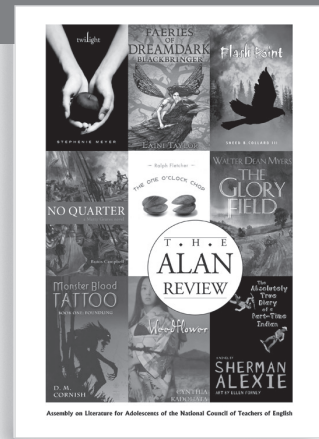


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<p>Lori Atkins Goodson Jim Blasingame</p>	<p>From the Editors</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Joan Kaywell</p>	<p>Grant Opportunities and Call for Manuscripts</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>William Broz Jeff Copeland Jerome Klinkowitz</p>	<p>Honoring Ted Hipple by Keeping YA Literature Alive for Future Generations</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>Linda J. Rice</p>	<p>Inman's War: Genre Jumping Brings to Life the Letters of an African American WWII Soldier: The Professional Resource Connection</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>Jonathan Stephens</p>	<p>McCarthy and More: A Conversation with Trudy Krisher</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>Scot Smith</p>	<p>Young Adult: A Book by Any Other Name . . . : Defining the Genre</p>	<p>34</p>
<p>Lisa Scherff Candace Lewis Wright</p>	<p>The Death of Genre: Why the Best YA Fiction Often Defies Classification</p>	<p>43</p>
<p>Lori Atkins Goodson</p>	<p>Getting Beyond the Cuss Words: Using Marxism and Binary Opposition to Teach <i>Ironman</i> and <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i></p>	<p>51</p>
<p>Diane P. Tuccillo Paulette Goodman Joann Pompa Joan Arrowsmith</p>	<p>Clip and File</p>	<p>A1–A8</p>
<p>Robin Mara</p>	<p>Spontaneous Combustion: School Libraries Providing the Spark to Connect Teens, Books, Reading—and Even Writing!</p>	<p>62</p>
<p>Lisa Arter</p>	<p>Briar Rose: Jane Yolen's Magic Touch Revealed</p>	<p>67</p>
<p>Jim Blasingame</p>	<p>Pushing Good Books: Alleen Pace Nilsen, Winner of the 2006 Hipple Award</p>	<p>73</p>
<p>Claudia Anne Katz</p>	<p>Virginia Monseau and Marc Aronson: Winners of the 2006 ALAN Award, Talk about Young Adult Literature and Young Adults</p>	<p>76</p>
<p>Ellen Wayman-Gordon</p>	<p>Splish, Splash: The Story of a Book and a Bath A Review of <i>Naked Reading: Uncovering What Tweens Need to Become Lifelong Readers: The Middle School Connection</i></p>	<p>81</p>
<p></p>	<p>The Center for Young Readers Honors M. Jerry Weiss</p>	<p>84</p>

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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 summer) 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

As fall rolls in, we embark on another school year filled with new students, new texts, and new opportunities. And, with such a growing list of quality young adult titles, how can you *not* be excited?

For this issue, we emphasize these opportunities through our theme of “Young Adult Literature—No Genre Unwanted.” Besides offering engaging texts that relate to adolescents’ worlds, YA lit provides an enormous variety of genres designed to interest even the most reluctant readers. Through this issue’s collection of articles, we share numerous approaches educators use to address everything from autobiography to horror. Also in this issue, Robin Mara explores Jane Yolen’s *Briar Rose* and metaphor, which Mara determines as the heart of the novel.

Joan Kaywell provides a tribute to the late Ted Hipple, who was such an integral part of the ALAN family. She details a collection of literature designed as a lasting memorial for the individual who served as executive secretary of this organization for nearly 20 years.

In the Professional Resource Connection, William Broz, Jeff Copeland, and Jerome Klinkowitz focus on “genre-jumping,” with Copeland’s *Inman’s War: A Soldier’s Story of Life in a Colored Battalion in WWII*. This unique article features a review of the book by Klinkowitz, as well as Copeland’s own words about the text, as well as an annotated bibliography.

In another article, Linda J. Rice interviews author and fellow teacher Trudy Krisher, who shares details of her life and her career in writing. Jonathan Stephens examines the genre of young adult literature . . . what it is and what it isn’t, as well as a closer look at several books in the genre. In his article, Scot

Smith explores “The Death of Genre” and how YA fiction often doesn’t fit neatly into distinct classifications.

Lisa Scherff and Candace Lewis Wright provide interesting connections regarding *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*, in their effort to pair the two novels. The authors emphasize literary theories as well as a practical application for the works. We step into some impressive libraries with an article by Diane P. Tuccillo, Paulette Goodman, Joann Pompa, and Joan Arrowsmith. They discuss the integral role of school libraries in helping teens connect with reading and writing.

ALAN award winners are featured in this issue, as well. Lisa Arter provides details of Alleen Pace Nilsen’s efforts to promote young adult literature. Nilsen is the winner of the 2006 Hipple Award. Virginia Monseau and Marc Aronson, the 2006 winners of the ALAN Award, discuss fiction, nonfiction, and adolescents with *The ALAN Review*’s Jim Blasingame. Awards were presented during the 2006 ALAN Workshop in Nashville.

Claudia Katz, in *The Middle School Connection*, reviews Teri Lesesne’s new book, *Naked Reading*. And, Ellen Wayman Gordon details an honor bestowed upon M. Jerry Weiss by The Center for Young Readers.

In addition, this issue of *The ALAN Review* offers some of our regular features, including more than 30 reviews of the newest works of young adult literature as part of our Clip and File section.

While the fall leaves may be tumbling down, students in classrooms across the country are seeing young adult literature—and its many genres—budding with possibilities. We hope you enjoy this collection; thanks for beginning another school year with *The ALAN Review*. Let the excitement continue.

Call for Manuscripts

2008 Summer theme: Life at My House: Depictions of Family in Young Adult Literature

This theme is intended to solicit articles about young adult literature, authors, and instructional approaches that deal with family relationships. One possibility is a discussion of how the concept of family in young adult literature has evolved to reflect a different reality from what might have been considered a traditional family at one time. Other possibilities might include discussion of books that celebrate family relationships, illuminate the problems inherent in a dysfunctional family, or address any aspect of groups that function as a family. This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics. General submissions are welcome, as well. **February 15 submission deadline.**

2008 Fall theme: How Will Life Be in 2053? Visions of the Future in Young Adult Literature

This theme is intended to solicit articles about young adult literature, authors, and instructional approaches that speculate on the nature of life in the future. This need not be limited to science fiction or fantasy by any means, but could center on any books that deal with trends that may impact life in the future. This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics. General submissions are welcome, as well. **May 15 submission deadline.**

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 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.

Honoring Ted Hipple by Keeping YA Literature Alive for Future Generations



In Memory of Ted Hipple (7/2/35–11/25/04):
Survey Results to a Special Collection in His Name
USF, ALAN and Authors Wish You Well Eternally!

Facts about Theodore Hipple

It is fitting that Ted Hipple passed away on Thanksgiving morning as his is a life that so many of us give thanks for, both knowingly and unknowingly. Ted's quick wit, jovial nature, great laugh, and dedication to the profession were infectious and his service record, humbling.

Did you know, for example, that Ted was . . .

- One of the founders of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), an organization for which he served for more years “than most of us have been teaching” and was the first recipient of its service award—named in his honor—in 2000?
- Department Chairperson at the University of Florida, joining UF fall 1968, and was colleagues with former ALAN President, Authors4Teens creator, and the Godfather of YA short stories Don Gallo for as many years as “the earth’s been cooling”?
- Presented the Florida Council Teachers of English Honor Award in 1980, FCTE’s most prestigious

award, for notable service to advance the teaching of the language arts in Florida?

- A prolific writer—having published numerous books, countless journal articles, and more congratulatory notes and/or ones of thanks that would surpass the net worth of Donald Trump and Bill Gates combined?
- Department Chairperson and Professor at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (went to UT the fall of 1984) where he mentored new doctoral students like Amy Maupin (Transylvania U) and ALAN President-elect David Gill (UNCW) as well as new assistant professors like Lisa Scherff (UA) while continuing to mentor his former doctoral students, the likes of Jeff Kaplan (UCF) and me (USF) here in Florida?

My relationship with Ted went back 30 years, though we got close beginning around 1983. I have been so blessed by having him as a mentor. He was the one who showed me the way life could be in a myriad of ways as he was the model professor, colleague, friend, and father figure. I was fortunate to be able to attend his memorial service, which oc-

curred on Thursday, 12/2/04, in Knoxville, Tennessee. The service was a moving display of the far-reaching effects of a gifted teacher and an awesome human being. There were well over 200 people in attendance and so many more who sent cards and gave testimonials as to how their lives were so positively influenced by his passion for teaching, integrity, life, and service. Here is a sample:

- The world of young adult literature has lost a giant. (Bill Mollineaux, 2003 ALAN President)
- Shakespeare gave his highest praise to one of his characters, a person he wrote, for whom “age cannot wither, nor custom stale.” Such was true of Ted, vibrant, outgoing, always interested in life and in us, his colleagues and friends. He is irreplaceable, and he will be missed. (Leila Christenbury, 2002 NCTE President)
- I admired his passion and knowledge for young adult literature. (Linda Rief, author and middle school teacher)
- He was a model for everything that was good and honorable and worthwhile in our lives and in our profession. . . .To paraphrase a line from Shakespeare: “We shall not soon see his like pass this way again.” (Jeff Golub, 2002 FCTE Honor Award recipient, USF Professor Emeritus)
- He was always a stand in a river of indifference . . . with a voice that resounded with clarity. I so appreciated that from him and trusted his views. (Carol Pope, *English Education* Section Editor)

To read more about Ted Hipple, read “In Memoriam: Ted Hipple” by Donald R. Gallo and Joellen Maples in *English Journal*, Volume 94, Number 3, January 2005, 10-12.

Deciding How to Best Remember Ted Hipple

It was during the memorial service that I decided that we needed to create something in his name so others could be inspired by his many contributions. One of Ted’s concerns was keeping YA literature readily available and he used to say, “It seems that YA

One of Ted’s concerns was keeping YA literature readily available and he used to say, “It seems that YA books go out of print just about as quickly as they come into print.”

books go out of print just about as quickly as they come into print.” Although admittedly unscientific, on June 21, 2006, I e-mailed ALAN members this question: Is there a young adult book you absolutely love that has gone out of print?

From then until September 2006, individuals could name one out-of-print young adult book they would love to see reissued. This message was forwarded by ALAN members and posted on message boards, and responses were

obtained from librarians, educators, authors, parents, editors, and one teenager. Respondents were asked to provide three bits of information: the name of the book, the author of the book, and whether they would most identify themselves as a librarian, educator, parent, or student.

