtful and appreciative of other voices, viewpoints, and perspectives? Many voices wait at the doors of classrooms, and it is up to teachers to say, "Welcome. Come into our classroom."

The voices of many different people can be powerful. Judith Ortiz Cofer, a Puerto Rican writer and educator, states:

This is what I have learned from writing as a minority person in America that I can teach my students: Literature is the human search for meaning. It is as simple and as profound as that. And we are all, if we are thinking people, involved in the process. It is both a privilege and a burden (562-563).

As language arts teachers, we must accept that

privilege and burden because we are accountable for the development of a young person's personality.

Preparation To Teach

Teaching Native American Literature requires that teachers do thoughtful homework. Even as a Native American teacher who taught Native students, I had to do my homework. While there are some similarities among Native tribes, many differences exist and each tribal nation must be viewed as a separate and distinct. In teaching texts that derive from a Native American writer and community, teachers must provide enough contextual information—cultural, social, and historical—especially if not providing this impedes understanding and appreciation of the literary work. More importantly, it is essential if not providing this could perpetuate prejudice, stereotypes, and negative or racist feelings.

Teachers who utilize this "voices of power" method of teaching should do so with a sense of purpose, preparedness, and respect. As Jacqueline Jones Royster says in the previously mentioned essay, when you're entering someone else's home as a guest, your own "home training" must prevail. I assume these refer to manners, consideration, kindness, carefulness, and open-mindedness. For teachers on this journey, it requires knowing where you're going, why, how you'll get there, what you'll do about obstacles and detours, what kinds of activities and learning can occur from that place. I presume English teachers prepare this way with any kind of literary journey even if it is not the "traditional" or canonized literary work from the textbook or curriculum guide.

Native American Literature invites inquiry, and it sometimes carries limitations, risks and boundaries. Teachers must be prepared to answer, explore, and handle questions and issues that arise not only from the literature but from student voices and their

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responses and reactions. The encounters and experiences of Native Americans, both past and present, are not always pretty pictures. Sometimes, Native authors' writing could be misinterpreted rather than understood because they write honestly about their experiences. Their voices evoke emotion while they express anger for being misunderstood, disrespected, oppressed, and colonized.

Not only does the Native American text give students understanding of the past, it also teaches them about present-day interactions and relations.

They may speak of mistrust for non-natives who abuse their culture and language, exploit their talents and resources, imitate and abuse their sacred ceremonies, and they distrust people who generally look down upon them as inferior and invisible. Teachers must be prepared to guide students in their awareness and

understanding that there are contrasts in the American experience and literature reminds us of this. My former colleague at Window Rock High School once said about using [James Welch's](#) (Blackfeet) novel *Fools Crow*, "Many students comment upon how mistakes made by either side led to huge misunderstandings and tragic consequences." Not only does the Native American text give students understanding of the past, it also teaches them about present-day interactions and relations.

I have taught Native American Literature on the Navajo Indian Reservation for many years, and find that a number of my Indian students have some understanding of tribal or indigenous language and culture. For works of literature from other tribes, however, students need some background information of that particular nation's historical, cultural, and contemporary status. Like my colleague, I also have taught Welch's *Fools Crow*. Before and during the reading of this book, supplementary material aided comprehension and appreciation of this novel. Finding primary and/or supplementary materials to teach Native American Literature takes time, but it is no different than if a teacher were using any text with no ready-made, pull-it-out-of-the resource-binder kind of material. Furthermore, this aspect of learning and searching gives purpose for various student activities,

projects, and research—reasons for them to inquire, explore, discover (and uncover), and make sense of the literature they are reading.

Teaching with the "power of voices" should be an ongoing, natural activity, not a gimmick. Using Native American literature should not be only during November, the one month that America recalls Pilgrims and Indians. Lakota writer, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve speaks about this particular time of the year "when paper products are illustrated with cute happy Indians and smiling turkeys on disposable plates, napkins and cups." She continues and asks a profound question: "Is this a comment on American Indians as also being disposable?" ([Sneve 299](#))

Selecting and Evaluating What To Use

One reason many Native American writers are not in textbooks is because they still live and own the rights to their writing. Their books are published through independent or small press publishers and have to be purchased as supplementary texts for English class. Whose voice will be heard through these selected materials? How do you judge or evaluate a book or other literary materials to be used in language arts? In his teacher's guide, *Reading Native American Literature*, [Bruce A. Goebel](#) says, "Most specialists in multicultural literature argue that two selection criteria are of utmost importance—cultural authenticity and literary excellence" (3).

Teachers should keep in mind that much has been written by non-Natives about Native American people, some of which is acceptable, although good texts written by Native writers are preferable. Evaluation criteria, for teacher use, were developed in the early 1970's and continue through more recent times. Barbara J. Kuipers's checklist is very helpful in evaluating Native American books. In her chapter, "Understanding the Evaluation Criteria for American Indian Literature," she provides extensive and valuable information that utilizes the voices of various Native people to develop the criteria. Her work includes the input from eighty-seven Native American tribes representing all regions of the United States and comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators ([Kuipers 5](#)).

At the top of her checklist is authorship. When selecting and evaluating Native literature, ask, who is

the author? What is the author's Native background and affiliation? From which Native community is the author speaking? Native writers will present a much richer and more accurate story than any other writer could, and they are less likely to use stereotypes. A. A. Hedge Coke, a mixed-heritage writer, says, ". . . The more rooted people are in their own community, the more likely their work will lead there" (Coke 114). However, the issue of Indian identity is complex and beyond the scope of this article. One does not have to look too far to find an example of Indian identity problems. A recent example is Nasdjiid, author of *The Blood Runs like a River Through My Dreams* who made national news when he was uncovered as a non-native man posing as a Navajo author after writing and publishing for several years. Sherman Alexie, (Spokane / Couer d'Alene) expressed suspicion of this writer because of the book's similarities to one of his short stories. Alexie says, "I approached Nasdijj's publishers telling them his book not only was borderline plagiarism, but it also failed to mention specific tribal members, clans, ceremonies and locations, all of which are vital to the concept of Indian identity" (Alexie 72). Teachers must find reliable background information on authors and make professional and ethical decisions about authorship and what material to use.

In addition to the authorship factor, another criterion is accuracy. Native people want to be depicted in accurate ways. Many a writer has profited from books that inaccurately portray Native Americans. Stereotypes and negative images still abound in many books. Some plots contain weird and unexplainable occurrences happening, perhaps revealing the authors' inaccurate notions and images of Native people. Other books include made-up tribal rituals that don't exist or indigenous customs and ceremonies that are trivialized, distorted, and inappropriate. These inaccuracies only exploit Indian people and perpetuate misunderstanding and disconnect among people.

A book can lack objectivity, an important evaluative consideration. An appropriate book should avoid stereotypes and prejudice. The language used should not be offensive. For example, if an author uses the word "savage" instead of "man" to describe a native male, or "squaw" instead of "woman," then this book is not objective. Furthermore, if Indian people are portrayed engaging only in negative actions and no

positive aspects are included, or only weaknesses and no strengths are portrayed, the book has bias (Kuipers 23-25). When only one side of an issue is presented—usually the dominant culture's—objectivity is definitely lacking.

Native Americans want to be depicted in authentic ways. One young adult literature book I read had on the cover a picture of a teenage girl looking into the distance while a hazy and faded picture of an Indian teen in traditional attire was situated in the background. As it turns out, the Indian teen was a long-ago ghost whom only the young girl could see. Why couldn't the Indian teen perhaps have been a student in her school? A peer. Imagine the message conveyed if this Indian teen were included in the adolescent world and treated with dignity and inclusion instead of as a ghost only appearing at night to scare the young girl. Any book that speaks of Native people in the past tense, or as "vanished" or "no longer living" is not authentic to the lives of Indian people today.

Evaluation could also include teachers looking at their reasons for teaching Native American Literature from a philosophical standpoint. In his chapter, "Teaching Native American Literature: Reflections and Responsibilities," Bruce Goebel discusses two important questions for teachers to consider: 1) Why do you want to teach Native American Literature? and 2) What are my responsibilities in the Classroom when teaching Native American Literature? (Goebel 1-3, 6-7). I recommend this chapter to those teachers looking for resources to educate themselves.

Some Experiences and Suggestions

The demographics involved when teaching Native American Literature determine the choices for instructional practices. Assessing student needs specifies how teaching and learning will occur. My past teaching experiences on my reservation made it less difficult to

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teach Native literary works because of student awareness and consciousness about living and being Native American. For my particular location and student population, using reader-response for literature study served effectively.

I used reading logs in which students personally responded to their reading. They taped a “leading sentences” page inside their spiral notebooks, in case they were stuck as to what to write (a common excuse students make), but students soon became comfortable with the text and made many text-to-reader connections. This particular method was used as we read [Robert J. Conley](#)’s (Cherokee writer) *Mountain Windsong* and *Navajo Stories from the Long Walk Period*.

Both books discuss Indian removal from ancestral lands from the viewpoints of Cherokee and Navajo people. Students were unaware of similar stories and experiences from two different tribes so placing the two texts alongside each other allowed more connections to be made. Their reading

logs and our class discussions were rich with responses, as well as realization and appreciation of the power of literature, of stories, of words and language. In addition, they learned about the human spirit from other people, times, and places.

Recently, I communicated with a former colleague who now teaches at a large New Mexico high school which borders the Navajo Reservation. She is not Native American, but she teaches with Native American literature to Native American, Hispanic and Caucasian students. She explains her use of Native texts: “I don’t believe any American Literature curriculum is complete without Native American voices. That just doesn’t make sense.” She uses a wide selection of

texts in her course throughout the school year while stressing diversity and relations among the different American ethnic and cultural groups. Among other things, in their literary study of James Welch’s *Fools Crow*, for example, students look at balanced characterization—complex characters with strengths and weaknesses. They address stereotypes and the authors’ efforts to represent white people both symbolically and realistically,

Teachers just beginning to teach with Native American Literature can start small—using short pieces of literature—and work with these while gaining confidence and making modifications. I find that short Native literary works can be used well in thematic units. Eventually, teachers can move to longer units or novels. Overall, the success of incorporating and teaching with Native American Literature depends largely on the teacher’s preparation, approach, and attitude.

Possible Challenges and Problems

In their article “Multicultural Literature and Discussion as Mirror and Window?” [Jocelyn Glazier and Jung-A Seo](#) discuss some problems encountered in the teaching of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* by N. Scott Momaday, a Kiowa writer. The article critiques non-native teachers teaching Native American Literature to non-native students. They use reader response and report that these students had difficulty making connections and felt “cultureless.” How can you know about culture and understand your own if you have never read the cultures of others? The voices of power dominate classrooms so prevalently that when a different voice is allowed to speak, some students are stunned. Perhaps they are not comfortable with the feeling because they no longer are the “subject” and have lost “position.” Might this be what schools protect when they perpetuate the voices of power?

Conversely, how do students who are members of minority ethnic groups feel when day after day and year after year, they hear only the voices of dominant culture writers? How does it feel to know that your people, your history, your culture, your existence do not matter and are not valued? In this same classroom study, the authors report that this Momaday’s book elicited many responses from minority group students who otherwise were silent. They connected to the

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book strongly, had many reactions and responses to share, caused and participated in lively classroom discussions, and perhaps, felt that school could be a place that valued them.

Other challenges are described in the article, “The Way to Confusion” by [Gary L. McLaughlin](#) which appeared in the *English Journal* (October 1997), in which he describes possible problematic areas for non-native teachers using Native American Literature. This author participated in Native American Literature conference workshops where a prominent message was to use literature in which Native Americans speak for themselves. Three other valid points arose from the presenters (two Native American and one non-native): 1) the importance of understanding the background that accompanies Native American works, 2) problems that translation of ceremonial songs and other traditional texts present, 3) Native American spirituality as part of the literature and how non-natives can not fully understand this (72).

McLaughlin left the conference confused. He states: “I also sensed that the workshop presenters were arguing that Native writers ‘owned’ their works, and readers with incomplete knowledge were to be viewed as trespassers, not guests.” This goes back to Royster’s caution about the right to your own “home” and the obligation people have to be careful in other peoples’ homes. This advice seems to encourage yet caution teachers who wish to invite the Native voice into their language arts classroom, and who wish to do so intelligently, sensitively, and respectfully. I hope this article dispels the thinking that only native teachers should teach Native American Literature and that it should be taught only to Native American students.

Another concern some language arts teachers may have is that they have no training to teach Native American Literature. What I envision is that teachers would challenge themselves and incorporate Native American Literature into their classrooms rather than operating on resistance and fear. In [McLaughlin’s](#) article, he quotes Diane Long Hoeveler who implores that “anyone teaching Native writers ‘should begin with a careful reading of a few very helpful studies’ (74). Again, I point in the direction of Natives themselves when seeking literary criticism and literary studies before reading the works of others. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn of the Crow Creek Sioux tribe and writer,

poet, and former professor, informs us of the native voice in the academic world when she says, “The emergence of the indigenous voice in academia in the last several decades has been recognized as a huge breakthrough for the right to speak for oneself and one’s people” (Cook-Lynn 80).

Literature To Read and To Transform

Teachers must realize that Native American Literature exists as a literature and its purpose is to be read. Literature lives “out there” among people and voices call for readers. **Contemporary Native American literature is comprised of subjects that are not**

“Indian writing” (the notion that Indian writers write only about Indian topics) **and fit with universal themes studied in classrooms: poems of love and loss, stories about basketball, essays about family, and many other topics that can be used in classrooms.** Native people should not be viewed as so “out of this world” that non-natives cannot relate to them. They are human beings who while they have unique culture, language, lifestyle, and worldview, they live in this world as global citizens and indigenous people. Their story is not a romanticized or stereotyped one as the movies often depict, nor is their story always a positive or a tragic one. This aspect of Native American life cannot and should not be overlooked. Students ask questions; young people look for meaning and want to know more. Literature can inform them; thoughtful and caring teachers can guide them.

Literature is powerful and can change lives. In her article, Laura Mellas speaks with Leslie Silko, renowned Native American writer originally from Laguna pueblo who believes that literature can

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transform. **Silko** insists:

The way you change human beings and human behavior is through a change in consciousness and that can be effected only through literature, music, poetry—the arts. (14)

These changes reflect the new ways of teaching language arts: a curriculum of inclusion rather than exclusion, a curriculum that utilizes and advocates for the power of voices rather than only the voices of power. If we teach our young about other cultures living with and among them, we help shape personalities, attitudes, and lives. As teachers, perhaps we could transform for better understanding and appreciation among people. Native American Literature can help this happen now and for the future.

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Attracting, Addressing, and Amusing the Teen Reader

with Lisa Bowen

Books have a lot of competition in today's electronic driven world. Teens are drawn to video games, computers, MP3 players, and cell phones. These high-tech toys can stimulate adrenalin, provide direct access to information, and reward the user with almost instant gratification. Books, on the other hand, require time and patience, with the reward—the unfolding of a story or information—generally delayed. As a young adult librarian in a junior high school, it is my job and my passion to enlighten teens to the joyous world that can be provided within the pages of a good book. But is it a losing battle?

A survey of the habits and attitudes of urban young adults toward leisure reading, interpreted by [Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Christina Lutz \(2006\)](#), found that indeed, it is not. Seventy-three percent of the students surveyed articulated that they engage in reading for pleasure. Reasons for reading range from relaxation to fun to attachment to characters in the story. Key information for



educators and librarians provided in the results is who the students revealed motivates them to read. Adults appear to have the most influence with parents first, teachers second, and school librarians third. They are looking to us for guidance. With the help of some resources, marketing strategies, and knowledge of the genre, we can fulfill this role.

If You Build It, They Will Come . . . or Will They?

The school library conjures up visions of stacks of dusty volumes

and cranky personnel. Our library chooses to destroy that image by welcoming students into a safe and stimulating environment. A beautiful, orderly library that doesn't value its patrons is an albatross. The first step in encouraging teens to read is getting them into the library.

Our library is a bustle of activity in the mornings before school. It is a meeting place for scores of students preparing to start their day. The computers are being utilized, numerous games of chess are engaged, assignments are completed, and a general atmosphere of hospitality prevails. Now that teens choose to enter the facility, the librarian must employ both marketing and advertising skills to elicit interest in the literature at hand.

From bookstores we learn that attractive arrangements, with book covers prominently displayed, can draw students to titles that otherwise might go unnoticed, filed away neatly on library shelves. Librarian [Thomas Washington \(2006\)](#) uses an analogy to describe

his technique. “To free books, I booby-trap my library with shelf displays. It reminds me of fishing as a kid. Watching students troll the display shelf carries the hope of having that fish on the line and feeling the tug and pull in the wrist. Fishing announces an attempt. You string the rod and reel, bait the hook, and cast the line. If nothing comes of the effort, so be it. Having your bobber in the water is sometimes enough” (38).

Most often our books are displayed and centered on a theme. We might capitalize on pop culture by choosing books on pirates, spies, technology, or titles that were made into movies. Biographies of celebrities or sports icons might catch the attention of a teen who thinks there is nothing of interest for them in the library. We celebrate holidays, promote hobbies, and support our troops through books meant to inform and entertain. Our most successful book displays are the new arrivals. Being the first to check out the latest manga or Darren Shan book is a prize to the lucky observer.

Another draw in our library collection is the magazine section. We subscribe to 30 different periodicals covering a wide range of interests. [Hughes-Hassell and Lutz’s survey results \(2006\)](#) clearly demonstrated that magazines are the favored reading material of teens. If our goal is to encourage teenagers to read, we cannot discount their preferred materials of choice. They go on to say, “. . . teens are drawn to magazines for several reasons, including: (1) the number and quality of pictures; (2) the speed with which information can be gathered from magazines;

Hughes-Hassell and Lutz’s survey results (2006)

clearly demonstrated that magazines are the favored reading material of teens.

If our goal is to encourage teenagers to read, we cannot discount their preferred materials of choice.

(3) the availability of magazines; (4) the “coolness” factor; and (5) the reading level” (23).

Each year we re-evaluate our collection. It is easy to see which magazines are perused most often by their tattered and worn pages. We have found the best source for new acquisitions to be student recommendations, but another good place to start is browsing the titles in local bookstores. [Bartel \(2005\)](#) created a guide and annotated list of over 70 periodicals with teen appeal. She also classified titles by intended audience and by interest. This comprehensive resource cuts down on a lot of legwork and provides all the information necessary to begin subscriptions.

An often-talked about and frequently visited display in our library is a bulletin board titled, “Look Who’s Reading.” For many years I have written to celebrities, politicians, and sports figures, asking them for an autographed picture of themselves and the title

of a book that had meaning for them. My return rate on these letters has been about 30%. My letter explains who I am, who my audience is, and why I am asking for their participation. We have received autographed books from Henry Winkler with a touching letter about his own struggle with dyslexia, t-shirts, autographed television scripts and CDs, in addition to book titles. Sometimes I only get a picture, but we enjoy every contribution, and they are all displayed. I recently read of Glenna Nowell, a retired librarian in Maine, who has been sending out similar letters for eighteen years. She has received responses from hundreds of famous people. [Varsalona \(2006\)](#) describes how publisher Thomson Gale prints a pamphlet of responses each year that can be requested for free by contacting the publisher. The list in its entirety, with a database of celebrities, can be accessed at www.gpl.lib.me.us/wrw/htm.

Everybody Loves a Celebration!

Library celebrations can revolve around local or national themes. The American Library Association (ALA) and numerous booksellers, publishing, and journalist organizations invite us to join in one way by recognizing Banned Books Week every September. The ALA provides lists, shared tips and ideas, bookmarks, posters, and t-shirts, all intended to educate our patrons about the many instances where our freedom to read has been threatened. The information can be found on their website at www.ala.org/bbooks.

One idea is to make shocking displays featuring police tape wrapped around formerly censored books, which is quick to draw attention and curiosity. Students are amazed that favorite books like *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*, and the Harry Potter series have been pulled from library shelves because of offensive language, being too scary, and having a positive presentation of magic and/or witchcraft.

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with hundreds of challenged titles. Also included is why and where they were challenged, First Amendment quotes and court cases, and both display ideas and activities. There is a suggestion in it by teacher Sarah Applegate, who states, “Bring a stack of books with you into classrooms and talk about them. Afterwards, throw them into the garbage can,” or “Give a book talk about banned books and then have an administrator come in and ‘get the teacher in trouble’ for talking about banned books” (157). A clever bulletin board idea sure to elicit giggles and gasps is titled:

“Ten Most Farfetched Reasons to Ban a Book”

1. “Encourages children to break dishes so they won’t have to dry them.” (*A Light in the Attic*, by Shel Silverstein)
2. “It caused a wave of rapes.” (*Arabian Nights, or Thousand and One Nights*, anonymous)
3. “If there is a possibility that something might be controversial, then why not eliminate it?” (*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, by Dee Brown)
4. “Tarzan was ‘living in sin’ with Jane.” (*Tarzan* by Edgar Rice Burroughs)
5. “It is a real ‘downer.’” (*Diary of Anne Frank*, by Anne Frank)
6. “The basket carried by Little Red Riding Hood contained a bottle of wine, which condones the use of alcohol.” (*Little Red Riding Hood*, by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm K. Grimm)
7. “One bunny is white and the other is black, and this ‘brain-washes’ readers into accepting miscegenation.” (*The Rabbit’s Wedding*, by Garth Williams)

8. “It is a religious book and public funds should not be used to purchase religious books.” (*Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, by Walter A. Elwell, ed.)
9. “A female dog is called a bitch.” (*My Friend Flicka*, by Mary O’Hara)
10. “An unofficial version of the story of Noah’s Ark will confuse children.” (*Many Waters*, by Madeleine C. L’Engle) (156)

Telling a teen they can’t read something is sure to draw them to the “offending” material. A t-shirt or pin declaring “I Read Banned Books” stimulates questions and discussion. Banned Books Week is an excellent opportunity to celebrate books and our freedoms.