The Results

In short, responses were obtained from 116 people: 68 educators, 28 librarians, 10 parents, 7 authors, 2 editors, and one teenager.

The following 12 books received more than one nomination in descending order:

- (4) *The Quartzsite Trip* by William Hogan (3 Educators & Librarian)
- (4) *The Only Alien on the Planet* by Kristen Randle (2 Educators, Editor, & Parent)
- (3) *The Dog King* by Paul Collins (2 Educators & Parent)
- (2) *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* by Pearl S. Buck (Parent & Educator)
- (2) *Sex Education* by Jenny Davis (2 Educators)
- (2) *The Magic Meadow* by Alexander Key (Educator & Author)
- (2) *Kinship* by Trudy Krisher (Educator & Author)
- (2) *Othello: A Novel* by Julius Lester (2 Educators)
- (2) *Miriam’s Well* by Lois Ruby (Educator & Librarian)
- (2) *A Couple of Kooks and other Stories about Love* by Cynthia Rylant (Educator & Librarian)
- (2) *Making Up Megaboy* by Virginia Walter (2 Educators)*
- (2) *Sparrow Lake* by Carol Beech York (Educator & Librarian)

The following five authors received more than one nomination for different books: **(4) Gordon Korman***, **(3) Sue Ellen Bridgers***, (2) Margaret Mahy, (2) Barbara Shoup, and (2) Betty Smith. See Appendix 1 for the remaining list of 87 titles, receiving one nomination. NOTE: Those bolded items that have an asterisk beside them are now available in the Ted Hipple Special Collection (see Appendix 3).

Initially, I was going to see about finding these books and getting them digitized until I found out how complicated the copyright issues had become regarding that process. Finally, with the help of Mark Greenberg, the Director of the University of South Florida (USF)'s Special Collections Department, and Jamie Hansen, the USF Special Collections Cataloguer, the idea for a Ted Hipple Special Collection was conceived. For the next year, I solicited donations from people via e-mail, phone calls, personal letters, blogs, and "various and sundry" means.

The Dedication

On May 23, 2007, The Ted Hipple Special Collection of Autographed First-Edition and Out-of-Print Young Adult Books was officially dedicated (See Poster

Session at 2007 ALAN Workshop in New York). Ted's wife of 49 years, Marge Hipple, flew in from Tennessee for the event as well as two of their three children—Kathy Hipple from New York City and Betsy Hipple from Los Angeles. Besides USF's Assistant Provost Dwayne Smith, Dr. Lisa Scherff came from Alabama and Dr. Jeff Kaplan drove over from Orlando, Florida. Mark Greenberg gave the opening remarks and read a letter from ALAN Executive Secretary Dr. Gary Salvner (See Appendix 2). There wasn't a dry eye among the Hipples and

several others were also affected among the 50 or so in attendance as I read my personal tribute to Ted while

the same PowerPoint shown at ALAN 2005 was playing in the background. (To see this visual tribute to Ted Hipple developed by USF doctoral student Jim Sams, please visit my website at <http://www.coedu.usf.edu/kaywell/>).

Next, award-winning novelist Lois Duncan graciously addressed the audience with her wit and charm, expressing the importance of such a collection to the field of adolescent literature. She also shared some of her poetry from her newest book, *Seasons of the Heart* (a print-on-demand book available from i-universe 1-800-288-4677), and helped us all believe that a new spring will come after those winter periods of grief and sorrow. Lois Duncan generously donated the proceeds of the night's sales as well as her talk for the continuation of this Special Collection. Since my first edited trade book *Dear Author: Letters of Hope* was actually dedicated to Ted Hipple, a portion of the royalties has been donated to the Ted Hipple Fund established by the ALAN Board of Directors after his death; a match has also been given by Philomel for this cause.

Finally, a plaque was given to the Hipple family and they were invited to do the actual ribbon cutting for the 333 donated books. Of these 333 first-edition autographed books, 25 were advanced reading copies, 12 included both an advanced reading copy and its first edition, and 2 were original manuscripts prior to publication. Forty-nine authors sent me their personal copies for inclusion and eight colleagues—Dick Abrahamson, Chris Crowe, Don Gallo, Sarah Herz, Teri Lesesne, Alleen Pace Nilsen, Cinda Snow, and Alan Teasley—contributed. Three publishers—Farrar, Straus and Giroux; HarperCollins; and Peachtree Publishers—donated, and both of my sons—Christopher Maida and Stephen Kaywell—gave many of their personal "association copies" to this Special Collection. See Appendix 3 for the complete list of books acquired thus far.

What You Can Do

Ted Hipple was a true advocate of professional service and practiced what he preached. In addition to serving as President of ALAN from 1977 to 1979, Hipple was Executive Secretary of our group for nearly 20 years before retiring from that post in 2000. On the NCTE convention program every year for nearly 35 years, Ted's was a familiar face at the ALAN Breakfast

Ted Hipple was a true advocate of professional service and practiced what he preached. In addition to serving as President of ALAN from 1977 to 1979, Hipple was Executive Secretary of our group for nearly 20 years before retiring from that post in 2000.

and ALAN Workshop. He also served as chair of CEE (Conference on English Education) and as chair and associate chair of the NCTE Secondary Section; he served at the local and state levels as well. Visit the NCTE Web site www.ncte.org for an article on volunteering with NCTE and/or your state affiliate—“Ask Not What NCTE Can Do for You”—written by Hipple for the Fall 2000 *Council-Grams* at <http://www.ncte.org/about/gov/cgrams/res/118813.htm?source=gs>. Ted Writes,

Bob [Hogan] . . . said, ‘NCTE must have volunteers or it will collapse.’ So it was then, so it is now. And not just, or even mainly, for the national outfit, but also for state and local affiliates. Look about you, please . . . [and] become a volunteer for NCTE or your state or local affiliate. Get involved; be a player. You don’t have to run for elective office or give the luncheon address. Those jobs can come later. For now. . . . Ask to join a committee. And what’s in it for you? In addition to helping out, you will find it personally and professionally among the most enriching experiences you can have. Trust me on that last point. I’ve been around the NCTE volunteer block a time or two and wouldn’t have missed it for anything.

It is no accident that I stepped up to the plate to serve as ALAN’s Membership Secretary with Dr. Gary Salvner serving as its Executive Secretary. Please notice that the position Ted held for almost two decades had to be split in two.

In conclusion, I hope you join me in honoring Ted and what he represents by serving the profession in some way: Volunteer for a professional organization; give a young adult book to a teenager to read since, in

Ted’s words, “It’s better THAT they read rather than WHAT they read!”; recruit a new ALAN member (www.alan-ya.org), the organization so dear to Ted’s heart; or donate to this Special Collection in some way. If you have an autographed first-edition of a YA book or an out-of-print YA book that you would like to donate to this collection, please e-mail me at Kaywell@tempest.coedu.usf.edu or send it to me at Joan F. Kaywell, Ph.D., College of Education 162, University of South Florida, 4202 E Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL 33620-5650. Remember a foundation has been established through ALAN in Ted’s name to help this Special Collection grow. If you care to donate, you can do so by contacting ALAN Treasurer Marge Ford at camp_mf@access-k12.org; your contributions are tax deductible.

I hope you are as excited as I am that the literature that Ted loved so well can be preserved in his name. My next step is to actually purchase old YA first editions as I find them, mail them to authors for their signature, and continue growing the collection until I join Ted in the hereafter. Of course, the ALAN Workshop will always guarantee some new books, and I hope you will consider bequeathing your personal autographed titles when the time is right.

I’ll close with what Mike Angelotti, Professor of English Education at the University of Oklahoma, had to say about Ted at his memorial: “Good humor. Guttural laugh. Always positive. Tireless worker for endless causes. . . . Move over Saint Peter. There is a new Executive Secretary in town!”

Appendix 1

87 Out-of-Print Young Adult Titles, Receiving One Nomination (Alphabetized by Author)

* Bolded items are now available in the Ted Hipple Special Collection (see Appendix 3).

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mildred Ames: <i>Anna to the Infinite Power</i> (Educator) | 9. Pierre Berton: <i>The Secret World of Og</i> (Educator) |
| 2. Chester Aaron: <i>Lackawanna: A Novel</i> (Educator) | 10. Sue Ellen Bridgers: <i>All Together Now</i> (Educator) |
| 3. Goldie Alexander: <i>Mavis Road Medley</i> (Educator) | 11. Sue Ellen Bridgers: <i>All We Know of Heaven</i> (Educator)* |
| 4. Avi: <i>Wolftrider</i> (Educator) | 12. Sue Ellen Bridgers: <i>Home before Dark</i> (Educator) |
| 5. Natalie Babbitt: <i>The Search for Delicious</i> (Educator) | 13. Bruce Brooks: <i>Midnight Hour Encores</i> (Educator) |
| 6. Rob Batista: <i>Street Angel</i> (Educator) | 14. Bill and Vera Cleaver: <i>Where the Lilies Bloom</i> (Author) |
| 7. James W. Bennett: <i>Squared Circle</i> (Educator) | 15. Daniel Cohen: <i>The Headless Roommate and other Tales of Horror</i> (Educator) |
| 8. Robert Hugh Benson: <i>Come Rack Come Rope</i> (Educator) | |

16. Dennis Covington: *Lizard* (Educator)
17. Gary Crew: *Strange Objects* (Librarian)
18. Gilbert Cross: *A Hanging at Tyburn* (Educator)
19. Charlotte Culin: *Cages of Glass, Flowers of Time* (Educator)
20. Jane Louise Curry: *The Bassumtype Treasure* (Librarian)
21. Jennifer Dabbs: *It's Beyond Redemption* (Librarian)
22. Nicole Davidson: *Crash Course*(Librarian)
23. Terry Davis: *If Rock and Roll Were a Machine* (Educator)
24. Carl Deuker: *Heart of a Champion* (Librarian)
25. John Donovan: *I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip* (Author)
26. Gerald Durrell: *The Mockery Bird* (Teenager)
- 27. Hazel Edwards: *General Store* (Educator)**
28. Carolyn Dwight Emerson: *The Magic Tunnel*(Librarian)
29. Zach Emerson: *Welcome to Vietnam* (Educator)
30. Ronald Fair: *Cornbread, Earl and Me* (Educator)
31. Mary Gallagher: *Spend It Foolishly* (Librarian)
32. Paul Gallico: *The Man Who Was Magic* (Parent)
33. Don Gallo: *Connections* (Educator)*
34. Nancy Garden: *Loners* (Librarian)
35. Sheila Garrigue: *The Eternal Spring of Mr. Ito* (Author)
36. Libby Gleeson: *Eleanor Elizabeth* (Parent)
37. Sheila Gordon: *Waiting for the Rain* (Educator)
38. David Haynes: *Right by My Side* (Educator)
39. James Herriott: *All Creatures Great and Small* (Educator)
40. Karen Hesse: *Witness* (Educator)
41. William H. Hooks: *Maria's Cave* (Educator)
- 42. Paul Janeschko: *Poetspeak: In Their work, about Their Work* (Author)**
43. Philip D. Jordan: *Fiddlefoot Jones of the North Woods* (Educator)
44. Gordon and Bernice Korman: *The D- Poems of Jeremy Bloom* (Educator)
45. Gordon Korman: *Don't Care High* (Educator)
46. Gordon Korman: *I Want to Go Home* (Librarian)
47. Gordon Korman: *Macdonald Hall* (Educator)
48. Gordon Korman: *Son of Interflux* (Author)
49. Evelyn Sibley Lampman: *The City Under the Back Steps* (Librarian)
50. Ellen Levine: *A Fence Away from Freedom* (Educator)
51. Margaret Mahy: *The Boy Who Was Followed Home* (Librarian)
52. Margaret Mahy: *The Tricksters* (Educator)
53. John Marsden: *So Much to Tell You* by (Librarian)
54. Sharon Bell Mathis: *Listen to the Fig Tree* (Educator)
55. Mercer Mayer: *Me and My Flying Machine* (Parent)
56. Eloise Jarvis McGraw: *Greensleeves* (Librarian)
57. Theresa Nelson: *Earthshine* (Librarian)
58. Joan Lowery Nixon: *House on Hackman's Hill* (Educator)
59. Roger Norman: *Albion's Dream* (Parent)
60. Andre Norton: *Stand and Deliver* (Educator)
61. Andrew J. Offutt: *The Galactic Rejects* (Librarian)
62. Gary Paulsen: *Harris and Me* (Librarian)
63. Christopher Pike: *Last Vampire Series* (Librarian)
64. Elizabeth Marie Pope: *The Perilous Gard* (Educator)
65. Hans Jurgen Press: *The Adventures of the Black Hand Gang* (Educator)
66. Jean Renvoize: *A Wild Thing* (Librarian)
67. David Rish: *A Dozen Eggs* (Librarian)
68. S.L. Rottman: *Hero* (Educator)*
69. Marisabina Russo: *House of Sports* (Librarian)
70. James Willard Schultz: *A Son of the Navajos* (Educator)
71. Sheila Schwartz: *Growing Up Guilty* (Educator)
72. Barbara Shoup: *Stranded in Harmony* (Librarian)
73. Barbara Shoup: *Wish You Were Here* (Educator)
74. Betty Smith: *Maggie-Now* (Parent)
75. Betty Smith: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (Educator)
76. Zilpha Keatley Snyder: *Black & Blue Magic* (Parent)
77. Celia Strang: *This Child Is Mine* (Librarian)
78. Marc Talbert: *The Heart of a Jaguar* (Editor)
79. Erika Tamar: *Fair Game* (Librarian)
80. Julian Thompson: *The Grounding of Group Six* (Educator)
81. Yoshiko Uchida: *Journey to Topaz* (Educator)
82. Dorothy Van Woerkom: *Becky and the Bear* (Librarian)
83. Victoria Walker: *The Winter of Enchantment* (Parent)
84. Stanley Gordon West: *Growing an Inch* (Educator)
85. Robert Westall: *Gulf* (Educator)
86. Robb White: *The Lion's Paw* (Educator)
87. Paul Zindel: *The Pigman* (Educator)

Appendix 2

Letter from ALAN Executive Secretary Gary Salvner

ALAN

May 22, 2007

Dear Marge, Joan, and friends and family of Ted Hipple,

I'm sorry I can't be with you on this special day. If anyone in the field of young adult literature deserves to have a special collection of YA titles named after him, it is Ted Hipple.

I succeeded Ted as Executive Secretary of ALAN in 2000—succeeded but didn't replace a man who had given nearly 20 years of leadership to the organization. I had been president and on the ALAN board for a number of years, but I had no way of appreciating the steady, behind-the-scenes guidance Ted gave to us until I was challenged with taking over. Ted always made those management tasks look easy, alert continually to both small details and large implications. In particular, he was attentive to the people of ALAN, its members and officers. "Don't worry; you'll do fine," Ted said as I took over, and it was only because he answered nearly all my frantic e-mails within hours that I got settled into what will always, to me, be "Ted's job."

If anything was professionally more important to Ted than ALAN, it was the field of young adult literature itself. None of us could keep up with his reading pace, and we all hung on those brief e-mails of his stating, "I just read. . . It's a great one. Give it a try." Ted Hipple shaped the summer reading lists of many, many professionals in the field with his "Give it a try" tips.

In a brief tribute to Ted after his death in 2004, I wrote, "Ted Hipple was like those great young adult novels he recommended—spirited, thoughtful, and masterfully composed. He was sometimes funny, always honest, never boring. Ted was the book you couldn't put down. He's the book we won't forget."

The Ted Hipple Special Collection of Autographed First-Edition and Out-of-Print Young Adult Books further ensures that we won't forget this titan in the field of young adult literature. My greetings to all of you as you join to dedicate this very special collection in honor of a very special man.

Regards,

Gary Salvner

Gary Salvner
Executive Secretary, ALAN
Youngstown State University

Appendix 3

The Ted Hipple Special Collection of Autographed First Edition and Out-of-Print Young Adult Books—Dedication May 23, 2007

* Advanced Reading Copy

** Both Advanced Reading Copy and First Edition

1. Laurie Halse Anderson: *Speak*
2. **Sandy Asher**: *Dude! Stories and Stuff for Boys*
3. **Sandy Asher**: *On Her Way: Stories and Poems about Growing Up a Girl*
4. **Sandy Asher**: *Out of Here*
5. **Sandy Asher**: *With All My Heart, With All My Mind: 13 Stories about Growing Up Jewish*
6. Andrew Auseon: *Funny Little Monkey*
7. *Avi: *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*
8. T. A. Barron: *The Great Tree of Avalon Book One: Child of the Dark Prophecy*
9. **T. A. Barron: *The Great Tree of Avalon Book Two: Shadows on the Stars*
10. T. A. Barron: *The Great Tree of Avalon Book Three: The Eternal Flame*
11. T. A. Barron: *The Hero's Trail*
12. *T. A. Barron: *Tree Girl*
13. T. A. Barron: *The Wings of Merlin*
14. L. G. Bass: *Sign of the Qin*
15. Joan Bauer: *Best Foot Forward*
16. Joan Bauer: *Stand Tall*
17. Marion Dane Bauer: *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence*
18. Raymond Bial: *Tenement: Immigrant Life on the Lower East Side*
19. Edward Bloor: *Crusader*
20. **Edward Bloor: *London Calling*
21. Edward Bloor: *London Calling*
22. Sue Ellen Bridgers: *All We Know of Heaven*
23. Sue Ellen Bridgers: *Keeping Christina*
24. Sue Ellen Bridgers: *Permanent Connections*
25. Kevin Brooks: *Lucas: A Story of Love and Hate*
26. Kevin Brooks: *Martyn Pig*
27. Martha Brooks: *Being with Henry*
28. Jen Bryant: *Pieces of Georgia*
29. Jen Bryant: *Thomas Merton: Poet, Prophet, Priest*
30. Jen Bryant: *The Trial*
31. Dori Hillestad Butler: *Do You Know the Monkey Man?*
32. Michael Cadnum: *Forbidden Forest: The Story of Little John and Robin Hood*
33. Michael Cadnum: *In a Dark Wood*
34. Michael Cadnum: *Raven of the Waves*
35. Elisa Carbone: *Blood on the River, Jamestown 1607*
36. Orson Scott Card: *Ender's Game*
37. Michael Cart: *The Best American Non-Required Reading*
38. Michael Cart: *From Romance to Realism: 50 Years of Growth and Change in Young Adult Literature*
39. Michael Cart: *Love and Sex: Ten Stories of Truth*
40. Michael Cart: *My Father's Scar*
41. Michael Cart: *Necessary Noise: Stories about Our Families as They Really Are*
42. Michael Cart: *Presenting Robert Lipsyte*
43. Michael Cart: *Tomorrowland: Stories about the Future*
44. Michael Cart: *What's So Funny? Wit and Humor in Children's Literature*
45. James Bucky Carter: *Building Literacy Connections with Graphic Novels*
46. Jan Cheripko: *Rat*
47. Judith Ortiz Cofer: *The Year of Our Revolution*
48. **Snead B. Collard: *Flash Point*
49. Kevin Crossley-Holland: *Arthur at the Crossing Places*
50. **Chris Crowe: *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*
51. **Chris Crowe: *Mississippi Trial, 1955*
52. Chris Crutcher: *Ironman*
53. Chris Crutcher: *The Sledding Hill*
54. Chris Crutcher: *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*
55. **Chris Crutcher: *Whale Talk*
56. Christopher Paul Curtis: *Bucking the Sarge*
57. Karen Cushman: *Matilda Bone*
58. Maureen Daly: *Acts of Love*
59. **Dana Davidson**: *Jason Kyrá*
60. Monalisa DeGross: *Donavan's Word Jar*
61. Mark Delaney: *Misfits No. 2: Of Heroes and Villains*
62. Mark Delaney: *Pepperland*
63. Matt de la Pena: *Ball Don't Lie*
64. Sarah Dessen: *Dreamland*
65. Sarah Dessen: *Just Listen*
66. Kenneth L. Donelson & Alleen Pace Nilsen: *Literature for Today's Young Adults*