For almost a decade the American Library Association has sponsored Teen Read Week in October. This predetermined weeklong celebration is the perfect time to focus on how the library supports teen reading. Some of the more successful activities we have engaged in include “Read My Shirt,” where we asked students to wear their favorite shirt endorsing a philosophy, saying, product, patriotism, or a statement that reflected upon their personality. The shirts needed to follow the school’s dress code and be school appropriate. Students were asked to stop in the library and have their shirt’s picture taken. A collage of all the shirts drew crowds for weeks. When the ALA promoted “Get Connected @ Your Library,” we asked students to submit their favorite website’s address, its purpose, and a description of its content. All submissions were

compiled into a list and made available for interested students and staff.

In an effort to recognize the students' preferred reading, annually during Teen Read Week we ask students to write down their favorite books. The submissions are collected in English classes and I tally the results. The culmination of this activity is a list that is made into posters and bookmarks proclaiming: "Top 10 7th, 8th, and 9th Grade Books".

Every year on March 2, which is Dr. Seuss's birthday, the National Education Association sponsors Read Across America to celebrate reading. Initially, I was not certain that teens would relate to the focus on Dr. Seuss but found that it was a unifying catalyst for a variety of activities. Most everyone has fond memories of Dr. Seuss, and by reflecting on these beginning readers we have developed several successful celebrations. One activity involved challenging homerooms to decorate their classroom doors with a favorite student-generated Dr. Seuss book cover. Most classes participated, resulting in colorful hallways that both students and staff stopped to admire, encouraging reflections on titles that reminded them of the rhyming texts and whimsical characters of their youth. A committee of students and staff selected the winning door. This illustrious class was treated to a breakfast of green eggs and ham prepared by the school administrators. A variation of this activity occurred this past March when we approached all classrooms and asked that they create a Seuss-like book cover on poster board that mirrored their subject matter. The

We chose a promotional activity modeled after the ALA's READ posters featuring celebrities by asking staff members to sit for a similar photo. Armed with their favorite book, teachers, administrators, secretaries, and support staff came to the library to pose for their own poster.

creativity that emerged was thrilling! We had "Did I Ever Tell You How Special You Are?" featuring handicapped students' faces on flower stems, "Hop on Cop" which showed a math teacher jumping on our security officer for answering a math problem incorrectly, and "I Like to Travel Here and There in my Dotted Underwear" by a geography class. One year a student council member dressed in a Cat in the Hat costume and cajoled students to purchase green egg and ham burritos prepared by a local restaurant.

On alternate years we focus on the "America" part of Read Across America. One year, in coordination with the school's tenth anniversary, we employed our school photographer to morph the entire student population into a map of the United States with READ superimposed over the top. This 16x20 poster proclaiming "A Decade of Readers"

hangs in the library and continues to draw attention. Another year we hung up an American flag and asked students to stand in front of it holding their favorite book. We took hundreds of these colorful pictures and made our own collage displayed on a library wall. Staff got in the act too when one year we took dozens of pictures of them wearing a Cat in the Hat hat and holding a book up to their nose revealing only a small portion of their face. Students enjoyed guessing their identity in an effort to win Dr. Seuss inspired pencils. Many more ideas like these are available just for registering as a participant at www.nea.org/readacross.

It has been my experience that teenagers like pictures—especially if they are in them! I discovered a website, www.getcaughtreading.org, sponsored by the American Association of Publishers, which features pictures of celebrities reading. Their purpose is simply to spread the word about the pleasure of books and reading. Posters of the pictures can be ordered free of charge with a shipping fee of \$5.00 for every twelve ordered. I decided to carry the idea a little further and make it more personal by taking candid shots of students reading. Now when we display the celebrity pictures we add students to the display. With new pictures being taken and printed often, students enjoy stopping in the library to see who "got caught".

The American Library Association also sponsors National Library Week every April to promote library use and support. Their website, www.ala.org, offers annual themes, logos, press kits and ideas for

celebrating. We chose a promotional activity modeled after the ALA's READ posters featuring celebrities by asking staff members to sit for a similar photo. Armed with their favorite book, teachers, administrators, secretaries, and support staff came to the library to pose for their own poster. Digital photography makes it easy to download pictures into a template and add text. Students enjoy searching for their favorite teacher to see which book he or she chose.

Contests

Running contests inside the library keeps patrons coming in to see what's new. We advertise on the daily announcements and on posters in the hallways. Some of the successful contests we have run include:

- **Stump the Librarian**—Students write and submit questions that they think will be difficult, if not impossible, for the librarian to answer. I had fun researching the answers and students were surprised at how comprehensive our resources are. Along with reporting the answer, I revealed where I had found it. I made every effort to find the answer in print before heading to the Internet.
- **Name That Desk**—With the teacher's permission, we took pictures of the top of their desks and posted them on a bulletin board. Students used visual clues to make educated guesses. It is interesting to see how the teachers' personalities and subject matter matches their desk's appearance. Math teachers tend to be minimal and

neat, drama and art teachers more quirky and unique in appearance.

- **First Lines**—This activity can be thematic or random. For example, for *Read Across America*, we ask students to identify first lines from Dr. Seuss books. Or we might ask English teachers to enjoy figuring out the first lines from classic novels. Most often we select the first lines from popular books that hold clues to its identity. A wonderful resource to get started on this activity is www.people.cornell.edu/pages/jad22/index.html#Categories.
- **Manga Contest**—In response to numerous requests for graphic novels, especially Japanese manga, we have developed and built up a considerable collection over the past three years. It was clear that many, if not most, of the manga enthusiasts enjoyed drawing their favorite characters on paper, their notebooks, their arms, etc. Seeing this as an opportunity to involve students in the library, I conceived a Manga Drawing Contest. Students were asked to create their own manga character. It needed a name and a few facts about his or her personality. Entries began coming in almost immediately with some students entering numerous drawings. We hung up the entries as soon as they came in and assigned them a number. After a predetermined amount of time students were asked to vote for their favorite. Although there is a definite line separating manga enthusiasts and non-enthusiasts, a number of students from both groups enjoyed the artwork and participated in the vote. The winner received a poster and a graphic novel that the local comic book shop had donated. This annual contest takes little planning and provides its own decor.
- **Who Can Survive the Harry Potter Challenge?**—With a little innovation, the combination of literature and pop culture can result in an entertaining contest. Using a similar format to the Survivor television series, I laid out plans for a Harry Potter trivia game. Anyone interested in being considered for one of six spots in the game was invited to come early to school one morning and take a general Harry Potter quiz. The highest scorers were selected as the contestants. The contest was held over five weeks with two sessions a week. One session was always a Reward Contest. These were library scavenger hunts for Harry Potter items and word games. The winner of the reward contest shared his or her reward of cookies, donuts, or ice cream with their homeroom class. The second contest was based on knowledge of Harry Potter trivia using a bulletin board full of questions and buzzers to determine who could answer the quickest. Each week the player with the least points was eliminated. Both contests were filmed, edited and shown to the entire school on Fridays. The contestants were surprised to discover that they were becoming local celebrities, and all because of their love for literature!

- **Reading in Tandem**—Fremont Junior High librarian Tim Loge (Mesa, AZ) created a clever reading contest called, “Reading in Tandem.” The rules for entry required that students either read two books by the same author, two books on the same subject, or two students could read the same book. There were specific rules as to how they would report on their book(s). Tim was able to procure a tandem bike from a local discount store and hung it in the library to entice participants. Faculty enthusiastically jumped on board by riding the bike around school in pairs and posing for pictures. The winner claimed her tandem bike right before Spring Break.

School-wide Support

Reading advocate Jim Trelease believes that students need time allotted for independent reading. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) gives them that time on a daily basis at our school. Thirty minutes a day is set aside for free choice reading. [Trelease \(2001\)](#) feels that by reading daily, students develop a positive attitude toward reading, and the more they practice in a relaxed, informal forum, the better readers they will become. The implementation of SSR at our school has improved our library circulation tremendously as students need reading material to actively participate.

Modeled after the “One Book” concept adapted by many cities and states nationwide, we implemented “One Book Stapley” five years ago. Developed by a committee of

reading teachers and me, the program encourages unity and literacy. The title is announced each year during Teen Read Week, and multiple copies are available in the library. Some teachers choose to read it aloud to their students, but for the most part, it is by individual choice. Throughout the kick-off, we promote the book via daily announcements and the promise of discussion groups. Everyone who reads the book is rewarded with a lapel pin designed to be significant to the book. Although our main goal has been to choose a book with universal appeal, the disparity among the likes and dislikes of 12-15 year-olds is difficult to appease. The following are the first five books we selected:

1. ***Stargirl*** by Jerry Spinelli—An entertaining story about being true to yourself and the power of peer pressure. Although a fitting book for the age group, we found that boys, as a rule, do not prefer to read a book in which the main character is a girl. The pin given to its readers was a star.
2. ***Touching Spirit Bear*** by Ben Mikaelson—An angry young man has to face his fears, learn compassion, and control his emotions in this story of survival. This book appealed to many and was deemed a success. The pin was a paw with the word spirit in the center.
3. ***Among the Hidden*** by Margaret Peterson Haddix—When the world becomes overpopulated and over polluted, the government makes it law that families can have only two children. It is the story of Luke, a forbidden third child. This has been our

most popular title so far. We couldn’t keep this book or its many sequels on the shelf. We held a contest to design a pin for this book, and it simply said, “Be Free,” with eyes peeking out from the darkness.

4. ***Tangerine*** by Edward Bloor—Paul is legally blind, tormented by his brother, and ignored by his parents in this multi-themed story that is not about a handicapped boy but about his ability to see what his family refuses to address. A great book for discussion, but too long at 300-plus pages for this activity. The pin was a soccer ball.
5. ***Stormbreaker*** by Anthony Horowitz—Alex Rider didn’t choose to be a spy, but when his uncle dies in the midst of an investigation, fourteen-year-old Alex is thrust into a dangerous operation. This fast-paced story has fun gadgets, cliffhanger chapters, and high-speed chases. The movie is due to be released in October. Our pin will be a lightning bolt.

Meet the Author

Certainly the most exciting event at our library was a visit by ***Twilight*** author, Stephenie Meyer. After reading it due to a recommendation by a student, I was impressed with how easily the author related to the young adult audience. Stephenie is very much in touch with her inner adolescent! Not wanting the story to end, and hoping to find that there is a sequel in the works, I immediately Googled her and found her impressive website (www.stepheniemeyer.com). After

reading all about her and her projects, I emailed her to thank her for her intelligent, compelling story, and asked if she would consider visiting our school. Her response came within 24 hours, and she expressed a strong desire to meet her fans. We chose a date and I set out to prepare the 1,400 students at my school. Over a weeks' time, I booktalked *Twilight* to 45 English classes. My passion was contagious as we pre-sold over 250 copies of her book to anxious teens wanting to escape into Stephenie's world of teenage angst, romance, and thrilling fantasy.

Hundreds of students came to see the author, hear her talk about future projects, and have their books autographed. Stephenie thoroughly enjoyed meeting her adoring fans and the students talked about it for weeks. Not since the Harry Potter series have I seen such affection for a book. For months it was, and remains, "cool" to carry a 512 page book around school!

The Personal Connection

As shown in the example of *Twilight*, booktalks are the most direct and personal manner in which to convey the pleasure of

reading a good book. I am asked to do booktalks for reading and English classes at my school. The more passion I have for a book, the more likely it will be checked out. I have three hard and fast rules for book talks:

1. **Never** booktalk a book you haven't read. You can't answer questions about it or portray the true voice of the book.
2. Only booktalk books you enjoy. It's hard to fake it.
3. Make a personal connection. I begin a booktalk on *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers with: "Imagine walking home from school and stopping at a convenience store with your friends for a snack. Suddenly, your friend pulls out a gun and holds up the cashier, takes his money, and then shoots him. Now *you're* on trial for accessory to murder. This is Steven's situation in *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers."

These are just a few of the great ideas that work in promoting teen reading. There is great satisfaction in matching a teen to a book. We as teachers and librarians know the joy of reading a great story. Sharing this joy with young adults can be challenging, but ultimately very fulfilling, and the library can

play an important part.

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“Today I’m going to meet a boy:”

Teachers and Students Respond to *Fifteen* and *Speak*

One of the remarkable things that literature has to offer its readers is the opportunity to closely observe a slice of constructed reality; a book can be read, reread, analyzed and dissected, and used to compare it to other realities. The idea of pairing books to examine different societies is certainly not new. High school teachers have found it very helpful to pair adolescent literature with classic texts to help young readers see themes and ideas that persist throughout history. For example, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* can be taught alongside Bette Green’s *Summer of my German Soldier* to examine the theme of doomed young love.

Another way that literature is used is to reveal alien cultures, to provide a window into a world that is very different from the readers. Teenagers reading *Shabanu*, by Suzanne Fisher Staples, have a chance to peek into the world of nomadic Pakistani tribes in the latter decades of the 20th century, and compare it to their lives.

The thoughtful teacher who introduces these texts always prefaces them by explaining that they are the author’s view of the constructed reality, not reality itself. Good teachers pose questions that force readers to research whether the purported culture is authentically portrayed, and what the agenda is of the author. Nevertheless, the opportunity to contrast different worlds, especially

when one of the worlds is the reader’s own, is of great help in developing adolescents’ critical consideration of their role and participation in that world.

Those of us who are concerned about adolescent girls constantly look for ways to help them understand what is happening to them. One report suggests that, compared to boys, adolescent girls experience greater stress, are twice as likely to be depressed, and are four times as likely to commit suicide (Rothenberg 1997). In the United States, girls under fifteen are five times more likely to give birth than female teens in other industrialized nations (Brumberg 1997). In the 1997 Commonwealth Fund Survey of 3,532 high school girls and boys, reported by Johnson, Roberts and Worell, over 20% of the girls said they had been physically or sexually abused (9). 23% of the girls had experienced depressive symptoms in the two weeks prior to the

survey (9). Statistics gathered in 2002 reveal that one to four percent of girls exhibit clinical anorexia nervosa or bulimia, and a far greater number experience disordered eating habits such as binge eating, extremely restrictive dieting, fasting, laxative abuse, or vomiting (“Statistics: How many”). This picture is very disturbing, and as teachers at the high school and college level, we are interested in using literature to discuss what societal forces are at work that might be creating this grim picture for at least some of our adolescent girls.

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One way of understanding what has happened to the society surrounding adolescent girls in the last half of the twentieth century is to compare Beverly Cleary's book, *Fifteen*, to Laurie Anderson's novel, *Speak*. The two stories, both centered on the experiences of high school girls, were written 43 years apart, *Fifteen* in 1956 and *Speak* in 1999. They reveal dramatic changes in the social fabric of America from the middle fifties to the end of the century, particularly in the ways that

adolescent girls come of age. There are so many parallels in the books that it appears that Anderson could have written *Speak* as a dark companion reader to *Fifteen*.

In *Fifteen*, the central character is Jane Purdy. We find out that this is her name in the first sentence. This early candor sets the tenor of the book: everything is transparent, and there are very few secrets. We know all about Jane's thoughts and wishes because the author clearly reveals them to us. The third sentence informs the reader of Jane's preoccupation

throughout the book: "Today I'm going to meet a boy" (1). Indeed, Jane does meet a boy. The boy, Stan, is handsome, pleasant, appealing, and slightly older than Jane. Like Jane, he comes from a white, middle class family. The book traces their burgeoning romance, which goes smoothly, barring a few hitches. First, Stan does not ask Jane to the first school dance, because he has already invited an old girlfriend from his former school. Unfortunately, he does not tell Jane this until after the dance, but finally he explains and all is forgiven. Second, Stan has an unexpected appendectomy, which puts him out of the picture for a while, but which ultimately allows Jane to declare her feelings for him and actually makes the relationship stronger. The book ends with Jane and Stan "going steady," which has been Jane's goal all along. Like Jane and Stan, the other characters in the book are also white, middle class and pleasant. Jane's mother and father (her father's occupation is unspecified, but

her mother is a stay-home mom) are devoted to Jane and are very protective of her. Jane's mother insists that Jane wear clothes that are somewhat childish, and Jane's father teases her about her boyfriend. They provide some of the gentle humor that is found throughout the book. Jane's best friend, Julie, is totally supportive of Jane and very much like her. They run a baby-sitting service together. The only moderately unpleasant character is a girl named Marcy, who is in Jane and Julie's class and is popular, self-absorbed and arrogant. The book does have a theme of sorts: Jane realizes that when she tries to act like Marcy, she makes both her friends and herself miserable. When she acts like herself—agreeable and friendly—she is happy. Jane sums up this concept as she thinks to herself, "She would remember she was Jane Purdy and no one else. Maybe she was doing the wrong thing, but that was the way she was" (176).

The contrast between *Fifteen* and *Speak* could not be starker. Both books open with girls who are getting ready to go back to school. However, while Jane is looking forward to it, *Speak's* central character, Melinda, is dreading it. We do not even know Melinda's name until the twenty-fourth page of the novel. We only know that something is very wrong in Melinda's life, since her good friends from the previous school year will not speak to her. We find out on page 27 that Melinda "called the cops" during a summer party. Gradually we learn that Melinda harbors a secret, about which she cannot speak, that is making her withdrawn and depressed. Melinda was raped at the summer party, but has been unable to tell anyone about it. Unlike Jane Purdy, luckily endowed with a supporting cast of characters, Melinda is alone. Her parents, both of whom work, seem to be unable or unwilling to acknowledge the depth of Melinda's despair. Her best friend Rachel has turned on her after the cop-calling incident, and the rest of her middle school friends are simply ignoring her. Melinda does meet a new "friend," Heather, but Heather ultimately betrays Melinda in her attempts to become part of a clique.

The central boy in Melinda's life is the boy who raped her. Never calling the perpetrator by name, Melinda refers to him only as "IT." This depersonalization is an attempt to objectify her traumatic experience. Melinda's nerdy biology lab partner, David, is a possible male counter to "IT." He expresses an interest

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in being Melinda's friend, but Melinda has difficulty connecting to anyone because of her rape. The theme of the book centers on Melinda's loss of identity due to the trauma she has endured. In the novel, she slowly loses the ability to speak as she sinks deeper and deeper into despair. She is saved from complete annihilation by several things, including an art teacher who challenges her to express her feelings through art and a message she writes on a bathroom wall that warns other girls of "IT." These actions give Melinda the courage to tell her former best friend Rachel about her experience, and although at first Rachel does not believe her, Melinda becomes empowered by the event. At the end of the novel, "IT" attempts to rape Melinda again. This time, however, she has the ability to scream and to fight back. Though dark, *Speak* offers frequent, biting moments of sarcastic humor through Melinda's descriptions of her teachers and the cliques that exist at her high school.

These two books show the challenges that girls have faced for centuries. The role of the female has traditionally been to subvert her own wishes and desires in order to assume the role of nurturer and caretaker. The expectation of the adolescent girl is that she will adhere to the commandments of society, winning a male who will fulfill the role of decision-maker and provider. That is evidently Jane Purdy's main goal in *Fifteen*—one at which she succeeds. This role was well-established in America in 1956. Despite the sacrifice that was required, there were systems in place that supported the adolescent girl in her tasks. For one thing, mothers were expected to remain at home to provide guidance, support and unconditional love for their daughters. Fathers—at least those of the middle class—remained married to their wives and contributed to the financial security of a household that sheltered young women from financial worries. It was expected that young men would respect young ladies and protect their innocence. Girls were placed at the center of a neighborhood or town in which the inhabitants knew them and contributed to their senses of security and protection. This is the experience of Jane Purdy, and of many (though certainly not all) girls in America in the 1950's. Of course, this security was purchased at a very high cost: girls were discouraged from seeking their own careers and personal fulfillment.

However, by 1996, for many of the girls in America, these protective systems were gone. In modern homes, mothers are usually working, and their children are not the sole focus of their lives. This does not have to be devastating, but in many cases it is. Melinda's mother is too stressed out and distracted by work to deal with Melinda's increasing problems. Although Melinda does have two parents (or two half-parents?) many girls in America do not have a father in the home for a large part of their lives, since more than half of all marriages end in divorce. This means that America's girls have experienced a loss of financial and emotional security. Like Jane, Melinda wants to meet a boy, so she goes to a party where she meets what she thinks is an attractive, charming suitor. She reflects ". . . I thought for just a minute there that I had a boyfriend, I would start high school with a boyfriend, older and stronger and ready to watch out for me" (135). But he ends up violating her. This is not surprising: Mary Pipher quotes a study from the 1980's that showed that more than half of the teens questioned (both males and females) believed that forced sex was justified if the girl had "led the guy on" (p206). There is very little sense of community in modern cities and towns; the rise of urban sprawl and mammoth suburbs has created neighborhoods of strangers who do not even speak to one another.

In Jane Purdy's day, teenage girls were expected to be pretty, sweet, and loveable. The role of "Kitten" on "Father Knows Best" (the title is exemplary of the era) typified the eager, pleasant young woman society required. What is the young woman of today supposed to be? Because of the pervasive influences of television and MTV, fashion magazines and movies, today's teen is expected to fulfill all of the following roles: sex kitten, waif, seductress, and fashion model, but also athlete, scholar and homemaker. It is too

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much for many girls, who withdraw into depression, drug abuse, and even suicide as they give up on trying to achieve the behaviors expected of them with little support and no safety nets.