67. Jennifer Donnelly: *A Northern Light*
 68. Sharon Draper: *Copper Son*
 69. Sharon M. Draper: *Jazzimagination: A Journal to Read and Write*
 70. Sharon M. Draper: *Tears of a Tiger*
 71. Lois Duncan: *Seasons of the Heart*
 72. Lois Duncan: *They Never Came Home*
 73. Jeanne DuPrau: *The City of Ember*
 74. Laura Elliot: *Annie, Between the States*
 75. Laura Elliott: *Flying South*
 76. L.M. Elliott: *Give Me Liberty*
 77. L.M. Elliott: *Under a War Torn Sky*
 78. Deborah Ellis: *A Company of Fools*
 79. Nancy Farmer: *The Ear, the Eye and the Arm*
 80. Nancy Farmer: *The House of the Scorpion*
81. Jean Ferris: *Love Among the Walnuts*
 82. *Sharon G. Flake: *Bang!*
 83. Sharon G. Flake: *The Skin I'm In*
 84. Sharon G. Flake: *Who Am I Without Him: Short Stories about Girls and the Boys in Their Lives*
 85. Paul Fleischman: *Breakout*
 86. Alex Flinn: *Breathing Underwater*
 87. Adrian Fogelin: *Anna Casey's Place in the World*
 88. Adrian Fogelin: *The Big Nothing*
 89. Adrian Fogelin: *Crossing Jordan*
 90. Adrian Fogelin: *My Brother's Hero*
 91. **Adrian Fogelin: *The Real Question*
 92. Adrian Fogelin: *Sister Spider Knows All*
 93. Russell Freedman: *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*
 94. Cornelia Funke: *Inkspell*
 95. Don Gallo: *Center Stage: Plays for Young Adults*
 96. Don Gallo: *Connections*
 97. Don Gallo: *Destination Unexpected*
 98. Don Gallo: *First Crossing*
 99. Don Gallo: *Join In*
 100. Don Gallo: *No Easy Answers*
 101. Don Gallo: *On the Fringe*
 102. Don Gallo: *Short Circuits*
 103. Don Gallo: *Sixteen*
 104. Don Gallo: *Time Capsule*
 105. Don Gallo: *Ultimate Sports*
 106. Don Gallo: *Visions*
 107. **Don Gallo: *What Are You Afraid Of? Stories about Phobias*
 108. Don Gallo: *Within Reach*
109. Nancy Garden: *Annie on My Mind*
110. Nancy Garden: *Dove and Sword*
111. Nancy Garden: *Endgame*
 112. Nancy Garden: *Good Moon Rising*
113. Nancy Garden: *Lark in the Morning*
114. Nancy Garden: *The Year They Burned the Books*
115. Mel Glenn: *Class Dismissed!*
 116. Mel Glenn: *Split Image: A Story in Poems*
 117. Alan Gratz: *Samurai Shortstop*
 118. Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan: *Vincent van Gogh, Portrait of an Artist*
 119. Nikki Grimes: *Bronx Masquerade*
 120. Nikki Grimes: *Dark Sons*
 121. *Nikki Grimes: *The Road to Paris*
122. *Brent Hartinger: *The Order of the Poison Oak*
 123. Jim Haskins: *Separate But Not Equal: The Dream and the Struggle*
 124. Patricia Hermes: *Emma Dilemma and the New Nanny*
 125. Karen Hesse: *Letters from Rifka*
 126. Karen Hesse: *Phoenix Rising*
 127. *Linda Oatman High: *Sister Slam and the Poetic Motormouth Road Trip*
 128. Valerie Hobbs: *Sonny's War*
 129. Will Hobbs: *Crossing the Wire*
 130. Will Hobbs: *Down the Yukon*
 131. Will Hobbs: *Ghost Canoe*
 132. Will Hobbs: *Jackie's Wild Seattle*
 133. Will Hobbs: *Leaving Protection*
 134. Will Hobbs: *The Maze*
 135. Will Hobbs: *River Thunder*
 136. Will Hobbs: *Wild Man Island*
 137. Michael Hoeye: *No Time Like Show Time*
 138. Gloria Houston: *Littlejim's Dreams*
 139. Gloria Houston: *Mountain Valor* (original manuscript)
 140. Gloria Houston: *Mountain Valor*
 141. Pat Hughes: *Open Ice*
 142. Jeanette Ingold: *The Big Burn*
 143. Jeanette Ingold: *Pictures, 1918*
 144. Angela Johnson: *Gone from Home*
 145. *Patrick Jones: *Nailed*
 146. Gail Karwoski: *Miracle: The True Story of the Wreck of the Sea Adventure*
 147. Gail Karwoski: *Quake: Disaster in San Francisco, 1906*
 148. Gail Karwoski: *Tsunami: The True Story of an April Fools' Day Disaster*
 149. Joan F. Kaywell: *Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics, Volume One*
 150. **Joan F. Kaywell: *Dear Author: Letters of Hope*
 151. Joan F. Kaywell: *Using Literature to Help Troubled Teenagers Cope with Family Issues*

152. Sally M. Keehn: *The First Horse I See*
- 153. M. E. Kerr: *Blood On The Forehead***
154. M. E. Kerr: *"Hello," I Lied*
155. M. E. Kerr: *Little Little*
156. M. E. Kerr: *Slap Your Sides.*
- 157. M. E. Kerr: *What I Really Think of You***
158. M. E. Kerr: *Your Eyes In Stars*
159. Daniel Keyes: *Algernon, Charlie and I: A Writer's Journey*
160. David Klass: *You Don't Know Me*
161. Annette Curtis Klause: *Freaks Alive, on the Inside!*
162. Ron Koertge: *The Brimstone Journals*
163. Ron Koertge: *Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright*
164. Ron Koertge: *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*
165. Kathe Koja: *Buddha Boy*
166. Kathe Koja: *Talk*
167. Gordon Korman: *Son of the Mob*
168. Marie G. Lee: *F Is for Fabuloso*
169. Marie G. Lee: *Necessary Roughness*
170. A.C. LeMieux: *Dare to Be, Me!*
171. A.C. LeMieux: *Do Angels Sing the Blues?*
172. A.C. LeMieux: *The TV Guidance Counselor*
173. Gail Carson Levine: *Ella Enchanted*
174. David Levithan: *The Realm of Possibility*
175. Robert Lipsyte: *The Brave*
176. Robert Lipsyte: *The Chemo Kid*
177. Robert Lipsyte: *The Chief*
178. Robert Lipsyte: *Free to Be Muhammad Ali*
179. Robert Lipsyte: *Raiders Night*
180. E. Lockhart: *The Boyfriend List*
181. David Lubar: *Dunk*
182. David Lubar: *True Talents*
183. Chris Lynch: *Dog Eat Dog*
184. Chris Lynch: *Inexcusable*
185. Chris Lynch: *Political Timber*
186. Chris Lynch: *Slot Machine*
187. Carolyn MacCullough: *Stealing Henry*
188. Victor Martinez: *Parrot in the Oven, Mi Vida*
189. Alfred C. Martino: *Pinned*
190. Susan C. McCarthy: *Lay That Trumpet in Our Hands*
191. Susan C. McCarthy: *True Fires*
192. Janet McDonald: *Brother Hood*
193. Janet McDonald: *Chill Wind*
194. Janet McDonald: *Spellbound*
195. Janet McDonald: *Twists and Turns*
196. Carolyn Meyer: *Mary, Bloody Mary*
197. *Ben Mikaelson: *Countdown*
198. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Camouflage*
199. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Close to the Edge* (paperback)
200. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *The Emerson High Vigilantes*
201. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *The Enemy Has a Face*
202. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Harry Truman*
203. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Masada: The Last Fortress*
204. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *The Love Bombers* (paperback)
205. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Past Forgiving*
206. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Runaway* (paperback)
207. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *Secrets in the House of Delgado*
208. Gloria D. Miklowitz: *The War Between the Classes* (paperback)
209. Ken Mochizuki: *Beacon Hill Boys*
210. Jaclyn Moriarty: *The Year of Secret Assignments*
211. Walter Dean Myers: *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*
212. Walter Dean Myers: *Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary*
213. Walter Dean Myers: *The Righteous Revenge of Artemis Bonner*
214. Donna Jo Napoli: *The Bravest Thing*
215. Donna Jo Napoli: *Crazy Jack*
216. Donna Jo Napoli: *The Great God Pan*
217. Donna Jo Napoli: *Jimmy, the Pickpocket of the Palace*
218. Donna Jo Napoli: *On Guard*
219. Donna Jo Napoli: *Shark Shock*
220. Donna Jo Napoli: *Shelley Shock*
221. Donna Jo Napoli: *Spinners*
222. Donna Jo Napoli: *Ugly*
223. John Neufeld: *Boys Lie*
224. Joan Lowery Nixon: *Playing for Keeps*
225. Joan Lowery Nixon: *The Weekend was Murder!*
- 226. Han Nolan: *A Face in Every Window***
- 227. Naomi Shihab Nye: *The Space between Our Footsteps: Poems and Paintings from the Middle East***
228. Susan Heyboer O'Keefe: *My Life and Death by Alexandra Canarsie*
229. James Patterson: *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment*
230. James Patterson: *Maximum Ride: School's Out-Forever*
231. Edith Pattou: *East*
232. Gary Paulsen: *Brian's Hunt*
233. Gary Paulsen: *Brian's Winter*
234. Gary Paulsen: *The River*
235. Mary E. Pearson: *David V. God*
236. Mary E. Pearson: *A Room on Lorelei Street*
237. Mary E. Pearson: *Scribbler of Dreams*
- 238. Richard Peck: *A Long Way from Chicago***

239. Richard Peck: *The Teacher's Funeral, A Comedy in Three Parts*
240. Robert Newton Peck: *A Day No Pigs Would Die*
241. Lynne Rae Perkins: *Criss Cross*
242. **Julie Anne Peters: *Between Mom and Jo*
243. Rodman Philbrick: *The Last Book in the Universe*
244. Carol Plum-Ucci: *The Body of Christopher Creed*
245. Adam Rapp: *The Buffalo Tree*
246. Adam Rapp: *The Copper Elephant*
247. Marilyn Reynolds: *Beyond Dreams*
248. Marilyn Reynolds: *No More Sad Goodbyes* (original manuscript)
- 249. Ann Rinaldi: *Millicent's Gift***
- 250. *Ann Rinaldi: *Mine Eyes Have Seen***
251. *Ann Rinaldi: *A Stitch in Time (The Quilt Trilogy)*
252. John H. Ritter: *The Boy Who Saved Baseball*
253. John H. Ritter: *Under the Baseball Moon*
- 254. Harriette Gillem Robinet: *Children of the Fire***
255. S. L. Rottman: *Head above Water*
256. S. L. Rottman: *Hero*
257. S. L. Rottman: *Rough Waters*
258. S. L. Rottman: *Shadow of a Doubt*
259. **Pam Munoz Ryan: *Esperanza Rising*
- 260. Graham Salisbury: *Island Boyz Short Stories***
261. Graham Salisbury: *Lord of the Deep*
262. Allan R. Shickman: *Zan-Gah: A Prehistoric Adventure* (Earthshakerbooks, Bonnie Lenz)
263. Gary D. Schmidt: *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*
264. Sherry Shahan: *Death Mountain*
265. Neal Shusterman: *Dissidents*
266. Neal Shusterman: *Full Tilt*
267. Neal Shusterman: *The Schwa Was Here*
268. Neal Shusterman: *The Shadow Club*
269. Neal Shusterman: *The Shadow Club Rising*
270. Neal Shusterman: *Thief of Souls*
271. Marilyn Singer: *How to Cross a Pond: Poems about Water*
272. **Alan Lawrence Sitomer: *Hip-Hop High School*
273. *Alan Lawrence Sitomer: *Homeboyz*
274. *Alan Lawrence Sitomer: *The Hoopster*
275. William Sleator: *The Boxes*
276. William Sleator: *The Last Universe*
277. William Sleator: *Marco's Millions*
278. Cynthia Leitich Smith: *Tantalize*
279. Sonya Sones: *What My Mother Doesn't Know*
- 280. Gary Soto: *Fearless Fernie (Poems)***
281. Jerry Spinelli: *Knots in My Yo-yo String: The Autobiography of a Kid*
282. Jerry Spinelli: *Milkweed*
283. Shelley Stoehr: *Weird on the Outside*
284. Tanya Lee Stone: *A Bad Boy Can Be Good for a Girl*
285. Joyce Sweeney: *Shadow*
286. Ann Turner: *Learning to Swim (A Memoir)*
287. Megan Whalen Turner: *King of Attolia*
288. Susan Vaught: *Trigger*
289. Deb Vanasse: *A Distant Enemy*
290. Vivian Vande Velde: *Smart Dog*
291. Wendelin Van Draanen: *Swear to Howdy*
- 292. *Ned Vizzini: *Be More Chill***
293. Rich Wallace: *Losing Is Not an Option, Stories*
- 294. Virginia Walter & Katrina Roeckelein: *Making Up Megaboy***
- 295. Will Weaver: *Hard Ball***
296. Will Weaver: *Memory Boy*
297. M. Jerry & Helen S. Weiss: *Big City Cool: Short Stories about Urban Youth (paper)*
298. M. Jerry & Helen S. Weiss: *Dreams and Visions: Fourteen Flight of Fantasy (paper)*
299. Carol Lynch Williams: *Adeline Street*
300. Carol Lynch Williams: *Carolina Autumn*
301. Carol Lynch Williams: *A Mother to Embarrass Me*
302. Carol Lynch Williams: *The True Colors of Caitlynnne Jackson*
- 303. Diane Lee Wilson: *Black Storm Comin'***
304. Ellen Wittlinger: *Blind Faith*
305. Ellen Wittlinger: *Heart on My Sleeve*
306. Ellen Wittlinger: *Sandpiper*
307. Jacqueline Woodson: *Behind You*
308. Jacqueline Woodson: *The House that You Pass on the Way*
309. Jacqueline Woodson: *If You Come Softly*
310. Jacqueline Woodson: *Miracle's Boys*
311. Sharon Dennis Wyeth: *The World of Daughter McGuire*
312. Tim Wynne-Jones: *The Book of Changes*
313. Tim Wynne-Jones: *Lord of the Fries and Other Stories*
314. Tim Wynne-Jones: *Some of the Kinder Planets*
315. Tim Wynne-Jones: *Stephen Fair*
316. Tim Wynne-Jones: *A Thief in the House of Memory*
317. Jane Yolen: *The One-Armed Queen*
318. Jane Yolen: *Sister Light/Sister Dark*
319. Jane Yolen: *White Jenna*
320. Paul Zindel: *The Doom Stone*
- 321. Paul Zindel: *Reef of Death***