It is important to note that *Fifteen* was certainly not an accurate portrayal of the majority of girls in the 1950's; nor, certainly, is *Speak* a portrait of every girl in the late 1990's. Both books are the authors' constructions of the reality experienced by themselves or their daughters as teenagers. But read together, these books reveal real changes in the world that now envelops adolescent girls.

Because we feel that these two books are so illustrative of what has happened to the world of American girls, we decided to use them as initial books in two courses: at the college level, they were used in a graduate course for teachers; at the high school level, they were the first books read in the school year by a group of tenth grade honors students.

The graduate class "Young Adult Literature" was part of the curriculum in a master's degree program in teaching language arts. The class consisted of 11 students, all female, who were teachers. This included elementary and secondary teachers. In the college class, after an introduction to the class and young adult fiction, the assignment made for week two was to read both *Fifteen* and *Speak*. In addition, the students were assigned readings from *Reviving Ophelia*, by Mary Pipher. Because the class members were teachers and graduate students, this reading was not onerous. Students were asked to respond to the books with a journal entry. In the next class, the three-hour class discussion revolved around issues raised in the journals and initiated by the instructor.

In the high school setting, the pace of reading the books was much slower. Paul's curriculum includes "LitTalk Day," a once-a-week occurrence during which students discuss the adolescent literature that they are reading independently. Paul introduces a novel to his tenth grade students in week one. This year, the novel selected was *Speak*. Students were instructed to read the first quarter of the novel at home (it breaks easily into fourths since it is organized around the nine-week grading periods used in most high schools.) Students had a week to read that portion of the novel.

When students enter class on "LitTalk Day," they first take a quiz on the novel they are reading. This is to ensure that students have read their assigned

chapter. The quiz asks for basic knowledge of the characters and events in the novel. After the students take the quiz, Paul collects their papers and briefly goes over the answers. Paul then asks the students to respond in writing to several prompts that require them to think about the novel. For instance, after the first quarter of the book students responded to these questions:

1. What is Melinda's home life like? What kind of support does she get from her parents? Do you think her home life is believable? How important is parent support for success?
2. What is Melinda's peer group like? Does she fit in? Why or why not? Have you ever experienced anything like Melinda does in this high school or other schools?

Students write quietly for about 10 minutes on these two topics. Then they are asked to move their desks into a seminar circle and bring their writing with them. Students must follow the following rules in the seminar circle:

- They are to use a "talking ball" to control the discussion. This small, lightweight ball is held by the person talking. When (s)he is finished talking, another student indicates that (s)he wants to talk, and the ball is thrown to the new speaker.
- Everyone listens respectfully to the person talking.
- The teacher is a listener, recording who talks and briefly noting interesting points.
- Students who contribute two or more comments receive 100 points for a quiz equivalent. Students who contribute one comment get an 88; students who listen respectfully but do not contribute get a 79 (C-).
- Students may discuss their responses to the questions that they have answered, or they may discuss other things in the text that they have read.

During a typical lesson, the action flows in this way: Paul sits on the outside of the circle as students begin to discuss Melinda's home life. The talk is interesting and lively. Many students participate, and the ball moves back and forth among the 30 pupils. Paul stops the discussion after about ten minutes to summarize some of the interesting points that have been made and to suggest that the students move on to the topic of Melinda's school life. The discussion resumes. At the end of another 10 minutes, about half of the students have contributed something to the

discussion. Paul now asks the students to pass the ball around the circle. Students who do not wish to speak can simply pass the ball along; however, this gives everyone one last chance to contribute to the discussion. This strategy results in almost every student contributing a comment. Paul summarizes the main points of the discussion and asks the students to read the next “nine weeks” section of the book by the following week.

After the students completed *Speak*, using four Fridays, they did the same thing with *Fifteen*. The book was divided into three parts, and students spent three weeks discussing the book. At the end of the three weeks, students were asked to write a paper comparing and contrasting the two novels they had read.

Student Reactions

The students’ writings, both in-class responses and the final paper were collected. Additionally, transcripts of the class discussions were reviewed. Themes that emerged from the analysis included:

Friendships are critical to the lives of teenagers.

Students commented over and over again about how difficult things were for Melinda, since she had basically no friends. This seemed horrible to the students. They noted how helpful Julie, Jane’s friend, was to her; Julie is “open and forgiving” while Melinda’s friends “take almost a year to forgive her.” Interestingly, some of them seemed to blame Melinda for her lack of friends: one boy commented, “Melinda is so closed off that nobody can get close to her”; one student talked about how “dreary” Melinda was another girl called her “dark and scary.” Most students did not seem to appreciate her sense of humor, or the strength that she exhibited in overcoming the effects of the rape.

Rape and scary things happen, but they can be prevented with care.

This theme developed during the class discussion of the rape incident in *Speak*. Both boys and girls talked about how Melinda should not have been drinking at the party. They said that she could have avoided the rape if she had stayed home or not had anything to drink. This was one of the few times that the teacher intervened in the discussion, talking about

the idea of “blaming the victim.” The students were quite defensive about this, and assured the teacher that they understood that rape was never justified. However, both the teacher and the observer felt that both boys and girls had a disturbing feeling that the behavior of raping was somewhat to be expected. In his final paper, one boy commented that Andy probably “learned this behavior from people around . . . I’m not saying that it’s right, but he kind of couldn’t help it.” Another boy also blamed the times: “I think if Andy had been around in the fifties then he wouldn’t have done what he did.” Girls seemed resigned to the fact that “there are people like Andy who stalk freshmen to try and have sex with them . . .” Many students talked about the fact that girls have to “protect themselves.” Only one talked about the fact that Andy’s behavior was criminal.

Today people tend to ignore teenager’s behaviors.

One girl commented, “Melinda’s parents and peers didn’t expect much from her; they wanted her to act “normal,” but when she didn’t they didn’t really address the problem.” One boy wrote, “. . . our “rules” today have evolved into a much more lenient [to] somewhat careless form. We are supposed to, nowadays, act responsibly, but our generation is full of rebellion and rowdiness. Parents today won’t crack down as much because of our society. We aren’t as safe as we think.” Another wrote, “Teenagers are supposed to be good but that doesn’t often happen. Peer pressure is a big factor in teens today. Teens get involved in drugs, gangs, unprotected sex, and many other things that they shouldn’t be doing.”

Parents need to talk to their kids, no matter what.

Students were very passionate about the need for parents to be involved in their lives. Most students felt that their own parents were supportive of them. One student wrote, “Parents are supposed to put their children first, talk to them, support them, and raise

Students commented over and over again about how difficult things were for Melinda, since she had basically no friends. This seemed horrible to the students.

them to be respectful adults.” Another wrote, “A teen might tell their parents that they butt into their business too much, but we would rather have that than you not care.” Students were appalled at the fact that Melinda had cuts on her wrist and her mother “had no time for this.”

Girls are resentful of the way some boys treat them.

One girl wrote, “There are few guys like Stan . . . Not many would meet the parents or respect a girl’s space.” Another commented, “Back in the 1950’s, guys were raised to be respectful and treat females like porcelain dolls that could break at any moment. Nowadays, a lot of guys have that ‘I wanna get with anything that has legs, breast, and a nice butt’ attitude . . .”

Teachers’ Reactions

Surprisingly, the teachers responded to the books in quite similar ways, although their age range was so varied. For most of them the 1950’s represented a time

significantly before they had come of age, although because of television they had similar beliefs that there was a time when things were like the setting of *Fifteen*. Discussion and journal entries revolved around the following points:

The world has changed for teenaged girls in many ways, although crucial elements remain the same.

The teachers felt that both Jane and Melinda were consumed by trying to “fit in” and find a place to belong in their teen

society. They, like all adolescents, were seeking identity. In both instances a male was central to this search; however, Jane’s ultimate goal was to merge her identity with a boy, whereas Melinda’s triumph was to free herself from victimization by a boy. In

both books, the teenagers are separated into “clans”—the popular kids and the unpopular ones. One teacher pointed out that in both books the “enemy” character is a cheerleader.

A major difference between the 1950’s and the 1990’s is the lack of a community that knows and supports its young people.

In *Fifteen*, the owner of the ice cream parlor knows Jane and asks about her. Jane’s parents check out Stan to make sure that he is acceptable. The small suburban setting offers a protective barrier against many threats. On the other hand, Melinda is isolated not only at school but in her community—she wanders through a mall, on a bus, in a hospital—and is neither recognized nor claimed. One teacher described Jane’s experiences as “walking a social tightrope with a safety net provided by two loving parents and an actively-involved community.”

The relationship between parents and child has fundamentally shifted.

In both books, there are two parents available to a single child. In *Fifteen*, the mother is totally focussed on home and children, although the father is absent due to work. In *Speak*, both parents are focussed on work and on themselves. As one teacher expressed: “Jane’s biggest worries involve appearing “too little-girlish” and disapproving of her mother’s tendency to forego stockings in the privacy of their home.” Melinda’s parents, instead of prying in their daughter’s life, appear not to want to know about her problems. When Melinda tries to cut her wrists, her mother says, “I don’t have time for this.” This was shocking to the teachers, and they spent significant time discussing the impact of working mothers. One journal response noted, “Jane navigated her way through adolescence with relative ease, taking for granted the support provided by her nuclear family. Imagine the impact a similar support system might have on the thousands of Melindas in our society.”

Both books describe white, middle class families.

Therefore, the inferences that can be drawn from these books are severely restricted. Class discussion revolved around the different experiences that Blacks and Hispanics had during the 1950s, before civil rights legislation.

The teachers felt that both Jane and Melinda were consumed by trying to “fit in” and find a place to belong in their teen society. They, like all adolescents, were seeking identity. In both instances a male was central to this search.

Summary

It is fascinating to contrast the different ways in which the intertextual reading of the books varied between teachers and students. Teachers, certainly because of their age and interest in changes in society, focused more on the macro-level inferences of the books, the relationship of the society to the behavior of the girls and boys in it. They sought illumination from the texts that would help them understand the world of the students that they were teaching. Not surprisingly, the students, lacking the experiences of living through different generations, were more focused on the micro-themes related to their own world. Although they observed the 1950's through *Fifteen*, they could not truly access it to understand changing contexts for teenage behavior. They often alluded to it, but only as comparison for what they were experiencing themselves.

Reading the books together was definitely helpful for both groups. The teachers were able to engage in the society/behavior analysis (aided by additional readings), while the students could look at questions that are important to them: how should girls be treated by boys? What is the role of "clans" in negotiating high school? How can parents help through the teenage years? These kind of discussions are vital in helping students negotiate the complicated world of high school, and in helping teachers understand what their students face on a daily basis.

The experience certainly argues for teaching books, particularly young adult literature, together to provide different contexts or lenses into similar issues. Consider the texts *Go Ask Alice* and Burgess' *Smack*: both speak of drug addiction, but the differences in culture, time period, and approach are markedly different. *Julie of the Wolves*, contrasted with *A Girl Named Disaster*, both describe a young girl's survival in hostile environments after running away from dreadful circumstances, but the protagonists in the stories have fascinating similarities and differences that make for rich discussion. All of these books deal with young girls, so they extend the examination of gender issues and what is expected and experienced by girls in various environments. Classes that allow students to do this kind of reading have the potential to help girls (and boys) understand and deal more

effectively with the social challenges that surround them.

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<p><i>Bittersweet Sixteen</i> by Carrie Karasyov and Jill Kargman HarperCollins, 2006, 230 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Friendship/Money ISBN: 0-06-077844-X</p> <p><i>Bittersweet Sixteen</i> is a look into the lives of a group of teenage girls living in New York City and attending an out-of-your-reach expensive all-girls school. The story is told from the perspective of Laura, who is attending the school only because of scholarships. While her friends are wearing designer clothes and renting private jets to fly to Europe, Laura gets caught up in the whirlwind of being a teenage girl trying to “keep up with the Joneses.” The language and descriptions used in this book remind me of a mix of Fox’s “The O.C.” and MTV’s “My Super Sweet 16.” <i>Bittersweet Sixteen</i> would be enjoyed by any teenage girl who wonders what it would be like to have a glamorous life in New York City, but who knows that the reality of life is having great friends and family who allow you to be yourself.</p> <p>Bonny Martens Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Call Me the Canyon: A Love Story</i> by Ann Howard Creel Brown Barn Books, 2006, 224 pp., \$8.95 978-09768126-4-7</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Romance/Southwest ISBN: 0-9768126-4-9;</p> <p>In the late 1880s, Lester Demming and his daughter Madolen scratch out a harsh life in the canyons of Southeastern Utah. Madolen’s mother was Navajo, and after her death, Demming retreats into silence. So when Mormon missionaries offer to take Madolen in, she quickly accepts. Creel sympathetically depicts Mormonism, but she excels at describing the typology of Utah—the rugged beauty of the rocks and plateaus where the spirits of the “Ancient Ones” still dwell. A strength of the novel is Creel’s ability to weave in archeological information about the ancient Indian civilizations of the region, while she also explains the spread of mining, ranching, and Mormonism in the area. Her female characters are well-drawn, but she is less successful in showing Madolen’s spiritual and emotional journey from embracing the Mormon faith, to her love affair with a wealthy Harvard law student, to her eventual marriage to a Navajo trader. Creel never fully develops what it means to Madolen to be part Navajo, and her depiction of Navajo culture is lacking in nuance.</p> <p>Johanna Denzin Bradley Fayette, MO</p>
<p><i>Call Me Henri</i> by Lorraine M. Lopez Curbstone Press, 2006, 233 pp., \$17.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Hispanic Families ISBN: 1-931896-27-5</p> <p>In his required journaling, Enrique writes that sometimes there are more important things to worry about than listening to his teacher and peers during ESL class. This couldn’t be truer for Enrique. He is responsible for taking care of triplet infant brothers; his stepfather is abusive; his beloved dog, Boy, is missing; a new classmate commits suicide; and he watches his best friend be shot by local gang members. No wonder he is struggling in math class. Throughout, Enrique stays hopeful that his teenage life will have some sense of normalcy: finding a girlfriend and learning his favorite language, French. When all hope seems lost, the teachers at his school team up to provide Enrique with his best hope for escaping the troubles of his youth. Lopez authentically captures the struggles of a second language learner dealing with the trials and tribulations of being a teenager.</p> <p>Faith H. Wallace Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>The Cassandra Virus</i> by K.V. Johansen Orca Book Publishers, 2006, 151 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>The Future/Computers ISBN: 1-55143-497-0</p> <p>This novel is disturbing, not only because it is at times illogical, but because the basis for its plot has been largely mined before in the 1983 Ally Sheedy/Matthew Broderick film, <i>War Games</i>. The main character, Jordan O’Blenis, bears a striking resemblance to the Broderick character in the film.</p> <p>In the novel, Jordan and his female sidekick begin to communicate with a computer Jordan builds one summer, to which the writer devotes an entire page. Once Cassandra, named after his sister, is up and running, it can hack into any computer in the world, can read email, can remove software and hard drives. The government wants to shut Cassandra down, just as the computer in <i>War Games</i> is determined to have hacked into NORAD, the early warning system established by the U.S. military to warn of incoming missiles from Russia.</p> <p>There are differences, largely made from the writer’s choice to set this book in the near future, but only the most computerwise and reluctant of readers will follow this novel through its anticlimactic ending.</p> <p>John Jacob Oak Park, IL</p>

Clip & File YA Book Reviews

<p><i>The Crow-Girl</i> by Bodil Bredsdorff Sunburst, 2006, 160 pp., \$5.95</p> <p>Compassion/Orphans/Relationships ISBN: 0-374-40003-2</p> <p><i>Crow-Girl</i> is a Danish folktale comparable to a Hans Christian Anderson story. Crow-Girl lives by the sea in a small house where she spends her time caring for her dying grandmother and gathering driftwood and oysters. Before her grandmother dies, she promises Crow-Girl she will continue to watch over her in order to guide and comfort Crow-Girl on her life's path.</p> <p>Now an orphan, Crow-Girl decides to travel until she can find a new family. Led by a crow (that's the reason she is called Crow-Girl), she journeys to various towns where she discovers that not all people make good family members, and that it is best to find happiness when you help others. She assists a number of people on her journey—a small abandoned boy, an abused mother and daughter, and a lonely old farmer. By selflessly helping others, Crow-Girl gains a family from those she has helped.</p> <p>Diana Harter Provo, UT</p>	<p><i>Crunch Time</i> by Mariah Fredericks Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006, 317 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 0-689-86938-X</p> <p>Following four high school juniors through the endless struggle of growing up, <i>Crunch Time</i> by Mariah Fredericks is a novel many students will relate to. Delving deep into the issues of friendship, relationships, failure, parents, and fear, this novel depicts the world of high-stakes testing and pressure to succeed in a refreshing, entertaining way. <i>Crunch Time</i> stands as a snippet of high school life, including the dramas and scandals typical in most schools today.</p> <p>Fredericks creates this high-stress world by giving first-person accounts of the four very different main characters who met by skipping a SAT prep course together. The characters tell their side of the story in their own unique voices, so readers know what's going on far before the characters do. This out-of-the-ordinary perspective allows for more suspense, insight, and connection as readers sympathize and relate to each specific character's personality and situation.</p> <p>Jennifer Hanni Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>The Dream Where the Losers Go</i> by Beth Goobie Orca Book Publishers, 2006, 204 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 1-55143-455-5</p> <p>Beth Goobie's <i>The Dream Where the Losers Go</i> immerses readers into a world of silent darkness and screaming light where the main character, high school junior Skey, wants to wake up from the nightmare that is her life. To find relief from the pain and scars on her wrists, Skey must battle the Dragons, her boyfriend, her mother, and most importantly, her own mind that will not allow her to remember how she got to the dark. Happiness seems as hopeless as sleep, until a boy enters the darkness with her and helps her find the light.</p> <p><i>The Dream Where the Losers Go</i> is the emotional saga of a girl searching for her lost soul. The novel delves into themes of divorce, abuse, suicide, anger, and love through entwined images of dark and light. Readers find them selves sharing Skey's pain and illusions from beginning to end, showing Goobie's great skill at creating imperfect characters readers can relate to.</p> <p>Jennifer Hanni Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Escape: The Story of the Great Houdini</i> by Sid Fleischman Greenwillow, 2006, 206 pp., \$18.99</p> <p>Biography ISBN: 978-0-06-085094-4</p> <p>Harry Houdini is, perhaps, America's most enigmatic hero, and Sid Fleischman brings is considerable storytelling skills to bear in this attempt to capture his illusive subject. In <i>Escape</i>, Fleischman traces the journey of Ehrich Weiss, from the Jewish ghetto of Budapest, became the Great Harry Houdini, from Appleton, Wisconsin.</p> <p>Houdini was as much a social phenomenon as a performer. The details of his life says as much about the American culture in the first two decades of the 20th century as they do about the man (in no small part because, as Fleischman documents again and again, the details of his life are shrouded in mystery and outright deception).</p> <p>That Houdini remains a source of fascination says a great deal about our need to witness the impossible, all the while knowing it isn't real. <i>Escape</i> provides today's adolescents a glimpse at the life of the man hanging suspended in the water-filled torture cell. The book is an essential addition to secondary school libraries, and it would be an excellent text for interdisciplinary or social studies units.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Exit Point by Laura Langston Orca Book Publishers, 2006, 110 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Paranormal Activity/Child Molestation ISBN: 1-55143-505-5</p> <p>Ostensibly a novel about the afterlife of narrator Logan, a 16-year-old victim of a car crash, the book may interest reluctant readers with its brevity and characterization of Logan and his grandmother, whom he meets in the afterlife, younger, smoking, and gambling. She is the most well-characterized person in the book. But close readers will notice that Logan is hardly sympathetic (he died racing cars after getting drunk one night, his preferred form of recreation), and that, while the afterlife is interesting, it can conform itself to almost anything the author wants to say.</p> <p>The author seems torn between developing her afterlife and making Logan's presence somewhat valid, by making his younger sister the victim of sexual molestation from their uncle.</p> <p>The novel becomes a race to stop another evening of molestation, and when Logan has accomplished his "mission," he is allowed to continue in his movement from the stations in the afterlife to a final resting point beyond.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">John Jacob Oak Park, IL</p>	<p>Exposure by Patricia Murdoch Orca Soundings, 2006, 102 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>Female Bullying ISBN: 1-55143-493-8 [pbk.] ISBN: 1-55143-523-3 [bound]</p> <p>Pudgy Julie has long been bullied by her high school's popular Dana. When Dana attends a party and exposes herself, she is photographed with Julie inadvertently finding the pictures. Julie, enjoying her new power, taunts Dana and eventually leaves the photo for the school to view. Dana threatens suicide and a chastised Julie visits her at home, where they discuss their antipathy and reconcile. Before Julie leaves, she discovers her visit stopped Dana from suicide.</p> <p>Although this large-print, fast-paced novel zips through female bullying and ends tidily, there is a compelling, albeit condensed, discussion of bullying from the viewpoints of the abuser and victim. The girls realize there were multiple factors leading to their actions, and understand that both are victims with difficult changes necessary to stop their behaviors.</p> <p>If educators embellish this subject it would be beneficial to all, for female bullying is increasing in school prevalence and violence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lisa A. Hazlett Vermillion, SD</p>
<p>French Kiss by Aimee Friedman Scholastic, 2006, 301 pp., \$8.99</p> <p>Romance/Friendship ISBN: 0-439-79281-9</p> <p>When sophisticated and fashionable Alexa St. James is abandoned in Paris by her insubordinate boyfriend, she turns to her estranged friend Holly, who is currently in England with her track team. Deserting her team, Holly rushes to Alexa's side. Both girls struggle with relationship issues, causing the distant friends to find comfort in each other's company and discover French romance seems to be just what the doctor ordered. Good girl Holly is torn between her love back home and a sizzling French suitor as risqué Alexa finds herself in over her head after being spurned by the mesmerizing artist that captures her heart.</p> <p>The bonds of friendship run deep as opposite personalities find balance with a few bumps and bruises along the way. Be swept off your feet and enjoy the ride as you experience the spiciness and worldly adventures that bring the two girls closer than ever.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Susan Gapp Vermillion, SD</p>	<p>The Frog Prince by Gillian McKnight Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster, 2006, 203 pp., \$8.25</p> <p>Romance/Friendship/Family Problems ISBN-13: 978-0-868-87735-3 ISBN-10: 0-689-87735-8</p> <p>Wealthy Alexis and Helene are seventeen, stepsisters, and best friends, especially as each pines for an absentee parent. Summer finds Helene's estranged father inviting her to Paris, with Alexis's mother proposing Greece. As Helene misses former boyfriend Lazlo, Alexis challenges her to attract Daniel D'Artois, dashing heir to Vedette, France's premier fashion house.</p> <p>Alexis joins Helene when her trip is cancelled, and they seamlessly enter Parisian high society. Alexis interns at Vedette with Helene named their new face, and romantic misunderstandings ensue among the girls, Daniel, and photographer Philippe. Happiness follows Lazlo's surprise arrival, Daniel revealing his homosexuality, Alexis and Philippe's pairing, and the girls' renewed parental relationships.</p> <p>Contrived plotlines assure tidy endings, and unfortunately Daniel is more device than character, with his attractiveness initially fostering the girls' jealousy and homosexuality ending their competition. Still, behind the opulence, younger girls will find likeable characters with universal parental and relationship problems and sound advice.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Lisa A. Hazlett Vermillion, SD</p>