with guest contributors Jeff Copeland and Jerome Klinkowitz

Inman's War:

Genre Jumping Brings to Life the Letters of an African American WWII Soldier
(Plus, a Bibliography of African American WWII Literature Suitable for YA Readers)

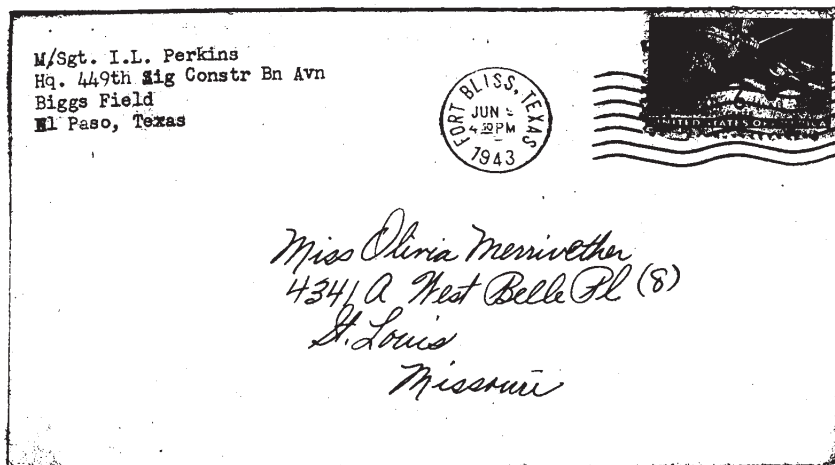
I have written about the literature of WWII in this space before (“Finding Small Press and Self-Published Books about WWII.” Volume 32, Number 1, Fall 2004), and I will probably do it again if the editors let me. That is because I have seen so many great middle school teachers attach units of robust and engaging literature of WWII onto a common reading of the play *The Diary of Anne Frank* found in many middle school literature anthologies. More recently I have seen how effective both middle school and high school

librarians and English teachers have become in spreading the word to their social studies colleagues about the value of their students reading book-length fiction and nonfiction texts, especially texts about WWII. This time I am offering resources about the literature of WWII as it depicts African-Americans.

I am inspired in this effort by having just finished *Inman's War: A Soldier's Story of Life in a Colored Battalion in WWII* by Jeffrey S. Copeland. You are going to be hearing about this book from many sources, if you haven't already. It

was a moving read, and it is a great book for young adults. In my opinion, it achieves this status by blurring the lines of genre. The book is largely a first-person narrative constructed from the letters of Inman Perkins (a WWII GI) and the extensive research that grew out of those letters. It is not fiction and it is not non-fiction, and the text of the book is a first-person narrative rather than a collection of letters.

Below, distinguished literary scholar Jerome Klinkowitz offers a review of *Inman's War*. That review is followed by something you cannot find within the pages of *Inman's War*—a photocopy of one of Inman Perkins' letters to his wife, Olivia, accompanied by notes that show Copeland planning how to spin the letter into his first-person narrative. This column concludes with an annotated bibliography of books about African-Americans in WWII compiled and introduced by *Inman's War* author and professor of young adult literature Jeffrey Copeland. But first I want to entice you with the story about the



writing of *Inman's War*. The truth is stranger than fiction.

Once upon a time, in the fall of 2002, Jeffrey Copeland, whose area of YA literature is the lives of poets who write for young adults, and who had little past experience with artistic or creative writing, stumbled across an old suitcase full of letters at a flea market in Belleville, Illinois, just across the Mississippi River from his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri. The letters were from a young African-American WWII soldier to his wife. Some were from the wife to the soldier—nearly 150 letters written between fall 1942 and late spring 1944. The reading of those letters sent Copeland on an odyssey. He went to the school in St. Louis where the husband and wife had taught and was told, “The records might be stored downtown somewhere.” But on the way out of the building the elderly custodian who had overheard said, “I know about Inman and Olivia Perkins.” Copeland learned that some of that schools students of the era in which the Perkins taught were quite well known. Later, standing in line after a lecture to meet the great Dick Gregory who had been one of Olivia’s students, Copeland showed Gregory a picture of Inman in uniform standing next to Olivia on the steps of the high school and asked him if he remembered these people. Recognizing his teacher Gregory got misty-eyed, and when he learned of the letters and the book in-progress asked if he could write the introduction. Copeland traveled to several repositories of military archives only to learn that he was the first person since 1945

The letters were from a young African-American WWII soldier to his wife. Some were from the wife to the soldier—nearly 150 letters written between fall 1942 and late spring 1944.

to read the accounts of the battalion Perkins lead. And there is more to the story of writing this book that you can read about in Copeland’s introduction to his annotated bibliography below.

When I read *Inman's War*, I thought it was perfect for young adult readers as well as for anyone interested in WWII or the African-American experience in the Midwest in the 1940’s. It would be a great book for high school history students or college students in African-American Studies. I hope *The ALAN Review* readers keep teaching those important units on WWII and encourage individual students and reading groups to read widely in the scores of great books on the subject. I hope that the following review and bibliography will help you round out your classroom and library collections.

Review of *Inman's War*

Inman's War: A Soldier's Story of Life in a Colored Battalion in WWII. By Jeffrey S. Copeland. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2006. 366 pp. Paperback. \$17.95

Reviewed by Jerome Klinkowitz, Professor of English, University of Northern Iowa

Inman Perkins was a science teacher at Charles Sumner High School in St. Louis, Missouri. There he met and married Olivia Merriwether, who taught science. In 1942, he joined the United States Army Air Force, serving in a Signal Construction Battalion that saw combat in Italy—at Anzio, which saw some of the fiercest and costliest fighting of World War II. As a teacher, he was a leader, and became even more of one in the service. In doing so, he quickly attained the rank of First Sergeant. Why not higher? Because he was an African American. His unit was segregated; officers’ commissions were limited to whites. Being First Sergeant was as far as Inman Perkins was allowed to go.

To his men, however, he might as well have been a general, a highly respected and beloved one at that. Disregarding military custom, they saluted him as if he were General Eisenhower himself. And while it is the Eisenhowers and Pattons who have had their stories told by leading historians, it is Sergeant Perkins who (with scholar Jeffrey S. Copeland’s help) tells his own. During his training in the U.S. and while stationed abroad, Inman wrote his fiancée (and soon, secretly, his wife) Olivia nearly 150 letters, which she saved for the rest of her life. For *Inman's War* those letters are used to create an autobiographical narrative that tells an important story of what some have called America’s Greatest Generation, a story that now has a rainbow hue.

Inman Perkins' tale could have been one of limitations: of having to teach only African American students, themselves restricted to a segregated high school; having to marry Olivia in secret, because at that time in that school district, married women were not allowed to continue their careers as educators; of having to serve in what was formally named as a "colored" battalion (other battalions were colored, too, but their color was white); and having to discover the racial attitudes of the American South, after being raised in middle class circumstances in Des Moines, Iowa. Thankfully, neither Inman nor Olivia let themselves be hamstrung by these obstacles. He persevered as a leader of soldiers; she continued as a teacher (of some remarkable students, including Arthur Ashe, Tina Turner, Chuck Berry, and Dick Gregory, the last of whom has honored her with an introduction to this volume). Succeeding against the odds has become popular lore for the attractiveness of their generation, and the materials of *Inman's War* substantiate the claim people of this era make for our sympathy and admiration.

Because the materials of Inman Perkins' letters have been woven into such an appealing story, readers can get a true sense of what life was like for a pair of two still relatively young people in the years just before and during World War II—life not just from an African American perspective, but from viewpoint of people born into a world on the threshold of great, even monumental change— an era, in other words, somewhat like our own time of millennial fears and

He persevered as a leader of soldiers; she continued as a teacher (of some remarkable students, including Arthur Ashe, Tina Turner, Chuck Berry, and Dick Gregory, the last of whom has honored her with an introduction to this volume).

expectations. Because both Inman (in the service) and Olivia (in high school) are devoting themselves to informing and inspiring others, their leadership makes issues of the day all the more critical. Inman, for example, has to teach men how to drive Army vehicles, and some of these men have never sat in the front seat of a car! He stands up for them when custom would restrict their Rest & Relaxation time to the base and its environs, instead of the more exciting prospects of some time off in Mexico. He guides them through minefields—some laid by Germans, other (metaphorically, but no less real in their effect) by racial custom in our own military.

That Inman led men in a Signal Construction Battalion proves significant. His unit endured all the risks of combat forces, yet with a different mission: not to destroy but to build. They supported troops, but also civilians. One of the book's most impressive episodes comes near the end, when Inman directs

the rescue of some villagers trapped in a bombed building. It's a tricky task, putting his men at great risk. He must commandeer building supplies and improvise a structural support that allows his men to climb through the teetering rubble (past an unexploded bomb) and bring the survivors to safety. Instead of killing Germans, Inman's battalion saves Italians. Needless to say, they are hailed as heroes.

With full respect for Inman Perkins' story, Jeffrey S. Copeland effectively "channels" himself as the teacher/sergeant's voice, taking letters and developing them into a coherent, compelling story. That many of them were love letters does not detract in the least. Instead, it gives the story its fullest dimension. Inman loved Olivia, and she him. He loved his men, and they him. And whether at war or in the classroom, Mr. and Mrs. Perkins loved their country, making it better by everything they did.

What Jerome Klinkowitz means by using the term "channeling" can be seen by considering the Inman Perkins letter in Figure 1, Copeland's notes on the letter, and a quote from the book that is connected to the letter and the notes.

Here we see Copeland making notes to create the first-person narrative out of the letters.

Notes—Letter, June 8, 1943:

1. First of all, Inman talks in this letter about the "Special Services" organization set up for all things related to recreation and athletics at Ft. Bliss in El Paso, Texas. He was actually elected President/representative of his

Biggs Field
June 8, 1943

My dearest:

Yesterday I was very pleasantly surprised to find the long expected pictures in the mail. Really I think they are gorgeous and I like your new hair style very much. As I write your picture is on my left. I couldn't think of not having it on my desk. I put one of the new pictures in one side of the frame and here one of the pictures of you and I together in the other side. I have the other two also in the frame so that they won't get bent. I was so, so very happy to get them and I spent all of my time looking at them. I tried to figure out which looked you had on, but it was kind of hard. I think it was the one you got before I came to the Army wasn't it? Your rings must still be clean judging from the way they gleam in the picture. But whether was right there watching you all the time you were taking the pictures. It seems that I can see her shadow on the wall. I forgot to tell you that I was on the main base when I got the pictures and of course I couldn't wait to open them. I had been on the base to a meeting of special service representatives. I thought I would see get a letter yesterday, but when I didn't I just knew that I would get one today and darling I was right, because I did get one this morning.

I guess you are wondering about special service so I will tell you about it. That is the service that takes care of recreational and athletic programs for soldiers. Therefore the officers have taken care of the job, but now each organization is to organize a special service of council of enlisted men.

I know what they will cost, because I am having them fixed through the PX, which will make them much cheaper than ordinarily. I am supposed to get them Thursday or Friday. I have been wearing my old pair since I broke my thumb. I haven't received my O.D. glasses as yet. The fellow who had some shopping to do (Wilson) ~~was~~ was shopping for baby clothes. He is an expert paper. He asked us to help him select a couple of things that his wife wanted so send for a shower. He purchased some bath towels and a wrapping blanket. He bought a blanket that can be used for either a boy or a girl. He wants a boy, but I kidded him and told him that he would probably have a girl.

I am supposed to play in the pool tournament tomorrow night. I don't know what kind of pool they will play, but I hope I can stay in for at least a couple of rounds. I don't expect to win, but it will be a lot of fun and it is free. Friday morning I have to go to another meeting. Lt. [redacted] was telling me that I was supposed to make a speech at the dedication of the U.S.C. but I think he is pulling at least I haven't heard anything about it, and that definitely is out of my line.

Went to church again Sunday morning and plan to try and make it every Sunday.

Darling you are right about the school. I shall be so very happy even if you can only get one free just a day just so you get her. You must be thinking of the same thing that I am. I have already decided that I want to be in St. Louis on my "Red Letter Day". Of course this is a little soon to be planning but rest assured I will make every effort

who are to act with the special service officer and there is also an enlisted men's special service council to be organized on the base composed of representatives of all organizations on the base. I was elected president of our council and therefore will be a member of the base council. We hope to get at least some athletic equipment and some way of having a show now and then.

Speaking of shows the ones I mentioned did not materialize because as yet we have no 16 mm projector. We have been promised one, but it had to be ordered and hasn't arrived yet. Pardon my rambling but the reason for the enlisted men's special service council is that higher headquarters felt that an enlisted man would know a little more of what the men wanted inasmuch as he was closer associated with them.

We had a dance last night at the new U.S.O. and it was pretty nice. The new U.S.O. building is very nice and one of the largest I have seen there and I think that when it is fixed up the place will be very nice. The building is now completed and very comfortable especially in the afternoon. Three of us stopped there yesterday afternoon for a few minutes.

The reason we were down that way was because one fellow had some shopping to do, the other fellow had some errands to run and I had to take my glasses to the optical shop. O yes they are broken. I did it myself trying to strengthen the frames I don't

to be there. I played some bridge last night for the first time for a long while. Really to say I enjoyed myself, but she sure all a little rusty. We are supposed to play tonight after it cools off. It is really hot here, but around 5 the wind comes up and it cools off very nicely at night.

We just got two new tennis rackets and a new net so I guess I can start learning to play tennis now. I battled a few balls this afternoon.

I saw just here Lawrence talking about his job. I tell him to be sure that pole is always slick otherwise the results might be disastrous. I imagine it will take him some time to get adjusted to his hours. Tell him his job is mighty sweet and he shouldn't worry about his hours. Just think he can ball for forty whole 24 hrs. But let him get feet on the job. Tell him he had better start taking his exercises regularly so that he won't catch up with ill. There is no one making up. Tell him he will also have to improve on that.

I guess everyone at S.A.S. is too busy these days to keep the group going which is probably fortunate for the individual or individuals involved.

I guess you are glad that another of your tax installments has passed by. Glad that you got the money when you needed it. I expect the phone call to be expensive and it wasn't so bad. I enjoyed every tickle second of it and the pleasure far outweighed the cost.

Love to all the family
Inman

Figure 1.

segment of the council (representing the 449th). What he did not know at the time he wrote this letter was that while he was allowed to be part of the overall council, recreation and athletics were still to remain segregated on the base. A little over a month later he wrote Olivia about his surprise in discovering this fact. In other words, he was invited to the table, but he wasn't invited to eat . . .

2. He also talks here about a movie projector that was supposed to be given to his outfit. This became a running joke between Inman and Olivia in their letters because the 449th never got one through normal channels. It was just one of many promises made to the 449th that never materialized. Eventually, his friend, Williams, had to go to the other side of the base to "borrow" one.
3. In this letter Inman talks about the new U.S.O. club (what Inman's battalion called the Service Club). Although he says in this letter he doubted a rumor from another sergeant that Inman would be giving a talk at the dedication, he did end up doing exactly that. However, after all the pomp and circumstance surrounding the dedication died down, Inman's battalion was allowed the use of the facility just one night per week. This limited use eventually led to one of the major conflicts between the men of the 449th and others on the base (described in the book).
4. The "Red Letter Day" he is talking about in the letter was "Inman Perkins Day" at Charles

This became a running joke between Inman and Olivia in their letters because the 449th never got [a movie projector] through normal channels. It was just one of many promises made to the 449th that never materialized. Eventually, his friend, Williams, had to go to the other side of the base to "borrow" one.

Sumner High School in St. Louis, Missouri, where he had taught before the war. Unfortunately, the "day" did not coincide with his leave, so those at Sumner held it without him present. Olivia said a few words on his behalf.

The voice of Inman Perkins telling his own story in the text is amazing as we see on page 234 of *Inman's War*. This scene takes place in the office of the white colonel in charge of the colored battalion where Inman, a master sergeant, spends some of his time as an administrative assistant.

The most anticipated night of the week was Thursday night. Thursday night was our one and only night to use the base Service Club. . . . The Service Club was popular with the men because it had brand-new pool tables with smooth felt, Ping-Pong tables that were level, shuffleboard tables of regu-

lation size, and card tables and chairs that didn't collapse when leaned on or sat in. The Club also had a jukebox stuffed with the latest Glen Miller and Benny Goodman records and a large dance floor right next to it. . . . We had our own recreation area in the barracks and had converted part of the motor pool into our own version of a Service Club, but it wasn't even close to being in the same league as the base club. For the men, the base club was like entering the gates of Shangri-La.

Colonel Ellis had stuttered and stammered that first week we came to camp when he explained to me that our battalion [the only colored battalion on the base] would be allowed to use the club only on Thursday evenings. I asked it all of the other groups on the base had special nights as well. His response was, "Well, others use the club the rest of the time."

I was sorting files at the time and pretended not to hear him. Without looking up, I said, "I'm sorry, Sir. I was looking for something and missed what you were saying. So, other groups on the base have their own special nights, too?"

"Sort of, They all . . . that is . . . it's used by . . ." he said, struggling for words and chopping sentences in two. Finally he just blurted out, "Well, it's restrict . . ."—and he minute he said it I saw out of the corner of my eye his eyes widen as he realized what he had started to say. He quickly shouted out, louder than he probably meant to, "I mean it's *reserved* the rest of the week!"

He paused a minute, taking his glasses off to wipe them with his handkerchief, and added, softly, "Our battalion gets to use it Thursday nights, OK?"

"If you say so, Sir," was all I could think of to say. I understood perfectly what he meant. Perfectly.

Inman's War reads like a novel, but it is more and less than a novel. It is *A Soldier's Story of Life in a Colored Battalion in WWII*.

Chasing Ghosts: African-American Contributions in World War II

Finally, Jeffrey S. Copeland offers a few words of his own, as well as a bibliography (see p. 00):

The journey started on a hot and dusty Saturday morning at an outdoor flea market in Belleville, Illinois. Piles of old letters were stacked haphazardly in a suitcase balancing precariously on the edge of a dealer's table. I picked up a couple of the letters and started reading them. I immediately discovered two things. First, the letters were World War II vintage. Second, the voice in the letters touched something deep within me. Most of the letters were from a Sergeant Inman Perkins to Olivia Merriwether of St. Louis, Missouri. The more I read into the letters, the more my mind began racing. Who were these people—and what had happened to them? I purchased the letters and began a quest that I could not have imagined in my wildest dreams.

When I got back home that same afternoon, I put the letters in chronological order and started reading through them. It was only then I realized Sergeant Inman Perkins was a member of what, at the time of World War II, was called a “Colored Battalion,” a label that was, sadly, fitting for many of that era because of the segregation that was a fact of life in the armed forces. Sergeant Perkins was a talented and gifted writer with an eye for detail. His nearly one hundred and fifty letters provided a chronicle of a story not told before: A personal account of what life was like for the individual soldier in a

segregated, “Colored Battalion.” His letters described and detailed everything from life in a crowded army barracks to the particulars of what he was taught in the “separate but equal” training classes given to his battalion, the “449th Signal Construction Battalion, Army Air Corps.” Through the years readers have been presented with wonderful accounts of the “group” achievements of units like the Red Ball Express, Tuskegee Airmen, and the 761st Tank Battalion. However, the letters I held in my hand that Saturday morning provided a look behind a curtain that had been largely closed, and tightly, since the conclusion of the war.