<p>Hard Hit by Ann Turner Scholastic Press, 2006, 167 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Coming of Age/Cancer/Grief ISBN: 0-439-29680-3</p> <p>Mark Warren has a great life. He has a cool best friend. He's the star pitcher on his high school team, thanks in part to the endless hours his father put in as his catcher. The new girl notices him, and thanks to his mother's advice, he is able to carry on an intelligent conversation with her. His younger sister turned 13 and is a pain, but not bad as sisters go. But one lousy phone call, and Mark's world is forever changed. His dad's pancreatic cancer is back.</p> <p>Ann Turner's free-verse poem depicts the tide of emotions that inevitably rages through a family battling cancer. Middle school and high school students will quickly become attached to the characters and will find themselves gripped by this sensitive, well-told story.</p> <p>Vicki Sherbert Wakefield, KS</p>	<p>Harlem Hustle by Janet McDonald Francis Foster Books, 2006, 192 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>African Americans/Music ISBN: 0-374-37184-9</p> <p>Harlem is full of energy, life, and diversity. Hustle embodies the spirit of Harlem as a young African American teen with the dream of making it big as a rapper. A smart homeboy, Hustle knows his way around Harlem, where to shoplift and who to get to know to make it in the biz. Hustle is discovered at a party and for a short time believes this is the break he needs to enter the world of hip hop. But he soon discovers the world of rappers in gold chains with music labels is as crooked as the streets of Harlem. McDonald's story is full of the vibrant life that is Harlem, complete with contemporary language of the hip hop culture that appeals to teens of all races and backgrounds. Hustle's story is not predictable in that he examines his old ideas of what makes good lyrics and studies poetry in order to improve his own word play. This contemporary novel provides the interest needed for teen-age boys to get hooked immediately.</p> <p>Deana Cowan Maple Hill, KS</p>
<p>Heat by Mike Lupica Philomel, 2006, 220 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Baseball/Family ISBN: 0-399-24301-1</p> <p><i>Heat</i> is a well paced, steadily building novel that examines baseball, cultural identity, first love, and adulthood. When their father dies, Michael and his older brother are forced to fend for themselves. But should anyone find out their secret, they will be split up or worse...sent back to Cuba, spoiling Mike's chances of playing in the Little League World Series. This coming of age tale uses the America's past-time as backdrop for exploring multiple adolescent themes. The fairy-tale ending borders on the unbelievable, but overall the work is a terrific read for those looking for a dose of childhood baseball nostalgia.</p> <p>Curtis Chandler Wamego, KS</p>	<p>Hell Phone by William Sleator Amulet Books, 2006, 237 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Good vs. Evil/Wealth/Rights ISBN: 0-8109-5479-6</p> <p>This was a suspenseful thriller mystery intertwined with fantasy and romance. The compelling story was an easy read. Although the beginning of the story lacked vivid descriptors, it improved. The quick pace of the story keeps the reader interested and would appeal to young readers who enjoy thrillers with the mention of ghoulish creepiness. Young readers with the same socio-economic background could easily relate to the problems of Nick, the protagonist, a foolish and easily duped teenager with a trusting character. The author was superb with his depiction of the innocent youth being the unsuspecting target of unscrupulous characters.</p> <p>Paulette Clark Junction City, KS</p>

<p>Incantation by Alice Hoffmann Little, Brown and Co., 2006, 166 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Coming of Age/Historical Fiction ISBN: 0316010197</p> <p>This coming-of-age story about Estrella deMadrigal, set in medieval Spain, looks at contrasts and appearances. At first Estrella sees herself as the look-alike and sister to her best friend, Catalina. She also sees herself as a Christian. But when Estrella witnesses a book burning in the town's plaza, her world begins to change. Soon public denouncements and executions follow as the town fathers accuse all Jews of witch craft and sorcery. Estrella finally sees what has always been around her. There is a secret her family is protecting—secret knowledge of the Jews or kabbalah, which is taught in her family's house. Family rituals are really Jewish rituals and family members have secret names. Along her journey to selfhood, Estrella falls in love, loses her best friend, and survives horrific persecution.</p> <p>The historical setting and Biblical allusions add richness to this coming-of-age story. Alice Hoffmann's characters are well developed and speak with unique voices. This story will foster discussions about diversity, religious freedom, friendships, and betrayal. But, most of all, it is a poignant and often painful tale of growing up.</p> <p>Larisa Schumann Laie, HI</p>	<p>Little Secrets—Playing with Fire by Emily Blake Scholastic, 2006, 149 pp., \$8.99</p> <p>Friendship ISBN: 0-439-81053-1</p> <p>Alison Rose struggles with the embarrassment of her rich, strong mother being incarcerated and losing her boyfriend to her best friend, her cousin Kelly. At the beginning the reader wonders if Alison's mother is framed and will the mystery be revealed. Members of the family claim the maternal grandmother is responsible for her daughter's incarceration. Many skeletons are exposed in Alison's family and the families of her friends. As the story unfolds, the characters demonstrate the importance of belonging, acceptance, and friendship. During her mother's incarceration, Alison experiences more freedom to grow and solve her problems. She is reunited with an old friend she betrayed during 5th grade. Now, as they both struggle to find acceptance and fit in, they work through their problems and become allies. A naïve' Alison grows during the story to become a strong opponent.</p> <p>Paulette Clark Junction City, KS</p>
<p>Long Gone Daddy by Helen Hemphill Front Street, 2006, 169 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fathers-Son Relationships/Religions ISBN: 1-932425-38-1</p> <p>This was a delightful story that let the reader feel the emotions and battles of a teenage boy trying to understand his thoughts and life—separate from the thinking of his father, the preacher. His struggles bring out the bitter anger within himself when he tries to express his feelings and opinions. Harlan Q, the protagonist, begins his relationship with his paternal grandfather on the cold, mortuary-embalming table. While he and his father transport the grandfather's body to its final resting place in Las Vegas, they encounter a young philosopher, Warrior, who gently opens the minds of Harlan Q and his father. The journey unravels the mystery of the grandfather and the world to Harlan Q. He experiences a world outside his hometown and realizes his own vulnerability.</p> <p>Paulette Clark Junction City, KS</p>	<p>Monkey Town by Ronald Kidd Simon and Schuster, 2006, 259 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Evolution ISBN: 978-1-4169-0572-1</p> <p>Given the recent debate regarding “intelligent design,” Kidd's <i>Monkey Town</i> is especially timely. Inspired by a chance meeting with the daughter of one of the key players in the Scopes Monkey Trial, Kidd carefully researched the events of the summer of 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, and young people with an interest in the evolution controversy should find this a compelling read.</p> <p>Kidd's novel retells the Scopes story as one of a small town struggling to survive in the face of economic hardship. Town leaders see in the ACLU's offer to defend any teacher charged under the state's new anti-evolution law an opportunity to bring attention, publicity, and prosperity to Dayton. With the consent of John Scopes, the trial moves forward, ultimately to become part of American mythology.</p> <p><i>Monkey Town</i> provides an accessible glimpse into an important incident in American history and culture. The book is especially well-suited for interdisciplinary studies, and the topic should be of interest to many contemporary students.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>

<p><i>Pretty Little Devils</i> by Nancy Holder Razorbill (Penguin), 2006, 250 pp., \$14.99</p> <p>Suspense/Murder/Mystery ISBN: 1-59514-030-1</p> <p>Hazel Stone longs to be part of the popular high school crowd, but her good looks and classy style haven't been enough to move her up the social ladder. Imagine Hazel's excitement when Sylvia Orly, the most popular girl, recruits her to be a member of The Pretty Little Devils, undoubtedly the most elite group. Hazel will pay any price to prove her worthy, enduring an induction of social lessons, devilish tactics, and sinister pranks. Alarm sets in when no one from within the group claims credit for mysterious threatening messages, casting suspicion on various outside enemies.</p> <p>This book will keep the reader on the edge of their seat as suspects' motives are revealed, but prepare for ultimate suspense when the murders begin. Cleverly written using personal blog style dialogue, it is a must-read for suspense thrillers.</p> <p>Susan Gapp Vermillion, SD</p>	<p><i>The Rise of Lubchenko</i> by Michael Simmons Razorbill (Penguin), 2006, 218 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Bioterrorism Espionage/Adventure ISBN: 1-59514-061-1</p> <p>Evan Macalister, teenage protagonist of <i>The Rise of Lubchenko</i>, is an even more unlikely hero than Clark Kent. Author Michael Simmons combines a rebellious yet insecure, sleep-through-class smart guy with a save-the-world adventure seeker to create one sarcastic, vulnerable, funny, likable, somehow believable character.</p> <p>Male readers will vicariously enjoy Evan's James Bondian adventures to prevent a smallpox epidemic planned by his father's business partner without revealing his own illegal theft and sales of his father's office equipment. They will identify with his more ordinary problems (a distant dad, failing grades), all of which Simmons handles lightly-handedly yet sincerely. They will also appreciate Simmons' fast-paced, no-nonsense, humorous style.</p> <p><i>The Rise of Lubchenko</i> offers something not always easy to find—a good casual read for middle-school and high-school guys.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>
<p><i>Sand Dollar Summer</i> by Kimberly K. Jones Simon & Schuster, 2006, 206 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Family/Friendship ISBN: 1-4169-0362-3</p> <p>Lise, a twelve-year-old girl, thinks her life is over when her mother moves the family to a beach in Maine for the summer. Unknown to Lise and her five-year-old brother, this is where their mother grew up many years ago. As the family deals with living in a ramshackle beach house, Lise is battling with her fear of the sea, and is constantly questioning why her mother has brought them here.</p> <p>Friendship, family, and love are continuing themes in the first novel of Kimberly K. Jones, who lives on the East Coast and brings knowledge of the sea into her writing.</p> <p>Bonny Martens Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Store-Bought Baby</i> by Sandra Belton Greenwillow Books, 2006, 246 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Death of a Sibling ISBN: 978-0-06-085086-9</p> <p>Leah's life as a high school teen-age girl has fallen apart. She should be worrying about chemistry and track practice, not wondering how her life will go on without her spirited brother Luce who had a way of making everyone feel special. Since the car wreck killed her brother, Leah questions her own life. Do her parents love her the same as they loved Luce? Why doesn't her mother take an interest in her life the way she did in Luce's? How can she go on living when Luce is no longer part of her life? Sandra Belton's novel not only explores the themes of death, family loss, coming of age, and love, but it also concerns adoption. In the story, Leah becomes obsessed with the fact that her brother Luce was adopted. As Leah comes to terms with her life and her family without Luce, she learns families are made, not necessarily born, and that life goes on after one of the family members dies.</p> <p>Deana Cowan Maple Hill, KS</p>

<p>Stuffed by Eric Walters Orca Soundings, 2006, 108 pp., \$7.95</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Moral Issues/Friendship ISBN: 1-55143-500-4 (pbk.) ISBN: 1-55143-519-5 (bound)</p> <p>When fifteen-year-old Ian views <i>Stuffed</i>, an exposé of the Frankie's fast food chain and similar to the real <i>Super Size Me</i>, his class project emerges. He likes Frankie's food, but dislikes their unhealthy ingredients, toys and gimmicks used to entice customers, and negative corporate policies. He posts his suggestion of a one-day Frankie's boycott on the Internet.</p> <p>Ian reaches millions with hundreds responding, including Frankie's attorneys, who offer his school a free Frankie's lunch in lieu of boycotting. Ian and Frankie's attorney present their positions to Ian's entire school, with students unanimously selecting to boycott. Tidily, Ian is offered a future position by opposing council, the girl he secretly likes calls, and Frankie's menu becomes healthier.</p> <p>Ian is an intelligent, witty narrator, and this fast-paced, large-print novel explores the seamy sides of the fast-food industry and legal profession while revealing the business tactics of each as being remarkably similar.</p> <p>Lisa A. Hazlett Vermillion, SD</p>	<p>To Catch a Prince by Gillian McKnight Simon Pulse, 2006, 254 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>Romantic Fiction/Travel/Humor ISBN-13: 976-0-689-87734-6 ISBN-10: 0-689-87734-X</p> <p>Two beautiful 16-year-old rich girls, Helene and Alexis, best friends and step-sisters, fly off to London for a summer of adventure and fun. On the way, they make a bet as to who can ensnare the heart of Prince William first. In the past, these two have made a point of choosing different activities to avoid competition. This ill-advised bet throws their relationship awry. Meanwhile, in their pursuit of a stodgy, self-centered, and unromantic prince, they don't see the two far superior boys pining for them in front of their noses until it is almost too late. In spite of the book's standard disclaimer that all the characters are fictional, the author does seem to delight in taking a few unnecessary potshots at the heir to the British crown. Nevertheless, the book is a light fantasy escape into the lives of the likes of more virginal Paris Hiltons.</p> <p>Myrna Marler Late, HI</p>
<p>Tyrell by Coe Booth Push (Scholastic), 2006, 310 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Inner-city Teen Struggles ISBN: 0-439-83879-7</p> <p>Tyrell's world is not easy to hear about. A homeless African-American teen in the Bronx, Tyrell's goal is to hold his family together and move his spaced-out mother and seven-year-old brother "home" to the projects. Available money-making ventures, though, also involve brushes with the law, and Tyrell doesn't want to end up in jail like his father: "I don't wanna be the kinda man my pops turned out to be. . . . Nah. I'ma hafta do better than him."</p> <p>Readers listen to Tyrell for just one week, but that is enough to recognize the frustration of his world. "I really wanna put my fist through the wall. . . . I gotta do something. I wanna go somewhere, but I don't got nowhere to go."</p> <p>Born in the Bronx, author Coe Booth continues to live there, and this first novel takes mature readers there, too.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>	<p>Vampire Beach: Bloodlust by Alex Duval Simon Pulse, 2006, 196 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>Vampirism ISBN: 978-1-4169-1166-1</p> <p>This is a well-written tale of school life in Malibu, and this book is only one in a series of books about Jason and his sister, Dani, and their "friends" in the high school where they have come to live.</p> <p>The vampires stay hidden for fully half of the book, allowing the reader to become familiar with the teens who inhabit the country's most elite high school. The parties, the obnoxious spending, and the cliques are largely glossed over as one of the vampires turns rogue and kills someone. In this haven for vampirism, the condition has existed for more than a century, and though some scenes come from films like <i>Fright Night</i> and <i>The Lost Boys</i>, Jason does seem to have something of a normal life. The vampire he lusts after—sexually—explains that vampires only take enough blood to stay relatively young. Only rogue vampires kill and, of course, Jason must confront both the rogue and his competition at school, in a tale that is meant to flow into other stories.</p> <p>John Jacob Oak Park, IL</p>

<p><i>Wait for Me</i> by An Na G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2006, 169 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Realistic Fiction ISBN: 0-399-24275-9</p> <p>Creating a dream-like state through language and point of view in <i>Wait for Me</i>, An Na tells the story of a Korean-American girl searching for her own dreams, while trying to live up to her mother's high aspirations of a Harvard education. While some of the language and situations may be culturally specific, all readers will connect with the fear, anger, desperation, passion, and struggle with parents Mina feels, as well as fall in love with Ysrael, the boy who flips her tormented world upside down, forcing her to decide exactly what she, and not her mother, wants.</p> <p><i>Wait for Me</i>'s chapters switch focus between the protagonist, older sister Mina, and her younger hearing-impaired sister Suna. Mina's chapters are written in first person, while Suna's are written in third person, creating an interesting dynamic of voice and point of view. This point of view floats readers outside reality into a world where truth, reality, and fantasy intertwine.</p> <p>Jennifer Hanni Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Waking</i> by Alyxandra Harvey-Fitzhenry Orca, 2006, 119 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Self Discovery/Death/Relationships ISBN: 1-55143-489-x</p> <p>Beauty feels alienated around her classmates. But so would you if you had to shave your legs at school and cover your scratches because your father was paranoid about sharp objects. Ever since her mother died, Beauty has had to deal with strange changes like being haunted by a Shadow Lady in her dreams.</p> <p>It isn't until Beauty is assigned to work with the odd new girl, Luna, that Beauty begins to find peace in her life. Luna introduces Beauty to the carefree, hippie-like philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelites who created the great works of art and poetry that Beauty admires. By adopting this new outlook, Beauty is able to discover herself and to find a place among her peers. In addition, her newfound confidence aids her to overcome her nightmares and leave behind the horrors of her mother's death.</p> <p>Diana Harter Provo, UT</p>
<p><i>The Winter Road</i> by Terry Hokenson Front Street, 2006, 175 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Coming of Age/Adventure ISBN: 1932425454</p> <p>Willia Raedl is frustrated with her life. School is unfulfilling, and at home she feels ignored and unimportant. Ever since her brother Ray died, it seems her family has been disconnected and numb to her feelings.</p> <p>On one particularly challenging day, Willa sees an opportunity to prove to her family—and to herself—that she is more capable and responsible than they often believe her to be. When she discovers her uncle is not in any condition to fly out and transport her mother from one city to another, she decides to fly his plane over to pick up her mother herself.</p> <p>After trying to navigate through a blizzard, the plane crashes in a snowy wilderness, and she must figure out how to survive deathly cold temperatures with only a few supplies and the knowledge she has gained over the years from her father and uncle.</p> <p>Terry Hokenson's first, <i>The Winter Road</i> is a story of survival and self discovery and shows how one girl finds value in herself through determination and perseverance.</p> <p>Suzy Oertel Topeka, KS</p>	<p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> Lori Goodson 409 Cherry Circle Manhattan, KS 66503</p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagoodson@cox.net</i></p>

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Quantity and Quality:

The Need for Culturally Authentic Trade Books in Asian-American Young Adult Literature

I walked into *Borders* bookstore to buy a birthday present for a friend of mine who is also a public school teacher. I wanted to purchase some Asian-American children's trade books for her classroom library. To my dismay, this huge bookseller was limited in its supply of books representing the Asian-American experience. Outside of the recent Newbery-award winner, *Kira-Kira* (Kadohata, 2004), Asian-American children's literature was not visible or easily available. I scoured the shelves before soliciting help from a salesperson who pointed out a handful of folktales and a couple of books about the internment of Japanese-Americans. There were an even smaller number of books representing the contemporary experiences of Asian-Americans. Adding insult to injury, the salesperson shared with me how much she loved *The Five Chinese Brothers* (Bishop & Wiese, 1938), a book that many consider to be an affront to Asian-Americans and which has been deemed by scholars to be racist and inauthentic (Cai 1994).

This incident clearly illustrates an important point about Asian-American trade books today. In spite of the fact that there are more than 12 million Asian-Americans in this country, only a small percentage of the children's trade books published focus on this group. For example, Lee (n.d.) of Lee & Low Books stated that only 1.5% of all children's books published in 1997 were about Asians and/or Asian-Americans and Bucher & Manning (2006) reported that out of 5000 books published in the year 2002, only 91 were by and about Asian-Americans (39). The lack of books focusing on this group presents particular disadvantages in the classroom setting. Because few titles exist,

children gain little exposure to Asian-Americans from the books they read in their classrooms. In addition, teachers may lack awareness of whether or not Asian-Americans are portrayed accurately in the books they choose. As a result, students may be denied the opportunity to see into this culture through books; thus, they are denied windows into other cultures. Furthermore, children who are themselves Asian-American are denied the opportunity to see themselves mirrored in books.