The journey—make that the quest—that followed to bring this story to paper took me to museums, archives, military installations, and schools across the country for the gathering of the necessary background information to fill in the gaps in Sergeant

Perkins' experiences. Along the way, the ghosts started to take form, finally started to achieve flesh and bones. It became more and more clear that the men of the 449th, like those in so many other segregated battalions, were truly unsung, and often invisible, heroes of the great conflict of World War II.

While completing this background research, I paused to take a look at the other literature written about the contributions of other African-American soldiers who served during the war. The list, at first, appeared thin. Very thin. It took side trips down many paths, but a core list of books finally began to emerge. Within this list, it immediately became apparent that most of the books about the African-American involvement in the war could be classified into four categories: Books describing specific events or battles; Unit (group) histories of the “Colored Battalions”; Books about the experiences of individual soldiers (very few. . .); Books dealing primarily with how the African-American soldiers were coping with the two-front war many were facing at the time—the conflict overseas VS the racial conflict still present on the homefront in the U.S. It should also be noted that books in these categories written specifically for younger readers are a relatively recent development, paralleling the rise of multicultural studies in the schools. For now, young readers interested in these areas will need to expand their reading horizons and sample everything from titles written specifically for them to scholarly examinations published by university presses—and every-

Why are there so many important stories in this area being published by university presses? Partly because titles written specifically for younger readers have not yet found their way into print—but they will, no doubt, in the coming years.

thing in between (NOTE: Why are there so many important stories in this area being published by university presses? Partly because titles written specifically for younger readers have not yet found their way into print—but they will, no doubt, in the coming years.) What follows is an annotated bibliography of the core group of titles that kept showing up during my search—and those recommended to me by young readers form across the land.

An Annotated Bibliography —The African-American Experience in World War II: America’s Unsung, Invisible Heroes

Abdul-Jabbar and Anthony Walton. *Brothers in Arms: The Epic Story of the 761st Tank Battalion, WWII’s Forgotten Heroes*. Broadway Publishers, 2004. (320 pages). (This story of the “Black Panthers” is a must for class libraries because of its detailed look at the almost constant racial issues that faced these gallant men while they were in combat. Young readers enjoy the third person point of view used to tell the story.)

Adler, David A. *Joe Louis: America’s Fighter*. Gulliver Books/Harcourt, 2005. (32 pages). (While not exclusively about Mr. Louis’ army service during WWII, the book does present a fine look at his contributions to the war effort. For primary grades.)

Allen, Robert L. *The Port Chicago Mutiny*. Heyday Books, 2006. (244 pages). (One of the more

disturbing stories of the war. An accidental explosion killed over 300 African-American soldiers serving at Port Chicago, California. When survivors of the disaster refused to return to unsafe working conditions, over two hundred were court-martialed.)

Brooks, Philip. *The Tuskegee Airmen*. Compass Point Books, 2005. (48 pages). (Not as comprehensive as most books on the subject, but important because it explores the history of how the unit came about. Targeted for middle school readers.)

Bruning: John Robert, Jr. *Elusive Glory: African-American Heroes of World War II*. Avisson, 2001. (135 pages). (Biographical profiles of African-American soldiers who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (7 of them). Also includes biographical sketches of some of the more prominent Tuskegee Airmen. Targeted for middle school readers and up.)

Carroll, Peter N., Michael Nash, and Melvin Small. *The Good Fight Continues: World War II Letters from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*. New York University Press, 2006 (300 pages). (A very readable account of the exploits of the “Lincoln Brigade,” a volunteer outfit that fought during the Spanish Civil War right before the U.S. involvement in WW II. Also follows the men through their eventual service with the U.S. Army and contrasts their treatment while in Spain with the discrimination they faced

once they joined the American forces.)

Colley, David P. *Blood for Dignity: The Story of the First Integrated Combat Unit in the U.S. Army*. St. Martin’s Griffin, 2004. (240 pages). (A quick and compelling read. Relates the story of African-American troops that were added to combat units near the end of World War II. They were mostly unwelcome . . .)

Colley, David P. *The Road to Victory: The Untold Story of World War II’s Red Ball Express*. Warner Books, 2001 (336 pages). (One of the best accounts of the convoy unit that helped supply the troops as the allies advanced on Germany. Their contributions are described here through interviews with former drivers and detailed research. A fine book.)

Cooper, Michael L. *The Double V Campaign: African Americans and World War II*. Lodestar Books, 1998. (86 pages). (Describes how the contributions to the war effort were in stark contrast to the reception the soldiers received when they returned home. Has section of photos and maps. Targeted for middle school readers.)

Copeland, Jeffrey S. *Inman’s War: A Soldier’s Story of Life in a Colored Battalion in WWII*. Paragon House, 2006. (366 pages). (Book provides an individual, personal account of the life and service of Sergeant Inman Perkins of the 449th Signal Construction Battalion, Army Air Corps. Includes detailed Epilogue.)

- Francis, Charles E. and Adolph Caso. *The Tuskegee Airmen: The Men Who Changed a Nation*. Branden Books, 1997 (496 pages). (Book is important because it contains over one hundred pictures, many of them never seen before, of the Airmen. The photos bring the pilots to life in a way other books do not.)
- Griggs, William E. and Phillip J. Merrill. *The World War II Black Regiment That Built the Alaska Military Highway: A Photographic History*. University of Mississippi Press, 2002. (195 pages). (A beautiful book containing a chronological history of the creation of this important highway. Also a look at the non-combat contributions of African-American soldiers.)
- Harris, Jacqueline L. *The Tuskegee Airmen: Black Heroes of World War II*. Dillon Press, 1996. (144 pages). (What makes this book different, and important, is that it contains many first-person accounts. Also has a comprehensive, and useful, bibliography. Targeted for middle/high school readers.)
- Hasday, Judy L. *The Tuskegee Airmen*. Chelsea House, 2003. (108 pages). (One of the better accounts and loaded with archival pictures. Excellent timeline traces complete history of the unit. Targeted for high school readers.)
- Homan, Lynn M. and Thomas Reilly. *Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. Pelican Publishing, 2001. (336 pages). (Another excellent book. What distinguishes this one is the authors included interviews with the pilots and their family members. A very personal, sensitive look at this exceptional unit.)
- Homan, Lynn M. and Thomas Reilly. *Tuskegee Airmen: American Heroes*. Pelican Publishing, 2002. (85 pages). (Written in novel form, a substitute teacher keeps a class spellbound as he relates his experiences during WWII as a member of the Tuskegee Airmen. Great for a read-aloud experience. Targeted for middle school readers.)
- Jefferson, Alexander and Lewis Carlson. *Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman and POW*. Fordham University Press, 2005. (133 pages). (Story is nearly unique as it is the personal account of one of the very few African-American soldiers to become a prisoner of war. Also contains the drawings done by the Airman while a prisoner in Germany.)
- Kelly, Mary Pat. *Proudly We Served: The Men of the USS Mason*. Naval Institute Press, rev. ed. 1999. (220 pages). (Somewhat difficult to navigate at times, but still an important account of a convoy escort ship where the crew was almost entirely composed of African-American sailors. Includes letters from and photographs of the sailors.)
- McGuire, Phillip. *Taps for a Jim Crow Army: Letters from Black Soldiers in World War II*. University Press of Kentucky, 1993. (276 pages). (Book shares a personal view of the African-American experience in WW II through letters sent home from soldiers in many of the segregated units.)
- McKissack, Patricia and Fredrick McKissack. *Red-Tail Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. Walker and Company, 1995. (136 pages). (One of the “Best Books for Young Adults “ in 1996. Has become something of a “modern classic” in multicultural studies. Different from most others on this subject by quality of the writing and inclusion of first-person accounts of many of the Airmen. A must for classroom libraries.)
- Moore, Brenda L. *To Serve My Country, to Serve My Race: The Story of the Only African American WACS Stationed Overseas During World War II*. New York University Press, 1998. (240 pages). (One of only a handful of accounts of the contributions of African-American women to the war effort. Book is based in part on interviews with those who served in the 6888 Central Postal Directory Battalion. A quick read and an important book.)
- Moore, Christopher. *Fighting for America: Black Soldiers—The Unsung Heroes of World War II*. Presidio Press, rev.ed. 2005. (400 pages). (BIG book, but important because it includes newspaper articles of the era to supplement the text, which provides a context not found in most other books on the subject.)
- Owens, Emiel W. *Blood on German Snow: An African-American*

Artilleryman in WWII and Beyond. Texas A&M University Press, 2006. (160 pages). (Traces the life of Mr. Owens from his boyhood through his service in the war to his life after the war. One of the very few autobiographical accounts of the African-American experience during the war.)

Pfeifer, Kathryn Browne. *The 761st Tank Battalion*. Twenty-First Century Books, 1994. (80 pages). (An older book, but important because it looks at the experiences of individual men who served in the battalion.)

Potter, Lou, William Miles, and Nina Rosenblum. *Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II*. Harcourt, 1992. (303 pages). (Traces the birth of the 761st Tank Battalion, from its formation to its return to the U.S. Book will also serve as an excellent supplement to the PBS special on the same subject.)

Robert, John and Jr. Bruning. *Elusive Glory: African-American Heroes of World War II* (Young Adult Series). Avisson Press, 2001. (135 pages). (Details the military experiences of fifteen African-American soldiers and pilots of WWII. One of these is Ben Davis, Jr., one of the original Tuskegee Airmen.)

Sasser, Charles W. *Patton's Par-thers: The African-American 761st Tank Battalion in World War II*. Pocket Books, 2005. (368 pages). (What separates this account from others is the detailed look at the battalion's help in liberating a Nazi concentration camp,

an important part of the battalion's history that has seldom been addressed in the history books.)

Stanley, Sandler. *Segregated Skies*. Smithsonian Paperback Series, 1998. (217 pages). (History of the 477 Bomber Group and the 332nd Fighter Group—and how the men had to convince all around them that they were worthy of sharing the skies.)

Stillwell, Paul and Colin L. Powell. *The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers*. Naval Institute Press, 2003. (336 pages). (A wonderful oral history of the first African-Americans to become officers in the U.S. Navy. Contains interviews with eight of the original thirteen.)

Wilson, Joe and Julius W. Becton. *761st Black Panther Tank Battalion in World War II: An Illustrated History of the First African American Armored Unit to See Combat*. McFarland, rev.ed. 2006. (323 pages). (Title says it all. Beautiful and inspiring photographs of the men of the "Black Panther" unit.)