Lost in the Literature: A Paucity in the Classroom of YAL by, for and about Asian-Americans

Research tells us that using multicultural children's literature is effective and beneficial (Banks, 2003; Cai, 2002; Bishop, 1992; Lindgren, 1992). Such literature can play an important role in classroom instruction. It provides reading materials and serves as springboards for critical thinking. These trade books supply students with images, ideas and models. In the absence of, or preferably in conjunction with, real-life role models, books can be a powerful tool for promoting cultural understanding. Cai (2002) suggests that multicultural literature is a means of achieving the goals of "diversity and equity in education" (13). He suggests that reading about diverse perspectives enhances multicultural awareness which enables us to recognize things like power and privilege, which may otherwise be invisible to some people. Bishop (1994) contends that multicultural literature is a "vehicle for socialization and change" (43). Scholars and research-

ers advocate for multicultural children's trade books; but, questions remain about the extent to which teachers are actively selecting and using these books in their classroom practice.

We know that students disengage from education when they see little congruence between home and school (Montecinos, 1994). We also know that teachers play a powerful role in shaping the learning environment, which includes the selection and employment of trade books. Bishop (1992) states, “. . .

the book choices teachers and others make have potential consequences for children. If literature is a mirror that reflects human life, then all children who read or are read to need to see themselves reflected as part of humanity. If they are not, or if their reflections are distorted and ridiculous, there is the danger that they will absorb negative messages about themselves and people like them” (43). In spite of such research supporting a multicultural approach—an approach that nurtures and favors the representation of heritage languages and cultures—many classroom teachers continue to teach from a one dimensional perspective, inadvertently overlooking the voices of marginalized groups and/or people of color.

There appears to be a disconnect between what we know and what we practice in the classrooms in terms of multicultural children's literature. We know that pedagogy based on mainstream American values “will, of course, continue to privilege those who feel most at home in the classroom” (Finders 1997 119). According to Heath (1983), common classroom practices support white, middle-class values; as a result, students who do not fit this mold often feel disconnected. In order to better serve our students, we need to bridge what we know with what we do in the classrooms. One solution could be to select and employ high-quality, authentic literature, especially multicultural children's literature. All students will benefit from learning about multiple perspectives. Practitioners have a great deal of power in regard to the selection and use of multicultural literature.

Key Constructs and Terminology

Because this article may involve constructs and terminology that may be loosely defined and employed, it is sensible at this point to define the following terms (listed in alphabetical order and written in bold type):

1. **Asian-American:** Encompassing diverse groups of people differing in culture, language, and belief systems, an “Asian-American” is a U.S. citizen or resident with origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, Indian subcontinent or the Pacific Islands which may include (but is not limited to) those from the following ethnic heritages: Cambodian, Chinese, East Indian, Filipino, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, and Vietnamese (Pang, 1995; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).
2. **Children's Literature:** This is a blanket term that often refers to board books, picture books, middle grade books and young adult books. These are books written for and about children and young adults (Galda & Callinan, 2002). They are categorized as narratives (fiction) and nonnarratives (nonfiction). They include (but are not limited to) the following genres: poetry and verse, folklore, fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, historical fiction, and biographies.
3. **Contemporary Realistic Fiction:** This is a genre, or category, of literature. These fiction stories or problem novels use contemporary, or current, plots, themes, settings, and characters to depict the world as we know it. The storylines are familiar and realistic. They are essentially fictional stories that are “true to life” (Bucher & Manning 87)
4. **Cultural Authenticity:** According to Short & Fox (2003), cultural authenticity generally refers to the degree which a book reflects the “values, facts, and attitudes” (5) of a particular cultural group. Howard (1991) claims that an authentic book is one in which “readers from the culture will know that it is true” (p. 92) and “readers from another culture will feel that it is true” (92). Both Howard (1991) and Karem (2004) also note the importance of reader response in defining authenticity as the reader must accept and believe what is being represented. It is prudent to note that scholars have a difficult time agreeing on an established definition of cultural authenticity (Short & Fox, 2003).
5. **Membership:** Membership is usually affiliated with racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Nonmembers, persons who are not of a particular racial, ethnic or cultural background, are also referred to as outsiders; Members are referred to as insiders. In the literature, there is generally more debate concerning nonmembers, who are criticized for not being able to represent the “nuances of day to day living” (Bishop 43) of another culture; whereas, members are assumed to have access and knowledge of cultural codes that allow them to accurately represent themselves.
6. **Multicultural children's literature:** According to Bishop (1992), multicultural children's literature consists of “literature by and about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the socio-political mainstream of the United States” (39).
7. **Perspectives:** An ethnic, or insider, perspective is one in which the author and reader clearly know about the particular cultural group represented. In producing culturally authentic literature, Cai (2002) notes the importance of an insider perspective which is needed to truthfully reflect and evaluate “the reality of an ethnic culture” (41). He does suggest that one does not necessarily have to be a member to have an insider perspective. On the other hand, an outsider perspective denotes someone who does not have a “special sense of reality” (Cai 41) meaning he/she is obviously unknowledgeable about and unfamiliar with the lived experiences of that specific culture.
8. **Trade Books:** These texts are literature-based books that employ authentic and natural language instead of controlled vocabulary and syntax. They are in direct opposition to basal readers or textbooks (NCREL, 2005).

The use or non-use of multicultural children's literature affects all children. Klein (1998) posits that children of color may not view their color and culture as significant if they only look out into a world of all-white faces; they need role models and positive representations which may increase their self-esteem and self-development. On the other hand, Anglo-

Cai (2002) suggests that multicultural literature is a means of achieving the goals of "diversity and equity in education" (13). He suggests that reading about diverse perspectives enhances multicultural awareness which enables us to recognize things like power and privilege, which may otherwise be invisible to some people.

American children may view themselves to be superior due to the lack of exposure. Without any opportunities to observe diverse cultures and heritages, these Anglo-American children may not be able to understand and respect differences and diversity. In the absence of culturally-authentic representations, children may be exposed to racist and sexist attitudes, which can be perpetuated by books and other media (Leung, 2003). Over time, such pervasive images can distort their perceptions allowing stereotypes to become reality. In the absence of culturally authentic texts, Asian American students may continue to be stereotyped

and neglected. Wills and Mehan note, "Women and people of color must be visible in specific historical events to be visible in history. Furthermore, they must appear as active participants, that is, social actors who made sense of their circumstances and orient their actions to others around them" (8).

In many cases, however, multicultural texts are additions to classroom libraries and not necessarily the foci of classroom practice. For example, the Asian-American experience is often relegated to Chinese New Year and/or lessons surrounding the California Gold Rush and transcontinental railroad; such practices may promote tokenism (Banks, 2003). Also, the

current practice of using these books for holidays may promote exoticism (Willis-Rivera & Meeker, 2002) as Asian-Americans are placed outside the common historical narrative (Wills & Mehan, 1996). Thus, the effective use of multicultural children's literature, via employment of a critical lens, may better equip them to function in a pluralistic society (Leung, 2003).

At the American Educational Research Association's 2004 Annual Conference in San Diego, three recurring themes became prevalent in regards to research on Asian-American student populations. First, despite growing numbers, their existence continues to be nearly invisible. According to the U.S. Census (2002), there are an estimated 12 million Asian-Americans in the United States, or about 4 percent of the total population. In addition, Asian-Americans are one of the fastest growing groups in the nation. Over the last decade there was a 69 percent growth in that population, and their numbers are expected to reach 20 million by 2020. So, why aren't they better represented in our mainstream culture? If addressed at all, Asian-American issues tend to be brushed under the larger umbrella of multiculturalism and diversity or even, urban education.

Third, Asian-American students are in desperate need of positive role models and advocates, which includes teachers of color. Pang's (1995) research suggests that Asian-Americans have lower levels of self-esteem than their counterparts. For Asian-American youth, the consequences of not having role models and positive images to help counter pressures brought on prevailing stereotypes especially the model minority myth may include the following: high suicide attempt rates, low self-esteem, increase in drug and alcohol abuse, increase in promiscuity, etc. (Siu, 1996; Grunbaum, et.al, 2000; Lee, 2003). In reviewing 34 studies of juvenile delinquency among Asian-Pacific Islanders published since 1970, Le (2002) found that Asian/Pacific Islanders are increasing their presence in the juvenile justice system whereas black and white youths are decreasing in their numbers. Le also suggests that contributing factors for gang affiliation and juvenile delinquency among Asian-Pacific Islanders are stresses related to assimilation and post-traumatic war syndrome especially among southeast Asian youth. In addition, Jenkins & Austin (as cited by Dowd, 1992) assert that books reflecting the diversity

of the pan-Asian-American experience especially of Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants are lacking; so this particular ethnic group may be at more risk.

Consequences of Under-Representation

Because Asian-Americans are not adequately and/or positively represented in the textbooks, literature, and other media images, they may be marginalized. Because of this, children may be denied the opportunity to read and learn about their native heritages. Due to the paucity of Asian-American trade books, children may also lack exposure to positive and realistic portrayals of Asian-Americans in life and in books; as a result, they may rely on gross stereotypes and superficial assumptions when making judgments about people and about themselves. There is evidence suggesting that Asian-Americans feel trapped by stereotypes and prevailing negative images and are thus, often misunderstood and/or ignored (Lee, 2003). These conceptions may even affect the adult lives of Asian-Americans. For example, Liang, Lee, and Ting (2002), in their study of Asian-Americans and glass ceilings, claim that as a result of Asian-Americans being stereotyped as passive, unassertive and docile, they are perceived to be lacking in leadership skills and thus, are denied positions of power.

Such positioning and mis-representation may result in other unfavorable consequences. The following have been associated with the young Asian-American community: high suicide attempt rates, low self-esteem, increase in drug and alcohol abuse, increase in promiscuity, high participation in gangs, etc. (Siu, 1996; Grunbaum, et.al, 2000; Lee, 2003). This may or may not be due to a lack of role models and positive images. However, the research does suggest the importance of role models especially for students of color (Keith & Keith, 1993; Finders, 1997; Sheets, 2001; Applied Research Center, 2002; Bell, 2002; Baldwin, 2004; Montecinos, 2004). In order to give the Asian-American experience agency and power and to re-position Asian-Americans inside the common American narrative (Wills & Mehan, 1996), teachers and students need access to culturally-authentic texts.

Thus, increasing the quantity and quality of Asian-American children's literature may help to increase their visibility, counter prevailing stereotypes and provide positive images and role models. Accord-

ing to Bishop (1992), multicultural literature is a "vehicle for socialization and change." In schools, texts which include literature, textbooks, etc. are used to disseminate knowledge and to produce and reproduce society (Mehan & Robert, 2001). Unfortunately, the literature suggests that there is a scarcity of culturally-relevant materials (Bishop, 1992; Lee, n.d.; Wills & Mehan, 1996; Yeh, Chen, Kwang, Chiang, Wang, & Pu-Folkes, 2002).

Given this scarcity, students will continue to lack the necessary information to understand diverse voices and thus, they may fail to bring marginalized groups of people into the "common narrative" (Wills & Mehan). Therefore, there is a real need to increase the quantity and quality of high-quality, culturally-authentic Asian-American trade books in classrooms. Lee (2003) writes, "students need a truly multicultural curriculum that challenges the idea that Asianness and Americanness are mutually exclusive categories" (48).

It is important to note that there is a difference between Asians and Asian-Americans. For example, a Chinese person growing up in China will have a significantly different experience from a Chinese person growing up in America. Thus, my definition of this genre encompasses those of an Asian ethnic background who were born or who are residing in the United States of America. This is inclusive of immigration and emigration experiences. Books which feature an Asian-American traveling and/or living abroad are included. It is also important to note that not all books featuring Asian-Americans can be considered Asian-American literature (Bishop, 1982) as some books will have Asian-American characters but ignore the Asian-American experience.

"Asian-American." What Does It Mean? Understanding the Diversity

It is important to address the term "Asian-American," which is complex and diverse. Encompassing diverse groups of people differing in culture,

If addressed at all, Asian-American issues tend to be brushed under the larger umbrella of multiculturalism and diversity or even urban education.

The term “Asian-American” includes (but is not limited to) those from the following ethnic heritages: Cambodian, Chinese, East Indian, Filipino, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, and Vietnamese (Pang, 1995).

language, and belief systems, the term “Asian-American” includes (but is not limited to) those from the following ethnic heritages: Cambodian, Chinese, East Indian, Filipino, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, and Vietnamese (Pang, 1995). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), an Asian-American is “a U.S. citizen or resident having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands.”

This diversity and richness of the Asian-American experience may be a leading factor in its failure to be adequately represented in the publishing world as there is much confusion and inter-ethnic strife. When examining the inter-ethnic politics of these groups, one will find that there are prejudices and dissent among Asian-Americans. For example, historically, there is animosity between Koreans and Japanese because of the Japanese occupation of Korea. In addition, Far East Asians tend to have prejudices toward Southeast Asians as they consider Southeast Asians to be from a third world mentality. To further complicate the matter, there are also differences between American-born and immigrant Asians as well as differences between generations of Asian-Americans.

However, the Asian-American identity is more similar than different. In addition to sharing similar physical traits, Asian-Americans share the common experience of assimilating and acculturating into a dominant Anglo-American, middle-class culture. Aoki (1992) stresses the importance of not over-generalizing differences between cultural groups.

Cultural Authenticity

Cultural authenticity looks at how accurately people of color are represented and/or portrayed in

the text specific to their culture (Mikkelsen, 1998; Higgins, 2002). Because cultural authenticity is influenced by power and perspective, a concrete definition is hard to operationalize. Different cultural groups have different criteria for cultural authenticity (Higgins, 2002). Whether or not a book is culturally authentic is often the subject of analytical discussions; however, what exactly is cultural authenticity is not clearly defined. Karem (2004) contends, “Reviewers from different aesthetic and ideological extremes have argued about what was authentic about a text or culture in their historical moment, but few of them have eschewed authenticity as a category of critical judgment” (6). The scarce use of cultural authenticity as a judgment criteria may be a result of an ambiguous understanding of cultural authenticity. For the most part, an authentic work illustrates one’s intimate familiarity with the nuances of a culture and that this may or may not be a result of one’s ethnicity (Yokota, 1993).

Much of the controversy that surrounds cultural authenticity deals with authorship. Nonmembers, usually Anglo-Americans writing about cultures and people outside of their cultural background are subject to the most criticism (Bishop, 1992). The general assumption, which is not accepted by all scholars, is that nonmembers, also referred to as outsiders, are unable to represent the “nuances of day to day living” (43) of another culture. Some scholars (Aoki, 1992; Mikkelsen, 1998; Slapin & Seale, 1992) maintain that authentic books are only those written by members, also referred to as insiders, as they have access and knowledge of cultural codes that allow them to accurately represent themselves. However, other scholars (Barrera, Liguori & Salas, 1992; Howard, 1991) acknowledge nonmembers who have researched and/or immersed themselves in another culture as being able to produce authentic books. In this sense, a culturally-authentic book is one in which the details truthfully represent the culture as determined by a member of that culture.

The History of Asian-American Children’s YAL

Children’s literature is playing a more important role in the educational and family trade books market as evidenced by its increasing numbers. In 1940, only 984 books were published for children (Mendoza &

Reese, 2001). Today, the children's book market publishes over 5000 books a year (Sautter, 2005), which suggests that there is a growing awareness of the power of these books. The two main influences for this increase are its use as a vehicle for helping children understand and cope with complex decisions and the renewed educational focus on authentic stories for literacy and language development (Ayala, 1999). Because children's literature is perceived to have an influential role in the socialization of children, representations or lack of representations of women and people of color in these books have come under closer scrutiny (Boutte, 2002). Unfortunately, there still remains an imbalance in the types of books being published and consumed.

Compared to the number of children's books published each year, multicultural trade books, although increasing, still only make up a small percentage of the market. For instance, out of 5000 books published in the year 2002, only 91 were by and about Asian-Americans (Bucher & Manning, 2006). In addition, the number of multicultural books published is still not commensurate with current demographics (Higgins, 2002; Nilsson, 2005). For example, even though there are more than 12 million Asian-Americans in this country, only a small percentage of the children's trade books published focus on this group; Lee (n.d.) of Lee & Low Books stated that only 1.5% of all children's books published in 1997 were about Asians and/or Asian-Americans. Furthermore, of the few that are published, only a small percentage could be considered to be culturally authentic (Barrera, Liguori & Salas, 1992; Sims, 1982; Bishop, 1992; Higgins, 2002). Other studies conducted by scholars such as Cobb and Reimer (as cited by Klein, 1998) have produced the same results: (1) the number of multicultural children's trade books are not commensurate with the demographics and (2) children's trade books have evidence of stereotyping (Ayala, 1999; Nilsson, 2005). In addition, Pace's 1992 study (as cited by Boutte, 2002) noted that high school literature anthologies were not ethnically diverse. These studies support the notion that there are problems with representation, quantity and quality.

Despite the increase in books written specifically for ethnic audiences and by ethnic writers, Anglo-American perspectives still controlled and continue to control much of the publishing markets. As a result,

people of color diverged from the mainstream and formed small presses and established writing contests and awards for ethnic writers and illustrators (Lindgren, 1991). For example, Asian-American children's literature began to emerge from such writing contests and publishing houses such as Lee & Low (Lindgren, 1991). The majority of multicultural children's books written from ethnic frames of reference continue to be from small, independent presses (Mendoza & Reese, 2001).

First, most Asian-American children's trade books focus on the Chinese-American or Japanese-American experience; however, the Korean-American and Vietnamese-American experiences are on the rise. This means that other Asian ethnicities like Hmong, Laotian, etc. are not well-represented. Second, there are three popular story themes prevalent in this genre: (1) stories about the U.S. immigration experience as a result of oppression in native countries, (2) stories about the prejudices newcomers face, and (3) stories about coming to terms with one's cultural heritage while adjusting or assimilating to an American lifestyle. Third, there is a need for more contemporary realistic fiction trade books as there exists significantly more Asian folklore. Fourth, most of the historical fiction addresses the Japanese internment experience. Fifth, most nonfiction books are about the lives of recent immigrants. From these trends, we ascertain that there needs to be a more substantial and rich body of literature reflective of the diverse experiences of being Asian-American.

Despite this, it is encouraging that Asian-American children's literature continues to grow. The research on Asian-American children's literature is also increasing albeit disproportionately. Such research is important in that it allows us to better assess the status of this genre and advocate for appropriate changes. For example, Louie (1993) examined eight young adult novels with Asian-American characters published between 1987 and 1992. She found that these books projected typical stereotypes with weak and indecisive characters such as the "Suzy Wong"

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and “model minority” caricatures. She also found that three characters rejected their Asian-American heritages and that only three stories contained mature and realistic characters. Louie felt that there weren’t enough Asian-American stories and too few that contained male characters. Klein’s study (1998) provides another example of the problem with representation. Over a period of 31 years, Klein (1998) studied the recommended reading lists for high school students put out by the National Council of Teachers of English. She found that Asian-Americans were the only ethnic group to decrease in percentage of annotations from 1964 to 1995. They were also the only ethnic group to still have the majority of the settings take place in another country and to not have

their characters increase in importance. Although their roles were less stereotypical, they weren’t necessarily more varied. The most common roles for Asian-Americans were “coming of age,” “warrior,” “civilian in war,” and “professional.” The roles that decreased were “leader,” “culture,” “romance,” and “self-sufficient” (27). The most common story lines were those of immigration and assimilation. As a result of studies such as these, authors, teachers and publishing houses may be influenced to produce higher quality and more authentic literature.

Even though representation remains problematic, the quality of Asian-American children’s literature has improved over time. In Harada’s (1995) study of the portrayal of Asian-Americans in picture books, she found that 90% of the books had positive and non-stereotypical portrayals and 80% of the books had proactive characters. Harada’s main criticism was that only five main groups are represented in the literature: Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos and Vietnamese. Similarly, a study conducted by Pankratz (as cited by Klein, 1998) also showed how there have been positive changes over time. In 1980, Asian-Americans were mainly depicted as impoverished; whereas, in 1990, 25% of them were of average wealth and 75% were

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impoverished. She also found that in 1980, no Asian-Americans were depicted as main characters; in 1990, 66.6% played major roles and 33.3% held minor roles. Klein (1998) also cites another study examining the percentage of reference books with multicultural topics. Asian-Americans at first had no representation and then by volume 30, were listed 0.3%. This is good but it’s not good enough; Asian-Americans are still misrepresented and underrepresented in trade books.

As evidenced by these studies, the 1990s saw an emergence of critical research and literature examining children’s literature for bias, stereotyping, etc. (Mendoza & Reese, 2001). They used primary sources for historical and cultural information, raising issues of

accuracy and authenticity, questioning perspectives and even the motives of Anglo-American writers writing about people of color. However, these studies are mainly published in less widely-known and prestigious journals and non-mainstream presses. Given that recognition and availability are the main motives for buying and using books, awards and reviews are also significant factors in sales and dissemination. Mendoza and Reese (2001) contend that reviewers and award committees rarely consider issues of cultural and historical accuracy and authenticity. In addition, Dowd (1992) contends that the voices of Asian-American authors and artists are minimized by mainstream presses; thus, smaller presses more often than not publish multicultural books. As such, these smaller presses do not have the marketing capacities and recognition as the larger presses.

Representations of Asian-Americans: Problematizing the Status Quo

As aforementioned, Klein (1998) found that the percentage of multicultural trade books on the recommended reading lists devised by the National

Council of Teachers of English has increased over a period of 31 years; however, she noted that the percentage of Asian-American trade books did not increase during this period. In addition, for all groups except for Asian-Americans, multicultural characters have increased in importance meaning Asian-American characters have not played significant roles. A number of scholars observed that the Asian-American identity is often overlooked by dominant society as evidenced by its lack of representation in the mainstream literature (Cai, 2002). Aoki (1992) writes, "Asian Pacific American people have been separated from Asia and the Pacific by geography, culture, and history for more than seven generations. We have more than 150 years of history in America, yet where are we in the literature?" (112-113). With the growing Asian-American student population, there is a real necessity for books that represent this culture. It is important for all students and especially, Asian-American students, to be exposed to positive, non-stereotypical images of Asian-Americans. Furthermore, Asian-American students need to feel validation and pride for the contributions and achievements of other Asian-Americans.

Why do Asian-Americans continue to be lost in the literature and school curriculums? Asian-Americans have experiences, people and histories that extend beyond Chinese New Year. The lack of adequate representations of Asian-Americans is detrimental to all of our students in that: (1) the proliferation of degrading stereotypes serve to dehumanize the history, lives and experiences of Asian-Americans which fosters racism and prejudice; and (2) the absence or silencing of insider perspectives marginalizes Asian-Americans which encourages cultural separatism (Willis-Rivera & Meeker, 2002). In this marginalization of Asian-Americans and other minorities from popular discourse, we may continue to replicate current systems of white, patriarchal hegemonic practices.

Willis-Rivera and Meeker (2002) posit that multicultural

children's literature is written for "white" audiences: "These stories (of the literature in general) can often only be read 'correctly' from a standpoint of whiteness" (272). As a result, the white frame of reference is not only privileged but controls the position of the people of color in the text. As such, people of color are often acted upon instead of being able to control their own behaviors. Anglo-Americans are more often than not the implicit intended audience of these books. This has implications for how diversity is addressed and should be taught to students. These authors argue against framing multicultural literature in a way that positions readers of color as "other" or "exotic." Such readings may give Anglo-American readers the appearance of diversity by allowing them to lessen their guilt; in other words, since they are reading these books about people of color, they can feel less guilty about white privilege. In order to counteract this, teachers need to explicitly discuss white privileging in these trade books.

Historically, Anglo-Americans have had greater access to mainstream audiences as evidenced by book sales and book quantities. The recruitment of authors of color is important because authors of color have experienced various degrees of institutionalized racism. They do not have as much access to the publishing world as Anglo-Americans do. Bishop

(1984) points out that the politics behind publishing deems what is accepted and what is not accepted. She notes the importance of the intended audience. Books about diversity told from an Anglo-American perspective were more likely to get published. Thus, for whom books are intended matters in that reception determines production.

It is not surprising that popular images in the media and literature perpetuate stereotypes. In regard to Asian-Americans, there are two dominating images, both of which serve to denigrate the Asian-American identity. Lee's (2003) study contended that Asian-American students are impacted greatly by the stereotypes of the

Aoki (1992) writes, "Asian Pacific American people have been separated from Asia and the Pacific by geography, culture, and history for more than seven generations. We have more than 150 years of history in America, yet where are we in the literature?" (112-113).

perpetual foreigner and the model minority, both of which are reinforced by schools and reflected in the literature. As school curriculums and libraries exclude the Asian-American experience, Asian-Americans may adopt and internalize prevailing notions which can negatively affect their academic performance and their social-affective development. Lee (2003) found that even American-born Asian-Americans consider Anglo-Americans to be the only authentic Americans thus, discounting their own identity affiliation. Believing themselves to be “foreign,” they may be less likely to participate in class, downplay physical traits by getting colored contacts, dying their hair or rejecting their names, languages and even other Asian-American peers.

The model minority theory, according to Lee (2003), has far worse implications than that of the perpetual foreigner. Seemingly positive, it is often not considered to be racist. Lee (2003) claims that the model minority theory denies that Asian-Americans continue to struggle against institutionalized racism and other barriers. As a result, they are denied access to programs and policies that encourage and support minorities. The myth also suggests that other minorities are not “model,” which is detrimental to other groups of color (Lee, 2003). Asian-Americans do not have strong political advocacy groups like African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. Over the past decade, both of these groups have established a body of literature that allows for more complex and multifaceted representations.

The Asian-American children’s trade books that are currently being used in the classrooms consist mostly of folktales and those with a Chinese New Year theme (Cai, 1994). In any study of Asian-Americans, it is important to explore significant elements of the heritage culture. Since folktales are passed down

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orally, they still remain a vital part of the Asian-American experience. For example, Young’s (1995) *Cat and Rat: The Legend of the Chinese Zodiac* tells the story of how the animals were chosen to be part of the zodiac, a belief system to which many Asian-Americans still adhere. Interestingly, Reimer (1992) claims that children’s literature did not exist in Asian countries until the 19th century. Therefore, having these stories in written form secures its preservation. However, when using folktales in multicultural lessons, there is a caveat. Cai (1994) asserts that using an overwhelming proportion of folktales can be misleading as students are distanced from the contemporary realities of the Asian-American experience and the folktales, may unintentionally reinforce negative stereotypes. Thus, a substantive body of literature featuring the complexities of the Asian-American identity is necessary.

In the absence of such a body of high-quality and culturally-authentic Asian-American

children’s literature, Asian-Americans may be held against stereotypes that are not only grossly misinformed but also monolithic. Dowd (1992) notes some of the current mis-representations of Asian-Americans in children’s literature. Asian men are often depicted in the following ways: smiling and polite, constantly bowing, proficient in the martial arts, celestial and all-knowing, and/or creepy or devious. They are sometimes drawn with squinty eyes and buck-teeth. Asian women, on the other hand, are depicted as: submissive, overbearing, old-fashioned grandmother-types. They are referred to as sexy “China dolls” or sinister “dragon ladies.” Such stereotypes contribute to the misconception that Asian-Americans are outside of the common historical narrative (Wills & Mehan, 1996).

In reviewing the research literature (Cai, 1994; Lowery, 2003; Tse, 1998; and Heller, Cunningham,

Lee, & Heller, 2000), there are some obvious characteristics of the current body of Asian-American children's literature. They include, but are not limited to:

- Confucian ethical codes which include filial piety,
- Idea of harmony, spirits, traditions, luck, and horoscopes,
- Brotherhood among family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors leading toward mutual help, communal support, and collective wisdom,
- Importance of honesty, hard work, selflessness, and sacrifice,
- Importance of the arts and education,
- Adjustment and assimilation to a new life encountering feelings of isolation, loneliness, poverty, language barriers, and racial discrimination,
- Need to belong to a desired group and obtain acceptance leading to feelings of ethnic ambivalence and confusion,
- Quest for successes in the new world,
- Depictions of historical and class relations between Asian immigrants and mainstream society,
- Ancestral worship which includes loving, respecting, and honoring the dead,
- Reverence for the elderly,
- Conflicts between tradition and pop or contemporary culture which may result in rebellion against parental and/or cultural constraints.

Many of these characteristics seem to align with what is known about various Asian cultures. As Asian-Americans do share certain cultural values and mores that are tied to an Asian culture, it is important for the literature to reflect these traditions and customs. But it is equally as important for the literature to depict contemporary experiences that speak to being both Asian and American. Again, a substantive body of literature is needed.

Cultural Authenticity and Cultural Membership

Using Bishop's (1984) definition of a culturally-specific book, a culturally-authentic Asian-American text describes the realistic experiences of its members and/or outlines relevant historical episodes as seen through the eyes of an Asian-American. Bishop (1984) further claims that such books must detail "the specifics of daily living that will be recognizable to members of the group" (44). In other words, the text

must reflect an emic, or insider perspective. Bishop's (1984) research raises the questions as to whether one can produce a "recognizable" text and not be a member?

The research literature addresses insider and outsider perspectives, with debates about whether a person who is not a member of the cultural groups can authentically write about that culture (Bishop, 1992). Writing outside one's gender does not seem to be as controversial as race and ethnicity, which seems to suggest that issues of power and perspective, as exposed by critical literacy, play substantial roles in determining cultural authenticity. Critical theorists believe that members of minority groups tend to not have central control over the production of images of themselves (Morgan, 1997). The largest and most prestigious publishing houses are managed by Anglo-Americans who dominate the decision-making process. According to Mendoza and Reese (2001), ". . .

bias and cultural misinformation are present in children's literature in part because people outside the mainstream are not the ones creating the images; members of the dominant culture are creating representations based on their own mistaken assumptions of what the 'others' are like" (33). Thus, insider perspectives are necessary in order to ensure cultural authenticity.

Yin (2000) presupposes that authentic Asian-American texts written from an insider perspective are more sensitive to the Asian-American experience. Cai (2002) promotes the importance of an ethnic perspective in that authors must "grasp the perspective of that culture in order to provide culturally authentic literature for the readers . . . this perspective is reflected in culturally specific ways of living, believing and behaving" (41). There is also an issue of cultural theft; Thelma Seto, a Japanese-American writer and poet, writes (as cited by Klein, 1998) states, ". . . it is morally wrong for Euro-American writers to 'steal' from other cultures in order to jump on the multicultural bandwagon, unless they have direct, personal experience in the country where that culture originates . . ." (4). In addition, Phoebe Yeh, Asian-American book editor and author (as cited by Klein, 1998), writes, "We expect all writers to approach their work with scholarship and authenticity. If they are writing in a culture that is not their own, they simply have to work harder to achieve an ethnic voice" (4). As such, I argue that perspective is more important

than skin color in that the two terms may not necessarily be synonymous as is generally assumed.

Some research suggests that the issue is less about the ethnic identity of the author and more about their research. For example, Linda Sue Park, a member,

provides another example of the importance of research in obtaining an insider perspective. Park, winner of the 2002 Newbery Medal, credits her research abilities and not her Korean roots in her authorship of *A Single Shard*, (Johnson & Giorgis, 2002/2003). Howard (1991) strongly asserts that one must be of a particular culture in order to write an authentic book reflecting that culture; however, in the same paragraph, she praises the authentic work of Jean Fritz, a non-member who has written extensively about China. Howard writes, “Jean Fritz is Chinese. If she isn’t, she’s pretty close. Jean Fritz grew up in China, knows

Chinese people well, and she wrote about herself in China” (93). Howard claims that Fritz’s immersion into the culture gave her access to an insider perspective as well as membership into that culture. Gates (as cited in Bishop, 1992) states, “No human culture is inaccessible to someone who makes the effort to understand, to learn, to inhabit another world” (41). Research and access appear to be the keys. Writers need access into cultures to produce cultural authenticity; teachers and students need access to literature in order to practice cultural appreciation and understanding.

In examining what is available, the fact is there are examples of high quality, culturally authentic Asian-American literature that are written by non-members and that there are members who write inauthentic literature. For publishers, the question is: What should take precedence: an author’s race/

ethnicity or an author’s research and scrutiny? Lee (n.d), of Lee & Low Publishing house, states, “The ethnicity of the authors and artists is an important factor, but by no means do we feel it is a requirement” (14). Skin color, or racial identity does not automatically qualify work as authentic. Both members and nonmembers need to research their topics and immerse themselves in the culture of which they are writing. The objective is to increase the amount of high-quality, culturally-authentic Asian-American children’s literature. By invalidating the work of nonmembers, we may be unnecessarily decreasing the number of available resources and subverting the need for high quality books in this genre. The underlying issue is whether or not the ethnicity or race of the author affects the text. In outlining definitions of high quality multicultural literature, rarely is the race of the author identified, which seems to suggest that skin color may not play a significant role in the quality of the text. However, one’s culture and personal experiences do add to the content and quality of the text.

Reimer (1992) states that the majority of Asian-American literature is not written by Asian-Americans. Ford (as cited by Mosely, 1997) contends that non-members write books for other cultures because there aren’t enough minority writers. The question that begs to be answered at this point is: Why aren’t Asian-Americans writing about Asian-Americans? Allen Say (1991), a popular and well-respected Asian-American author and illustrator, initially did not contribute to the genre of Asian-American literature. He states, “I wanted to shine as a nondenominational artist and be recognized for my abilities and not for my cultural heritage (45).” He goes on to state that he denied his heritage because of his fears of being stereotyped. However, as he became more established, writing and illustrating became a medium for connecting with his cultural roots. In today’s diverse world, stereotypes can only be broken if we actively challenge and question them.

Reimer (1992) does note, however, that there has been an increase in Asian-American authors writing about their own assimilation experiences such as Yep’s (1991) autobiography, *The Lost Garden*, and Lord’s (1984) semi-autobiographical, fictional account, *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*. Because of the positive influence books can have on the attitudes and self-images of our student populations, Asian-Ameri-

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cans have a social responsibility to share their own stories as well as the stories of other Asian-Americans. Regardless of whether or not an author chooses to write about Asian-Americans, authors have a responsibility to produce culturally authentic texts. Howard (1991) states, “the purpose of authentic multicultural literature is to help liberate us from all the preconceived stereotypical hang-ups that imprison us within narrow boundaries” (91-92). There is a social responsibility tied to cultural authenticity.

To further complicate the matter, cultural authenticity is “conceptually unstable” (Karem 4) in that it is subject to change and interpretation and is constantly being mediated by power and perspective. Karem (2004) writes, “. . . intense political and economic interests determined which aspects of [the work of ethnic writers] would be deemed authentic, not only constraining what they could publish but also shaping how their works were received and interpreted” (3). Mosely (1997) further explicates this issue of reception: Readers tend to trust authors who belong to the same culture as them. How members and nonmembers respond to text is important. To what extent are the responses shaped by ethnic identities? Copenhaver (1999) writes, “It makes sense to us that responses should be shaped by each reader’s background, including her cultural background” (p.). Enciso (1994) showed how some readers might resist or reject a text that does not reflect their cultural expectations. Members use their cultural expectations to detect violations and inaccuracies (Galda & Beach, 2001). Knowing about the readers’ background is valuable since it influences their response to their reading.

Models for Assessing Cultural Authenticity

Willis-Rivera and Meeker (2002) contend that teachers do not include multicultural literature in their classrooms for fear of giving the wrong message. Not being a member of the group, some teachers fear offending others and/or inadvertently selecting and sharing inappropriate books. As a result, classroom libraries may have an absence of culturally-authentic materials or worse, trade books consisting of negative representations. Bishop (1992) writes, “because of the limited quantity of multicultural literature available, there may be a tendency to accept poor literary quality

just to have something in the classroom or library” (48). Examining the cultural authenticity of children’s texts is important because these texts can serve as powerful tools for change; however, the problem is that teachers do not know how to assess cultural authenticity. Bishop (1992) states, “Feeling a lack of knowledge about cultural groups other than their own, they worry whether they can detect authenticity or its lack” (43).

Without heuristics, teachers may not have the available knowledge to detect cultural authenticity. Mendoza & Reese (2001) state, “Limited availability of criticism that addresses accuracy, authenticity, and related problems often leads to a major pitfall for teachers seeking multicultural books” (11). They cite the following as pitfalls for teaching multicultural books: (1) the assumption that a book is multicultural and worthwhile if it has diverse people and/or is critically acclaimed, (2) the assumption that a single book about a group can adequately portray that group’s experience, (3) the assumption that good quality books can be found in libraries and bookstores as such books are often times not readily available or easily accessible, and (4) teachers may feel overwhelmed by the prospect of finding and evaluating books.

The process of selecting multicultural books can be overwhelming. Left to their own devices, consumers of multicultural children’s literature may rely on a lens which has been influenced by their own biased schooling and which may be devoid of insight into their own racial identity development (Mendoza & Reese, 2001). Mendoza & Reese (2001) state, “Reliable, in-depth background information about the diverse groups and cultures in the United States is essential to

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evaluating multicultural children's literature" (27). Consumers need to have knowledge of cultural markers, indicators that the story is about a particular culture. The reality is that teachers and parents may not have the time needed to increase their cultural knowledge bases; thus, a reliable tool may be beneficial. Dowd (1992) contends, "The first consideration in critically evaluating a multicultural title is that it should meet the same requirements of any piece of high quality literature" (221). Similarly, Rosenblatt (as cited by DeKay, 1996) also notes how linguistic elements contribute to the quality of literature. Examining cultural authenticity includes literary merit.

1980, the Council on Interracial Children's Books published "Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks" which is most cited for assessing the cultural authenticity of multicultural texts). They offer the following ten guidelines as a starting point in evaluating children's books for racism and sexism (Council, n.d):

1. Check the illustrations.
2. Check the story line.
3. Look at the lifestyles.
4. Weigh the relationships between people.
5. Note the heroes.
6. Consider the effect on a child's self-image.
7. Consider the author's or illustrator's background.
8. Check out the author's perspective.
9. Watch for loaded words.
10. Look at the copyright date.

Aoki (1992) also offers a set of criteria established by the Asian American Children's Book Project Committee. It claims that culturally-authentic books:

- Should reflect the realities and ways of Asian-Americans.
- Should transcend stereotypes.
- Should seek to rectify historical distortions and omissions.
- Should avoid the "model minority and "super" minority syndromes which uses the positive experiences of Asian-Americans to denigrate other racial and ethnic minorities.
- Should reflect an awareness of the changing status of women in society.
- Should contain art and photos which accurately reflect the racial diversity of Asian Pacific Americans.

Others have continued to create assessment models over the years: Temple, Martinez, Yokota and

Naylor (1998); Sadker, Sadker and Long (1993); Dowd (1992); Pang, Colvin, Tran, and Barba (1992); and Higgins (2002). State departments of public instruction have created evaluative tools, as well, such as The Washington Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (1996), which developed a model for evaluating bias content in instructional materials. They created a list of common stereotypes and alternatives. They indicated the following categories of bias found in text: ethnic, sexual, biased language, omission or exclusion, and perspective

The main caveat seems to be attributing characteristics and traits to an entire group without considering individuals and the multiplicity of culture and ethnicity even though there are consistencies among cultural groups. No one image is enough to create stereotypes; but, pervasive images do which are then reinforced by culture and/or society.

Although these frameworks begin to delve into cultural authenticity, they may generate more questions than answers. For example, if the teacher is asked to determine whether the text reflects the reality of Asian-Americans, how is the teacher to know unless they are an insider and/or familiar with the Asian-American experience? It seems to me that an insider perspective is required to figure out some of these issues. For example, what are "the realities and ways of Asian-Americans"? When evaluating cultural authenticity, a tool needs to be developed that speaks to both members and nonmembers.

Nevertheless, These models or guidelines have been extremely helpful in limiting and even decreasing the offensive stereotypes present in trade books as evidenced in the representations in contemporary books. However, such models are only tools. DeKay (1996) writes, ". . . judgments of esthetic quality or value are not subject to clearly discernible, objective criteria" (8). Boutte (2002) notes that guidelines should be used as such and not as a strict evaluation of books. Consumers must actively employ a critical lens when selecting and using multicultural trade books. Dowd (1992) states the importance of engaging in literature-related activities and in becoming knowledgeable.

What Remains to be Done

Although these models push for critical investigations of multicultural trade books, they are too broad

to address the Asian-American experience. There is a need for a reliable and research-based tool that is germane to Asian-American children's literature. Inauthentic books continue to be published and circulated because teachers and other consumers may not have the tools to assess cultural authenticity. If

such books continue to be circulated, then the authentic books will continue to go unrecognized. It is also important to note that one authentic book is not enough; we need a substantive collection ([Higgins, 2002](#); [Washington Office, 1996](#)).

Interview with Cynthia Kadohata

Q: Would you describe yourself as a writer of multicultural or Asian-American children's trade books?

A: My books are about multicultural characters. I don't know whether I would describe myself that way, though it's accurate. I just think of myself as a writer writing about topics that call to me or that I feel compelled to write about.



Q: You write about a lot of Asian-American themes. How do you obtain your knowledge base?

A: Mostly from being Asian-American and talking to other Asian-Americans. For *Weedflower*, I did research and interviewed people. I obtained knowledge through research and through talking to former internees of Poston and through just being of Japanese heritage. I do have to read a lot about the people and places I'm writing about. Yet in the end it all comes down to how well I'm able to understand the characters and their story. Even with all the research and interviews finished, if I can't get in the heads of the characters, the book won't work.

Q: How do you come up with so many authentic details?

A: Some of them are from my life, some of them made-up. Some from research. For *Kira-Kira*, I was going to write a lot about swamps, so I ended up doing a lot of research about it but then I hardly used any. There's only a small bit about swamps in

the book. In *Weedflower*, I had a long scene about a bus trip. I joined a Greyhound bus yahoo list and asked all these questions about buses during the late thirties and early forties, and I corresponded at length with some of these guys about buses. My editor really liked this section at first but then ended up cutting it.

Q: What do you think about the current representations of Asian-Americans in children's trade books?

A: To tell the truth, I haven't read that many. Since adopting my son, Sammy, I haven't read much unless it was helpful to something I was writing. For instance, for my upcoming book about Vietnam war dogs, I did re-read *The Call of the Wild* and *Lassie Come-Home* because they have prolonged sections without human POVs. I read *Animals in Translation* and some other books about animals or dogs.

The first book about Asian Americans I remember reading was in college when we were asked to read Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*, which I think everybody who took an ethnic studies class had to read. They probably still do. We also read *Farewell to Manzanar* as well. I can't think of another book by an Asian-American writer that I read before. There just weren't any. I mean there might have been some but not very many. Today in children's books, there are a number of people I can think of offhand—Linda Sue Park and An Na come to mind most readily, of course.

Q: So, how authentically do you think Asian-American customs, traditions, food, etc. are portrayed in these books?

A: I think authors today tend to make a tremendous effort to portray people authentically.

Q: Describe the journey that led you to write and publish Asian-American children's literature. What were some challenges?

A: Just that everyone told me it was an impossibility to write about Asians at all. I think the challenge was that there were so few Asian-American writers to emulate when I started out, but that was in grown-up books. I didn't want to emulate, but to make people believe that we can do it. That was the hard thing: convincing people you can write about Asian Americans. I feel I have to qualify everything I say, because I'm of two minds about all this. Though your home base has to be your ethnicity, one of the challenges is that sometimes you want to write about other things too. Today's writers can write about anything they want, but I think yesterday's writers felt like stories had to be based on their ethnicities. I do think that your ethnicity is your home. For me, our being Japanese shaped my family's life profoundly. How can you not have that be the base of who you are and what you are writing about? So even if I write about other things, I still think my ethnicity is one of my homes. It's not my only home but it's certainly one of them.

What drives me crazy is that there are misconceptions about who and what you are if you're a person of color. In one workshop I took, someone said that some of my characters didn't act Japanese enough and I said, "What do you mean?" As I recall, she commented on their diet, and I said that they were traveling on the road and they're not going to be eating sushi on the road. And I had a teacher who once said I couldn't write an entire book with only Japanese as the main characters. He said I had to have them confront whites because ultimately any book about people of Japanese ancestry living in America had to be about what happens when they encounter whites. That also annoyed me.

Q: Why did you choose to write about Asian-Americans?

A: I don't think it was a choice. It was so natural. It was a compulsion.

Q: Do you write about other groups?

A: Well, I'm writing about the Vietnamese indigenous people called the Montagnards, but they're still Asian, though not American. There are other things that I am interested in and I can imagine writing about them. I do have a major Caucasian character in my Vietnam book, though the star of the book is a dog.

Q: What does it mean to write or publish a culturally authentic text?

A: I would think it has to be based on fact, unless you are writing fantasy. And it has to capture the nuances. That may be the hard part.

Q: To what extent, if any, do you think one's ethnic background plays in regard to cultural authenticity?

A: There are a lot of little things about manners or whatever that you learn in a different way when you're Asian. There are little thoughts you have in your head about, whatever, being spit at as I once was by a man yelling out "Bomb the Japanese." You kind of have to experience that to know what it feels like. You have to feel yourself getting hot with anger to understand it. To me, the thing about a white person writing from an Asian point of view is that they don't have that feeling; they don't know that feeling because they haven't experienced it. But I do think they could find that feeling through research and empathy.

Q: So, do you think nonmembers can write about Asian-Americans?

A: Yes, I do. I recently looked at the statistics about people of color writing children's books. The statistics are compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center. Asian Americans have made some big strides, while Native Americans and

African Americans have not. But there are many Caucasians writing about people of color across the board for the statistics up through 2005. I haven't read any of these books but they do make me wonder whether editors are trying hard enough in general to find writers of color. At the same time, I strongly believe that writers should attempt to write about people and subjects they feel compelled to write about. More qualifications! I'm of two minds about it. It bothers me, and yet I do passionately believe in artistic freedom.

Q: Do we have a problem with quantity?

A: Yes, yes, yes. The percentages of books by people of color is well below their percentages in the population. The percentage of Asian authors is low, though the number of books with Asian characters doesn't seem to be low. In other words, if you count books written by Caucasians, then the number of books with Asian characters seems to be

commensurate with their percentage in the population—if I understand the statistics correctly.

Q: Do we have a problem with quality?

A: I don't know—I think an editor would know better. And I actually think it's good to have a realistic depiction of history in books, so if a white writer is compelled to write about subject matter that includes people of color, I applaud that. On the other hand, if you find a book and think it's inauthentic, it seems to me that needs to be challenged. That's hard, because you have to keep in mind that there's a lot of diversity within each ethnic group. I don't think one person can speak for an entire ethnic group. There are a lot of thin lines! But I can say absolutely that I wish more children's books BY people of color were published. When—as if the case—a lot more books ABOUT Native Americans are written than BY Native Americans, that strikes me as problematical.

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Angela Johnson:

Award-winning Novels and the Search for Self

It was over a decade ago when Rudine Sims Bishop (1992) prophetically dubbed Angela Johnson as possibly one of “the most prominent African-American literary artists of the next generation” (616). At the time she had four picture books to her credit, but the following year she would publish her debut young adult novel, *Toning the Sweep*. From there, a number of other award-winners would follow and the total of young adult books would increase to eleven and counting. To date, Johnson has three Coretta Scott King Awards, a Michael L. Printz award, and the “Genius Grant” on her list of accolades. Here, I wish to look closely at the search for self in three of Johnson’s award-winners: *Toning the Sweep* (1993), *Heaven* (1998), and *The First Part Last* (2003).

Finding Self in Others

Readers, adult and young adult alike, readily embraced Emily, the protagonist of *Toning the Sweep*, Johnson’s first novel. Emily and her mother, Diane, have come to Little Rock, California to help Ola, who is dying of cancer, pack up her things and move to Ohio with them. This is a pivotal summer for all involved, but especially for Emily. While trying to make sense of Ola’s fatal illness and what it will mean, Emily discovers how she is connected to Ola and to other key members of her family. It is through story that Emily peels back the layers of herself, exposing complex relationships, traditions, and a strong sense of self. Emily uses the video camera to record the stories she hopes will document her grandmother’s existence.

Interview

KH: The search for self seems to be a recurring theme in your young adult novels. What’s the message you hope to leave with young readers?

AJ: I never consciously believe when I am writing that I am imparting any messages to my readers. The characters are so personal to me it seems I imbibe them with all that I remember about my feelings at that age. And truly, understanding self and standing alone when I had to was very important to me as a teen

KH: What kinds of responses do you receive from readers of your young adult books?

AJ: I had never really thought about reader response to my books that much until *The First Part Last* was released. Kids tend to be very polite about what they think about a book. But I know if it doesn’t hit them the first three pages, they don’t want to read it—unless forced. But they don’t tend to tell me that.

Heaven is a quiet book that has a few die-hard fans, but I know that a lot of kids find it too introspective for them.

KH: *The First Part Last* is a prequel to *Heaven*. Why did you feel the need to tell Bobby’s story? Will you add to this series?

Sally Hirt, the owner of a local store, tells the most revealing story, helping Emily understand the devastation her mother must have felt after discovering her father's dead body in the woods. She was only fourteen years old at the time. Immediately after the hate crime, Ola took her daughter out of the south, altering their relationship forever. Hearing this increases Emily's curiosity about her family.

Looking through her grandfather's old things brings her closer to him, providing a part of herself

she had no idea was missing. Before long she decides she must employ an African tradition—toning the sweep—in order to help the family reconcile her grandfather's death. Toning the sweep involves striking a plow to release a resounding ring thought to aid a love one's journey from life to death. It is not until Emily's mother informs her that she and her father toned the sweep for his mother that she realizes that the tradition actually belongs to her. Once Emily and her mother tone the sweep, they go to the party given for Ola, who will soon die. While Emily knows they will tone the sweep for her

some day, she also knows Ola will remain a part of who she is as her grandfather has done.

Discovering Self

Heaven, which earned Johnson a second Coretta Scott King author award, offers the story of Marley, a fourteen-year-old who discovers she is adopted. In the beginning, Marley makes it clear that she knows who she is and is pleased with who she is becoming. Her sense of her own identity remains firm until a letter confirming her adoption devastates and angers her, calling everything she thought she knew about herself into question. Throughout the rest of the novel, she

AJ: I was asked to write a prequel to *Heaven*. My editor thought the response to Bobby was amazing as a care taking African American teen father he thought everyone wanted to know more about him. At first—I didn't think so. But with a bit of inspiration, I agreed.

The First Part Last is unique in that it's the first of my books with an extremely positive young male reader response. That got my attention as we all worry about our young men reading. Interestingly enough there were a large amount of young women who were upset that the grandmother in the book was not raising her son's child. I found that fascinating. It made for some very good discussions.

There may be a third companion to *Heaven* and *The First Part Last*.

KH: Will any new novels, short stories, or picture books be released soon?

AJ: I believe I have a picture book—*Wind Flyers*—coming out in the winter illustrated by Loren Long. It's beautiful

And if I work hard and concentrate, maybe I can get my focus back on novels.

grapples with notions of her own self-perceived identity. Having defined herself in large part in relation to her position in the family, Marley becomes preoccupied with exploring the concept of the family unit. The question becomes: Can her identity remain intact if her family isn't? Biological mother Christine is dead and her father Jack is unstable, so where does this leave Marley? Can her identity rest within a family structure that differs from what Marley has been conditioned to believe is ideal? In order for Marley to answer these questions and feel affirmed, she must prove to herself that a search for identity is not necessary because her family structure is a legitimate one. She does this by exploring the family structures in her community and discovering that the one seemingly ideal family is possibly dysfunctional and has definitely produced a daughter who has no real understanding of who she is. It is the single parent home of Bobby Morris and her relationship with her

adopted parents that finally leaves Marley certain that family are “. . . the people who have always been there for you” (Johnson 99)

Constructing Self

In 2003, Johnson published *The First Part Last*, the prequel to *Heaven*. While on the cusp of manhood, Bobby Morris learns he will be a teen father. Initially, he and his girlfriend Nia decide to put the baby up for adoption. But when Nia unexpectedly slips into a coma, Bobby decides he wants to raise his daughter himself. To Bobby, this action will decide if he will remain a boy or develop into a man. Since Just Frank spends his mornings drinking beer and standing on corners, Bobby believes he is a bum who has no right to ask him if he is “being a ‘man,’” yet the answer to Just Frank’s question plagues him (Johnson 7). “Being a ‘man’” is a slippery concept that has little to do with masculinity. Identity is socially constructed and constantly changing (King, 1997). When Just Frank is killed trying to protect a girl in danger, it is this act that Bobby is challenged to reconsider Just Frank’s manhood and to wonder what type of self he will become.

Having earned a Coretta Scott King author award and a Michael L. Printz award, Johnson was invited to speak at the American Library Association conference in 2004. In her acceptance speech for the Printz award, she said Bobby told her “I’m a young teenage father. The world sees me as just another black boy who’s got a baby. I want to be a man, a father.” Unlike the protagonist in the two novels above, Bobby fears his identity is “always already identified” by society because he is a black male teen father (Mostern 1999, p.4). Despite Bobby’s numerous shortcomings, throughout the novel and in *Heaven* it is clear that he is constantly striving to mold himself into the type of black man he can be proud of.

Conclusion

In a recent interview with Richard Jackson, Johnson’s first editor, I asked him why he encouraged

Johnson to begin writing young adult literature during a time when she had little interest in doing so (Hinton, 2006). “I knew she could do it. It was important for literature. She was such an extraordinary writer who is a poet, so I thought older children should be able to read her words and get her sense of what it’s like to grow up in this country,” he said. Jackson is right. In the novels discussed here, Johnson is at her best, providing readers with a glimpse of what coming-into-self is like during young adulthood.

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In her acceptance speech for the Printz award, she said Bobby told her “I’m a young teenage father. The world sees me as just another black boy who’s got a baby. I want to be a man, a father.”

Rough Flight:

Boys Fleeing the Feminine in Young Adult Literature

From *Catcher in the Rye* to *Hatchet* to *Harry Potter*, many young adult novels focus on the coming of age stories of male protagonists. Numerous books and articles have been written, mostly in the last fifteen years, about representations of masculinity in young adult literature. For example, [Hollindale \(1988\)](#) discusses the patriarchal ideology inherent in many novels, while [Stephens \(2002\)](#), as well as [Bereska \(2003\)](#), address boys' gender constructs in children's literature. Scholars centering their attention on boys and the literary constructions of masculinity seem to agree that masculinity and manhood are traditionally defined by one's toughness, individuality, strength, and emotional reserve ([Stephens, 2002](#); [Connell, 2000](#); [Pennell, 2002](#)). While masculinity is not static—our definitions throughout history tend to shift—traditional ideas of masculinity remain entrenched in our literature, our media, and in our world. Though [Nodelman \(2002\)](#) notices how many young adult novels focus on the main protagonist, a young boy, “seeing through the conventional constructions of masculinity and learning to be more sensitive or more loving . . . or less caught up in the pleasures of aggressive bullying,” (11), few novels challenge the conventional construc-

tions of masculinity. Instead, many young adult novels show how boys learn to navigate within these constructions in order to ‘come of age.’ In novels such as Louis Sachar’s *Holes* (1998), Robert Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* (1974), and William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954), boys must accept the conventional constructions of masculinity and learn to master socially acceptable forms of male power. For the characters in these novels, masculinity, and essentially manhood, becomes what [Kimmel \(2004\)](#) calls a “relentless test” and a renunciation of the feminine

(185). Moreover, Kimmel notes that the hegemonic, traditional definition of manhood is a “man in power, a man with power, and a man of power” (184). In fact, Kimmel claims, “We equate manhood with being strong, successful, capable, reliable, in control” (184).

The importance of this definition of masculinity is that it relies on the underlying assumption that being a man means being **unlike** a woman. [Kimmel \(2004\)](#) writes at length about the idea of masculinity as the “flight from the feminine” (185). In order to attain power—that is, to become masculine—Kimmel argues that boys must renounce the feminine influences around them and within themselves (186). When Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger admonishes Republican opponents

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as “economic girlie men,” (2004 Republican National Convention) he reminds us that the threat to men, not only boys, of being labeled feminine is vividly illustrated in our political as well as social culture. Reynaud (2004) adds to Kimmel’s argument stating that in order to be fully masculine, man must establish dominance over and, metaphorically, kill off his feminine impulses and influences (144). Therefore, masculinity and manhood in these novels are defined by what they are not—soft, feminine. Thus, the portrayal of a boy coming of age, or at least maturing into a young adult, is signified by his acquisition of the gender constructions of a man—hard, competitive, and able to use his strength to attain respect and power. Moreover, men must flee from any feminine characteristics. This lifelong quest never ends; boys must prove they are men and men must continue to prove they are men.

Holes, *The Chocolate War*, and *Lord of the Flies*, demonstrate how these definitions and underlying assumptions about masculinity play out in young adult novels addressing readers of various ages. Although *Lord of the Flies* may not fit perfectly into commonly accepted definitions of young adult literature, its considerable presence in school curricula, its position adjacent to books like *The Chocolate War*, and its influence in informing teenage boys’ concepts of masculinity cannot be ignored. Furthermore, these novels represent increasing complexities and maturity of similar masculine themes: coming of age, and more importantly, coming to terms with a gendered identity. In addition, these novels are widely read in middle and high school classrooms. In other words, boys and girls read these texts, and the textual portrayals of gender constructions affect, and perhaps influence, both.

Holes

Louis Sachar’s *Holes* (1998) a well-known favorite among both teachers and students, and its movie adaptation attests to its place on many young adolescent’s reading lists. The movie version, however, alters many significant details relevant to a reading of masculinity. For example, in the film, Stanley is a young, good-looking, *thin* boy, which is contrary to Stanley’s depiction in the novel, where he is portrayed as overweight and bullied at school by a

boy smaller than he. Early in the story, we find Stanley paying for a crime he did not commit—or so it seems. Throughout most of the novel he blames his bad luck on his “no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great grandfather’s” curse. But, Stanley’s real crime is not being a man, or more to the point, exhibiting feminine characteristics. From the beginning, Stanley appears soft, flabby, and lacking agency. He passively accepts his fate. Sentenced to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile delinquency work camp, for stealing shoes, Stanley undergoes a series of tests before emerging harder, in control, and free from his grandfather’s curse.

While serving his sentence, Stanley unwittingly fulfills his great great grandfather’s promise to Madame Zoroni, who cast the original curse on the Yelnats men, by carrying the runaway, ailing and thirsting, Zero, another young delinquent, up a mountain (it turns out that Zero is Madame Zoroni’s great great grandson). More importantly, Stanley figuratively climbs into young manhood by claiming agency and taking action. Throughout the story, Stanley’s transformative acts move him from a soft, feminized boy towards a more mature young man.

Sachar introduces the reader to Stanley as a poor, “overweight” boy who “didn’t have any friends at home” (7). Although he is big, Stanley does not use his size and weight in a traditionally masculine way. A bully smaller than he intimidates him, and when Stanley complains, the teachers chide him for letting a smaller boy pick on someone his size (23). Thus, Stanley first appears as a boy unable to recognize his own strength and act in control of his environment. Stanley arrives at Camp Green Lake and meets Mr. Sir. Clad in a cowboy hat and always wearing sunglasses, Mr. Sir appears as the quintessential manly man, even chiding the boys with the refrain, “you’re not in the

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Girl Scouts anymore” (13). Mr. Sir reminds Stanley, and the reader, that Stanley’s transformation will begin by separating himself from the feminine—the girl scout. Stanley’s soft body sets him apart from the other boys. In addition, he writes letters to his mom, linking him to the maternal, or at least, the need for the maternal. This maternal link contrasts [Kimmel’s \(2004\)](#) assertion that in order to acquire a masculine identity, a boy must repudiate his mother (186). Thus, Stanley, by embracing his mother, remains a boy, not a man. Furthermore, Stanley’s position in Group D is at the bottom, ahead of only Zero, the boy who does not speak.

At camp, Stanley must dig holes five feet deep and five feet wide. This physical labor helps Stanley shed pounds and develop a fit body. Yet, even after he’s spent several weeks at camp he does not possess the physical or mental strength and confidence to confront the other boys. Resentful of Stanley and Zero’s deal (Zero digs Stanley’s holes in exchange for reading lessons), ZigZag starts a fight with Stanley, and Stanley never stands up for himself. As his face presses against the desert floor, “all he could do was wait for [the fight] to be over” (135). Only after he takes action by running away from camp in search of Zero does Stanley begin to recognize his transformation from a “girl scout”-like boy to a young man. Here, the elements and Zero’s incapacitated state, force him to take control and complete the final act of separating himself from the feminine.

While Stanley is not yet a man at the end of the novel, the reader recognizes a progression from a soft, ineffectual boy to a stronger, self-actualized young man. In this physical respect he shows a flight from the feminine. He is no longer guilty of his one true crime: being unmanly. Sachar gives the reader hints that Stanley is now on the right track to manhood. The fulfillment of one’s duty, and the attainment of

He is no longer guilty of his one true crime: being unmanly. Sachar gives the reader hints that Stanley is now on the right track to manhood. The fulfillment of one’s duty, and the attainment of manhood, reaps rewards: money, power, and friends. Yet it is important to note that these rewards are benefits of hegemonic masculinity, and enjoyed by men.

manhood, reaps rewards: money, power, and friends. Yet it is important to note that these rewards are benefits of hegemonic masculinity, and enjoyed by men. In fact, in the final scene we see Stanley surrounded by adult men and women, still learning the rules of the (patriarchal) game. During this scene, Clive Livingston puts his hand over his wife’s mouth to keep her quiet. Clive asks Stanley to take his place in his wife’s silencing while he goes for more soda, passing on a role of male dominance. Thus, the rights to power and privilege become available to men only, and to boys who actively and successfully seek dominant masculine ideals by escaping the feminine.

The Chocolate War

Considered a young adult classic, as well as a perennial teachers’ and librarians’ favorite, Robert Cormier’s *The Chocolate War*

(1974), appears on annual ‘must read’ lists—often at the top. *The Chocolate War* placed number one on Ted Hipple’s list in 1989 and 2004 ([Hipple & Claiborne](#) 99). The novel also appeared in [Donelson’s \(1997\) Best YA Books of the Year: 1964-1995](#) (44) and was listed among *Voices from the Middle’s* top fifty books “with lasting appeal” (Lesesne 54). Yet, the book clearly purports traditional masculine ideals. These ideals represent the power relationships between boys, men and ultimately between boys/men and girls/women.

The novel’s main protagonist, Jerry Renault, is a freshman recovering from his mother’s death, coping with living with his distant father, trying to make the football team, and wondering whether he should “dare to disturb the universe” (129). Unwillingly, Jerry finds himself carrying out an order from the secret and unofficial student-leaders of the school, The Vigils. The order is simple; for ten days he is to refuse to sell chocolates during the school’s annual fundraising drive. Jerry fulfills the Vigil mission, but resolves to

continue refusing to sell chocolates, despite the Vigils' orders to begin selling and the school's interim headmaster's disapproval. Jerry's defiance leads him to a battle against the Vigils, the administration, and the entire school.

The reader meets Jerry trying out for the football team. He is young, only 145 pounds "soaking wet," and, according to the football coach, needs more "meat" on his bones (4). Though he is slight of build physically, Jerry is still a tough boy. He suffers through football tryouts—getting smashed and tackled by bigger, older guys. In addition, during his defiance of the Vigils and the school fund-raiser, Jerry never wavers in his decision not to sell chocolates. In fact, he forms a new sense of individuality and self-pride in his action, stating to himself and before his classmates, "I'm Jerry Renault and I'm not going to sell the chocolates." (177, 207) Importantly, the only time Jerry 'loses his cool' is when the bully Janza accuses him of being a fairy:

" . . . you're a fairy. A queer. Living in the closet, hiding away."

Vomit threatened Jerry's throat, a nauseous geyser he could barely hold down.

"Hey, you're blushing," Janza said. "The fairy's blushing . . ."

"Listen . . ." Jerry began but not knowing, really, how to begin or where. The worst thing in the world—to be called queer. [. . .] "I'm not a fairy," Jerry cried.

"Kiss me," Janza said, puckering his lips grotesquely.

"You son of a bitch," Jerry said. (212)

Jerry gets beat up by a gang of kids, orchestrated by Janza and Archie, who want to psychologically intimidate Jerry. Referring to the "queer pitch," Archie says to Janza, "If you want to get under a guy's skin, accuse him of being something he isn't." (222) Being homosexual is aligned with being feminine; therefore, Jerry's assertion and reaction against Janza's accusation demonstrates the often violent flight from the feminine. Indeed, [Kimmel \(2004\)](#) argues the flight from the feminine is often "angry and frustrated" (185).

Young male protagonists in these coming of age novels are continuously engaged in a contest with other males. Their rank, status, and acceptance by other boys and men determine their actions and outcomes. [Kimmel \(2004\)](#) notes the important rela-

tionship that exists among men: "[Men] are under constant careful scrutiny of other men. Other men watch us, rank us, and grant our acceptance in to the realm of manhood. Manhood is demonstrated for other men's approval. It is other men who evaluate the performance" (p. 186). Success becomes contingent on their performance of traditional masculine conventions and others' approval. More importantly, many of these novels show how 'passing' the test and having other boys, and men, "grant" acceptance in to the realm of manhood leads to male power and privilege.

Several characters in *The Chocolate War* comment explicitly about being admired and "ranked" by other males. Throughout the novel, we see how the school-boys constantly evaluate themselves, and each other. Obie hates and fears Archie, yet he also admires him (7, 9, 148). The Vigils admire Archie (36) and Archie in turn enjoys their praise (241). Archie also admires and evaluates Brother Leon (23). In addition, he admires Emile Janza's handiwork (51-52), and he is "fascinated" by him (106). At the same time, Emile spends his time trying to impress Archie (105) and admiring Archie's "genius" (222). Jerry tries out for the football team, not just looking for a place on the squad, but also for the coach's approval (78). Brian Cochran admires Carter for his muscles and agility (98), and he "beams" and "melt[s]" when Archie's praises him (163, 236). Enjoying the admiration he receives for refusing to sell chocolates, Jerry "blush[es] with pleasure" and asks, "who didn't want to be admired?" (126). This evaluation and admiration among men marks the boys' immersion in a patriarchal structure that defines man as "strong, capable, reliable, and in control." ([Kimmel 184](#)). Within this structure men maintain power over other men and over women. By maintaining this power over each other and women, the boys are fleeing the feminine for a more male-dominated sphere.

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Boys operate under the hierarchy of power, with some men being more powerful than others (Kimmel 185). Although Jerry has qualities of the traditional man (he has strength, courage, is tough, an individual), he lacks power. In the end, he loses, finding that he can not escape the relentless test of masculinity—the ongoing battle to prove oneself a man, and more importantly, not feminine.

Lord of the Flies

Broad definitions of young adult literature include “works written for an audience between the ages of about eleven or twelve to about seventeen or eighteen” (Hipple & Claiborne 100). Additionally, most scholars mark the publication of *The Outsiders* (Hinton, 1967) as the beginning of the “golden age” of the young adult literature genre. Written in 1954, and

appealing to adults and adolescents, Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, falls outside the American category of young adult literature. Yet, *Lord of the Flies* is a classic novel, and a standard part of the curriculum, read by young adults. An analysis of *Lord of the Flies*, demonstrates how young adult literature mirrors more traditional texts in its underlying assumptions about masculinity.

The reader meets faired-haired Ralph first grinning, he exclaims “No grownups” to the “fat boy” Piggy while the two frolic in the warm water (7-8). Ralph’s smile is both the first and last, or nearly so, of the novel, as most of the boys, led by the devilish Jack Merridew,

descend into a savagery of painted faces and ritual hunts that leave two dead and the rest wounded, both physically and mentally. The details of this descent

reveal much about, as Wordsworth would say, “man’s inhumanity to man,” and do serve as a social and psychological critique of the British public school system. Just as importantly, the events in *Lord of the Flies* artfully reveal the boys’ struggle to define their masculinity.

In *Lord of the Flies*, Golding explores various ideals of masculinity but focuses mainly on the conflict between the ideals of civilized masculinity and barbarous masculinity. Importantly, Golding links the ideal of order with the feminine Piggy and somewhat effeminate Ralph, and the ideal of violence with Jack and Roger. As Ralph and Piggy’s more effeminate world of common-sense clashes with Jack and Roger’s masculine world of hunting, Golding shows that in order to become men, the boys must flee and ultimately establish power over the feminine.

It is no coincidence that Ralph and Piggy meet first, for as the novel progresses, they develop a nearly unbreakable bond. Physically the two could not be more different. Ralph is handsome, “fair-haired,” the tallest boy, who “might make a good boxer” (10). At first, with angelic looks and strong physical build, he seems a model of burgeoning masculinity, especially when he is voted chief. Piggy, in stark contrast, is fat, bespectacled, and suffers from asthma. With his almost Rubenesque physique and his multiple handi-caps, he is void of masculinity and represents more of a doughy femininity. The boys lose no time in recognizing Piggy’s lack of manliness, as they tease him mercilessly. Reynaud (2004) argues the body is the instrument of masculinity (141); therefore, by teasing the feminine Piggy, the boys illustrate their flight from the feminine. The boys continually reject Piggy, subjugating him to ‘feminine’ roles, such as taking care of the “littluns.” Interested in more conventionally masculine exercises like hunting and exploring, the boys heed Piggy’s advice only when Ralph, who often echoes—or steals—Piggy’s ideas, speaks it. But more deeply, the boys ignore Piggy because his body and upbringing represent femininity. Piggy has no patriarchal figure (he mentions his father is dead), and he continuously refers to his auntie who has raised him. In the boys’ eyes, Piggy might as well be a girl. Women, Reynaud (2004) argues, are flesh with no brain (143). Therefore, even though Piggy’s reasoning may be correct, when he, for instance, insists on keeping the fire going, he sounds to the boys like an

old aunt pleading with them not to go out in the rain without their Wellingtons. As ‘masculine’ boys, they have no reason to listen to Piggy. Furthermore, if they were to listen to Piggy, they would risk being associated with the feminine themselves.

In contrast, Ralph has a naval commander for a father, is tall and strong and good looking, and throughout the first half of the novel, most of the boys, save Jack and his hunters, applaud Ralph’s words because, as Yeats would say, of the “manly pose” he strikes. Reason itself is not un-masculine—[Reynaud](#), for instance, states that part of masculinity is based on strength of reason (142)—but reason becomes un-masculine when the body voicing the reason has the form of a woman. By rejecting the feminine Piggy’s words of reason, the boys further illustrate Kimmel’s point that masculinity is, at least partly, the flight from the feminine.

Ultimately, the boys end up fleeing from everything associated with the feminine, for they do not just reject Piggy, but they reject Ralph, as well. Ralph is not just the only “biggun” who listens to Piggy, but he is the only one who has compassion for him (117). Ralph defends Piggy against Jack’s ruthless savagery and worries about him when he leaves Piggy alone. Ralph’s compassion for Piggy does not exactly fit the mold of masculinity, particularly when Ralph’s ideas are so parallel to Piggy’s. To a certain extent, Ralph’s compassion for Piggy can be seen as homoerotic, a notion which illustrates Ralph’s more feminine sympathies. The other boys, particularly Jack, do not lose sight of Ralph and Piggy’s ‘different’ relationship, teasing Ralph about how he worries about his precious Piggy (117-18). Ralph is also a daydreamer. Throughout the novel, he finds difficulty embracing the more primitive way of life the boys lead on the island, imagining peaceful, innocent times at his family’s country home (112), something which is in direct contrast to Jack and Roger who seem as if they would be perfectly happy if they were never rescued. [Reynaud \(2004\)](#) would argue that Ralph’s nostalgia for innocence represents a kind of femininity (142).

Regardless, Ralph is by no means as ‘feminine’ a boy as Piggy. He certainly displays more physically masculine traits than Piggy. He participates a few times in the hunts and in the various exploratory adventures on the island. The lure of the hunt even excites him (113). Yet, many of Ralph’s tendencies

align him with the feminine. . Importantly, Ralph’s concern with keeping the fire going shows how much he wants to escape, not just from the island, but from what [Kimmel \(2004\)](#) argues is masculinity’s “relentless test” (185). By prizing rescue over all else, Ralph subtly reveals that he is not up to the task of survival on the island and that he needs relief from the masculine burden of leading the boys in living there. Here Ralph’s flight is from the masculine. Even if the boys agree it is important to take steps to be rescued, they need a leader who will keep them alive on the island and ultimately reject Ralph as their leader in favor of the hunter, Jack. Though Ralph is by no means entirely un-masculine, he does embody many feminine traits. By rejecting Ralph, the boys take their final flight from the feminine.

Even more than just fleeing from the feminine, the boys establish more and more power *over* the feminine. No one on the island represents physical masculinity more than Jack Merridew. That he is the only character to have his last name known shows his portent. Red-headed, ugly, and freckled (20), Jack, with his band of choir-boys-turned-hunters, almost entirely rejects the ideal of heroic masculinity that Ralph at least partly represents and fully rejects the feminine role Piggy and Ralph embody. Golding’s physical description of Jack alludes to his inner character. His red hair connotes his fiery

temper, and his freckles reveal a lack of inner purity. With his ugliness and black cloak, he symbolizes a kind of adolescent Satan, and his choir, always in lock step behind him, becomes not unlike fallen angels. Though Jack is not elected chief, he, like a Marine sergeant, has control of the boys from the beginning (20). During the first pig hunt, Jack hesitates to kill a piglet “because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh” (31). Here, he

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Thus, by using young adult literature and ‘classic’ texts, such as *Lord of the Flies*, that speak overtly to assumptions and conventions of masculinity, teachers and students can engage in dialogue that addresses the complex nature of being a boy/man and being a girl/woman.

realizes the enormous moral leap into the realm of violence, shrinking away from his masculine duty of killing the pig. But though he misses his chance, he already dreams of the “next time” (31). By making this choice to spill the blood of the pig, by becoming the

lead hunter, Jack firmly roots himself as the archetype of masculine strength and violence. He also does what he can to disrupt the ordered world of Piggy and Ralph. He continually questions their decrees and leads a hunting party instead of keeping the firing going (68). Importantly here, by not keeping the fire going, the fire being their one hope of rescue, Jack shows that he does not really want to be rescued, that this savage state fits his ideal of himself as a man. In this same scene, Jack hits Piggy, breaking his glasses. Piggy’s glasses had been used to start the fire, and they stand for

order and the hope of rescue. They also symbolize part of Piggy’s femininity. Kimmel (2004) argues that the “pre-oedipal boy identifies with mother, he sees *the world through mother’s eyes*” (187). By destroying Piggy’s glasses, Jack repudiates the feminine vision that handicaps him in his quest to become a man. Jack’s action not only furthers the point that he does not want to be saved, but it also illustrates his rebellion against the ideal of order and more crucially his revolt against the ‘other’—that is, the ideal of femininity.

The most notable example of the boys destroying the feminine occurs when Roger kills Piggy by pushing a boulder onto him. “Trapped behind the luminous wall of his myopia” (169)—that is both literally and figuratively—Piggy clings to his idea of order, shouting like his old auntie for the boys to stop “acting like a crowd of kids” (180). He is so far removed from Jack and Roger’s barbarous masculinity that he does not

see that the power of his precious reasoning, like the signal fire, died long ago. As the mayhem continues, Roger “with a sense of delirious abandonment” (180) cements his masculinity by crushing Piggy with a giant boulder. Reynaud argues that man “does his best to reject the ‘feminine’” (142). There can be no greater rejection than homicide.

Importantly, more than a symbol of heroic masculinity, Ralph survives as a symbol that the masculine flight from the feminine is continuous. As the boys cry at the end—a feminine reaction to their circumstance—the reader senses that the conflicts between masculinity and femininity that plagued the nameless island are not going away anytime soon. The boys, still not yet men, have yet to fully stifle all of their feminine tendencies. Even the officer who finds them continues to flee from the feminine. When hearing the boys’ cries, he is “moved and a little embarrassed” and then turns away so the boys can pull themselves together (202). The fact that he is moved shows a glimpse of his femininity. And by turning away from the crying boys, the officer illustrates his own flight from the feminine. Golding reveals here that as long as man survives—no matter his age—he must continually flee the feminine in order to keep his masculinity intact. The conflict is as unending as the sea surrounding the island, and the island’s anonymity itself suggests it could be any place and that the conflicts depicted there will happen again somewhere else.

Bushman and Haas (1997) tout the use of young adult literature in the classroom as “imperative;” it “serves young people in their struggle with identity, with their relationships with adults, and with their choices” (25). Thus, young adult literature acts as a guide through their journey into adulthood. Most often, according to Anderson, successful young adult literature contains themes that mirror the developmental interests and goals of student readers (as cited in Bushman and Haas 3). Citing Havighurst’s developmental tasks for individuals as a guide for themes in young adult literature, Bushman and Haas list “achieving a proper masculine or feminine social role” as one of the key developmental interests for young readers (8). A careful reading and analysis of *Holes*, *The Chocolate War*, and *Lord of the Flies* will allow students to learn how, traditionally, male coming of age has been portrayed as a flight from the feminine.

Students will, ideally, begin to debunk some of the standard ideals of masculinity, thereby achieving a more dynamic perspective of themselves and our society as a whole.

Nodelman (2002) asks a very important question about getting boys to analyze assumptions and conventions underlying the construction of masculinity. He writes, "How can this [analysis] occur when. [. . .] the act of seeing beyond almost inevitably demonizes what so many boys already have so much invested in?" (14) One must first begin to understand the dynamic nature of societal gender conventions, and be willing to explore how these conventions operate in literature. Nodelman suggests that by making masculinity "appear," that is to recognize its constructedness, we are on the way to thinking about and revising its implications (14). Thus, by using young adult literature and 'classic' texts, such as *Lord of the Flies*, that speak overtly to assumptions and conventions of masculinity, teachers and students can engage in dialogue that addresses the complex nature of being a boy/man and being a girl/woman. Rather than seeing gender as binaries, these texts help demonstrate how constructions of male and female depend on each other.

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Standards! Testing! And All That Jazz!:

A Real Conversation

"Dr. Weiss, we would like you come talk with our high school English and social studies teachers about books that might appeal to our students. We have four schools, and in three of them our students are failing to meet annual yearly progress expectations. We have money for professional development, which would cover your consultation fee; however, we can't buy books with this money. No, we have no district money earmarked for the books you talk about. But this will be motivational and professional."

Question: Should I go? Who would be more frustrated, the teachers or I?

This is NCLB.

On NCLB

Many of us professionals have no objections to raising the standards for students. Testing doesn't scare us. But how much does testing show about the quality of learning and the impact of reading upon the reader?

Michael Winerip in an article, "Teaching and a Law That Dismisses Them," (New York Times, July 12, 2006), states:

A final concern with the federal law is that it is so driven by state testing that there's too much time devoted to test prep, too much time spent drilling facts for survey courses, and not enough emphasis on finding something children will fall in love with for a lifetime—the Civil War, repairing engines, science research, playing the trumpet.

Fortunately, the remedy can be found on Ms. Ray's (an English teacher) walls in Huntington, VA, a quotation from William Butler Yeats: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." I recommend that as the official motto for a new, revitalized, No Child Left Behind Law. (p. B8).

Reality Check

So many states have reported that students are not doing well on these tests. But this is nothing new. In the early 50s, I worked on the drop-out studies in the New York City high schools. Other major cities were doing similar studies. We found out that students who

seemed to have reading problems were more likely to drop out. However, there were students who didn't necessarily need work on skills, although that was the chief emphasis being placed in school reading and remedial programs. Many students could read but didn't like the books being used in their classes. "The works were being dissected beyond belief." Others said they were so bored. "I read lots of good books I got out of the library."

My own son was a good reader, but he hated the texts. He was put in a Title I program for reading instruction. I never said a word. He told me that every third day he would get something right, and the teacher would give him a piece of candy or a cookie. She had many good books in her classroom from which the students could choose. He liked that.

So doesn't it make sense to have lots of good books for students to explore? Why not have reading groups, letting students choose books to match their different interests, abilities and needs?

A Thematic Approach

I've organized this presentation of good books according to themes, suggested topics worthy of consideration. I've chosen books that I found especially appealing to me. These might be starting points. But this is a sincere attempt to bring students and books together in a meaningful and lasting relationship.

Topic: Fantasy and Science Fiction

Almond, David, *Clay*. Delacorte.
Anderson, M. T., *The Amazing Life Of Octavian Nothing*. Candlewick.
Cornish, D. M., *Monster Blood Tattoo*. Dutton.
Knox, Elizabeth, *Dreamhunter*. Farrar Straus Giroux.
Layne, Steven L., *Mergers*. Pelican.
Pierce, Tamora, *The Will Of The Empress*. Scholastic.
Shan, Darren, *The Demonata: Demon Thief*. Little, Brown.
Skelton, Matthew, *Endymion Spring*. Delacorte.
Yolen, Jane, and Adam Stemple, *Trollbridge: A Rock 'N' Roll Fairy Tale*. Starscape.

Topic: MYSTERY AND SUSPENSE

Abrahams, Peter, *Behind The Curtain*. Harper Collins.
Broach, Elise, *Desert Crossing*. Holt.
Brooks, Kevin, *The Road Of The Dead*. Chicken House.
Feinstein, John, *Last Shot*. Knopf.
Horowitz, Anthony, *Ark Angel*. Philomel.
Portman, Frank, *King Dork*. Delacorte.
Springer, Nancy, *The Case Of The Missing Marquess*. Sleuth.
Updale, Eleanor, *Montmorency and The Assassins*. Orchard.

Topic: IN THIS SCHOOL

Alvarez, Julia, *Finding Miracles*. Knopf.
Clarke, Judith, *Kalpana's Dream*. Front Street.
Evangelista, Beth, *Gifted*. Walker.
Fogelin, Adrian, *The Real Question*. Peachtree.
Garden, Nancy, *Endgame*. Harcourt.
Gerber, Michael, *Freshman*. Hyperion.
Green, John, *Looking For Alaska*. Dutton.
Houston, Julian, *New Boy*. Houghton Muffin.
Sitomer, Alan Lawrence, *Hip-Hop High School*. Hyperion.

Theme: SPORTS WORLD

Carter, Alden R., *Love, Football, and Other Contact Sports*. Holiday House.
Eskilsen, Erik, *The Outside Groove*. Houghton Mifflin.
Gorman, Carol, and Ron J. Findley, *Stumptown Kid*. Peachtree.
Lupica, Mike, *Heat*. Philomel.
Martino, Alfred C., *Pinned*. Harcourt.
Ritter, John R., *Under the Baseball Moon*. Philomel.

Topic: HOLOCAUST

Friedman, D. Dina, *Escaping Into the Night*. Simon & Schuster.
Glayshteyn, Yankev, trans. by Jeffrey Shandiler, *Emil and Karl*. Roaring Brook.
Kass, Pnina Moed, *Real Time*. Graphia.
Miiman, Isaac, *Hidden Child*. Farrar Straus Giroux.
Orlev, Un, **Run, Boy, Run**. Houghton Mifflin.
Pressler, Mirjam, *Malka*. Speak.
Roy, Jennifer, *Yellow Star*. Cavendish.

Watts, Irene N., *Remember Me*. Tundra.

Topic: SPECIAL PROBLEMS!

Abbott, Tony, *Firegirl*. Little, Brown.
Frank, E. R., *Wrecked*. Atheneum.
Gallo, Donald R., ed. *What Are You Afraid Of?* Candlewick.
Hobbs, Valerie, *Defiance*. Farrar Straus Giroux.
Hobbs, Will, *Crossing the Wire*. Harper Collins.
Horrocks, Anita, *Almost Eden*. Tundra.
Johnson, Harriet McBride, *Accidents of Nature*. Holt.
Korman, Gordon, *Born To Rock*. Hyperion.
Nolan, Han, *A Summer of Kings*. Harcourt.
Runyon, Brent, *The Burn Journals*. Knopf.
Smith, Sherri L, *Sparrow*. Delacorte.
Vrettos, Adrienne Maria, *Skin*. McElderry.
Woodson, Jacqueline, *Behind You*. Putnam.
Zusak, Markus, *I Am the Messenger*. Knopf.

Topic: IN DANGEROUS PLACES

Rolub, Josef, *An Innocent Soldier*. Scholastic.
Hughes, Dean, *Search and Destroy*. Atheneum.
Lewis, Richard, *The Flame Tree*. Simon & Schuster.
Morpurgo, Michael, *Private Peaceful*. Scholastic.
Salisbury, Graham, *House of the Red Fish*. Random House.
Sandell, Lisa Ann, *The Weight Of the Sky*. Viking.
Staples, Suzaima Fisher, *Under the Persimmon Tree*. Farrar Straus Giroux.
Stein, Tarnmar, *Light Years*. Knopf.

Topic: HISTORICAL FICTION

Bajoria, Paul, *The Printer's Devil*.

Little, Brown.

Blackwood, Gary, *Second Sight*.

Dutton.

Geras, Adele, *Ithaka*. Harcourt.

Kidd, Ronald, *Monkey Town: The Summer Of the Scopes Trial*.

Simon & Schuster.

Lawlor, Laurie, *The Two Loves Of Will Shakespeare*. Holiday

House.

Lester, Julius, *Time's Memory*.

Farrar Straus Giroux.

Spooner, Michael, *Last Child*. Holt

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