And two to grow on: Two titles, in particular, stand out as representing the African-American contributions in other conflicts. These are valuable as they provide young readers with important context for the books examining World War II.

Barbeau, Arthur E., Florette Henri, and Bernard C. Nalty. *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I*. DeCapo Press, 1996. (279

pages). (One of the few, and best, accounts of the contributions of African-American troops who served in World War I. Readers may be shocked by the overt discrimination described in the book.)

Taylor, Theodore. *The Flight of Jesse Leroy Brown*. William Morrow, 1998. (300 pages). (Noted YA author Theodore Taylor tells the story of the first African-American U.S. Naval Pilot who flew during the Korean conflict.)

Jerome Klinkowitz, Professor of English at the University of Northern Iowa, is an editor of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, and is author of forty books of literary and cultural criticism, including studies of World War II flyers' memoirs in *Their Finest Hours* (Iowa State University Press, 1989), *Yanks Over Europe* (University Press of Kentucky, 1996), *With the Tigers Over China* (University Press of Kentucky, 1999), and *Pacific Skies* (University Press of Mississippi, 2004).

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McCarthy and More:

A Conversation with Trudy Krisher

I met Trudy Krisher when she was signing books at the NCTE Annual Convention in Indianapolis in 2004. I was excited to meet this author whose book *Spite Fences*, winner of the International Reading Association book award for 1995, had so captured my students' attention and interested them in the Civil Rights Movement. When I approached Trudy, I felt an immediate connection; she was so warm and welcoming. This kind-hearted, highly intelligent, gifted writer readily answered my questions about *Spite Fences* and enthusiastically talked about the inspiration for her then-new book, *Uncommon Faith* (2003). Talking with Trudy left me upbeat and eager to see how her latest novel would resonate with my students. I felt honored that this award-winning author took such an interest in my approaches to teaching her novel. I could see that Trudy was not one who just cared about the quality of her writing as evidenced by awards and reviews; this author clearly cared about her writing in much more personal terms: how it touched students' lives and impacted their understanding. Since our meeting at NCTE in 2004, Trudy and I have corresponded via email. Also a teacher, Trudy would converse with me about teaching strategies, and she has always been interested to hear about the myriad of creative responses my students have had to her novels. Two particular examples come to mind: one from *Spite Fences*, the other from *Uncommon Faith*. In response to *Spite Fences*, one of my students, Kirsten Lutz, made 3-D Character heads for characters Maggie, Virgil, and Zeke. Kirsten then wrote and recorded a speech for each (see Figure 1). The speeches really got into the minds of the characters, sharply defining the

perspective and traits of each. I took photos of the 3-D heads and sent them, along with the speeches, to Trudy. She really liked what the student had done, noting in particular that the student's speech writing picked up on Trudy's own use of dialect and repetition. The student example from *Uncommon Faith* was an original piano composition played in the background to a monologue from the perspective of the book's protagonist, Faith Common. The piano composition and monologue, "Jewel in a Pig's Snout" (see Figure 2), were written by one of my students, Michael Rinaldi-Eichenberg. Michael had his mother read the lines for his tape recording so the voice would be a woman's. When I told my students that I had shared their work with the author and that she was very impressed, I could tell they felt really proud of themselves, and deservedly so. As those who invest their lives in English language arts and working with young people, we are fortunate to have authors like Trudy Krisher who genuinely care not only about telling great stories but about connecting with students and supporting the work of teachers.

In August 2006 I received an advance copy of Trudy Krisher's latest novel, *Fallout*. In the spirit of *Spite Fences* (1994), *Kinship* (1997), and *Uncommon Faith* (2003), Krisher's fourth YA novel also has historical underpinnings. *Fallout* (2006) offers insight into the McCarthy era of the 1950s while also including elements that will remind readers of Hurricane Katrina which devastated New Orleans and surrounding areas in 2005. In addition to asking Krisher about her new book, *Fallout*, in the interview that follows, I have taken the opportunity to look at her work

Student-created characters heads and speeches by Kirsten Lutz

Maggie's Speech



Mama says we're not white trash like that Virgil Boggs and his kind. She's right. We don't go 'round beatin' up coloreds, terrorizing little girls, or trying to rape someone like me. Yet, my friend Zeke says blacks and whites sweat alike under one sun so why do we drink from separate water fountains, not eat at the same table—why? We even have separate bathrooms!

Trouble sure rained down on Zeke beginning that day at Byer's Drugs . . . I'd been up in the big tree restin' and thinkin'. When the truck pulled up and spewed forth Virgil and his boys, I sat quiet. When they beat on Zeke until he seemed nigh upon dead, I sat frozen to my bones. Then they peed and did something else all over Zeke . . .

Zeke quit coming uptown much after that night, so I just set myself to finding him. I'd seen news stories about bus station sit-ins and church kneel-ins and even on a black man who KO'd a white man in boxing. I wanted to see how Zeke was and to ask him why coloreds seemed to be so fired up to pushing whites. I kept hearing Zeke's words that night under the Ghost Tree. He held his head proud-like and said, "Just wantin' my rights, is all. My rights and my people's."

What is civil rights, anyway?

Virgil's Speech



Who-ee! What a night! Me and the boys have set that old nigger, Zeke, straight! He'll be tuckin' tail and runnin' scared from now on. Guess he and that fancy lawyer thought a change was a-comin'. Gawd!

Our venerable KKK Grand Wizard says coloreds are the mongrels of the world . . . We don't let no canine dogs eat at our tables and drink from

our glasses, so why would we let nigger-dogs do it? Why, those colored folk should be glad we whites let them have their own public bathrooms, and we cleared out the back of the buses door them so they can get somewheres. Where in 'tarnation do they think they're going anyways? They're not fit for any work but what we give them.

Well, one thangs for sure, Zeke got our message tonight. He ain't gonna see, hear, or speak no evil against whites no more. That's one terrified nigger. He'll keep . . . out of whites' bathrooms and he'll sure 'nuf keep his gorilla trap shut. Yes, boys, we have struck a blow for our cause tonight.

Zeke's Speech



Student Kirsten Lutz with character heads she made from Styrofoam face mannequins. Kirsten arranged the character heads on a lazy-Susan and turned each toward the class while playing a tape recording of the corresponding character speech.

"Never be afraid of the truth," that's what I said to young Maggie that day she wanted to buy her daddy a birthday present with two nickels that weren't hers. Now, I'm fighting for my own brand of truth. It seems, most ways, I've been fighting for truth all my life. Sure, I'm afraid. Equal rights for my people is gonna be a hard road to travel. There will be worse things than beatings between now and the victory-time. It's wrong to treat any man different 'cause his skin is not the same color as another man's.

That Virgil Boggs and his white supremacy buddies believe they have silenced me. Their taunts and name-callings are kindling and their pummeling fists, stomp-kicking feet, and acrid urine all provide fuel to keep the desire for freedom burning within my soul. They have made this desire even stronger. No, Sir-ree! It's Virgil and his kind who are wrong, and I am more determined than ever to follow Dr. King's vision. Yes, we shall be free.

Figure 1. Character Heads and Speeches (From Linda J. Rice, *What Was It Like? Teaching History and Culture through Young Adult Literature*, Figure 7.6. New York: Teachers College Press, ©2006 by Teachers College, Columbia University. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.)

Jewel in a Pig's Snout

Why am I mired in the 19th Century?
Just a young woman searching for equality
And how can I
Invoke one God
Ignore my talents
And remain invisible?
Sometimes I just want to explode

I'm tired of being ignored
I'm incensed and enraged
I don't want to practice
Discretion in a feminine cage

I'll not quietly mend your socks
Nor cook and clean all day
And if I get married
Don't expect a dutiful slave

I will learn calculus
and Greek and astronomy
And while I sew by the schoolhouse fire
I'll learn geometry

I don't want to become a product of my society
Pretending to be someone else entirely
I will be proud
To be a woman
I won't be an
Invisible subject
Sometimes I just want to break out

Just you wait Amos Read
Wait and you'll see
If you call me a jewel in a pig's snout
Then that's what I will be

Which I prefer to Lucy Putnam's ignorance
Each and every day
Because she accepts you and
Your society's backward ways

My subscription to sexism
Has long ago run out
And if that's the case
Then I'm a jewel in a pig's snout

When most women are both naïve and ignorant
I see society as a biblical confinement
I'm logical
Mathematical
Wanting nothing more
Than to be an equal
And I am proud to be a woman

Reading by Cecilia Rinaldi
Piano by Michael Rinaldi-Eichenberg

Figure 2. Monologue in Response to *Uncommon Faith*

collectively and explore some of the common threads that appear in all four of her young adult novels. In this way, this interview is intended to be more than a discussion of her latest novel; it is also intended to prompt readers to look at Krisher's earlier works and give insight into the author herself. I hope you enjoy the interview that follows with this master writer and teacher.

Interview with Trudy Krisher

Linda: Tell us about your new book, *Fallout*. What was the inspiration for it?

Trudy: I started *Fallout* about five years ago after having written a short story called "We Loved Lucy" for a Don Gallo short story collection. The inspiration for it was my belief that teenagers who question things—like Brenda Wompers, one of the heroines of the book—can have a difficult time in high school but that their presence is ultimately beneficial and necessary.

Fallout is set in the year 1954 and has a Cold War theme. Students can learn a lot about what the 50s were like—duck-and-cover drills, dreams about the supposed glories of atomic energy, changes brought about by the new interstate highway system, suburbia, and such. But the two most important historical events that happened in 1954 in terms of the novel were the McCarthy trials and the insertion of the words "under God" into the Pledge of Allegiance.

The high school setting of *Fallout* is one which I hope teenagers can relate to. There are whispering campaigns, rumors, and gossip just like in the McCarthy trial, and one of the protagonists, an intellectual teenager named Brenda Wompers, stages a protest about the use of the words "under God" when she is expected to recite the pledge. All this takes place against a North Carolina backdrop of hurricanes. In 1954, North Carolina experienced three—of which Hurricane Hazel, which roars up at the climax of the book, was incredibly destructive.

Linda: You would have been working on *Fallout* when the Tsunami devastated southeast Asia and Hurricane Katrina slammed into the gulf states. What influence did that play in your writing about Hurricane Hazel?

Trudy: I was at NCTE at the ALAN conference in Indianapolis when *Uncommon Faith* came out, and I was working on *Fallout* then. I had even men-

tioned in my talk that I was looking at hurricanes and the year 1954 when there were three hurricanes in North Carolina. But also in 1954 was the year they added “under God” to the pledge. When I was at the conference in 2004, there’d been this Supreme Court case about this father out in California who was upset because his daughter had to say “under God” in the pledge. He brought a lawsuit and eventually lost, but it was a very big issue. So when the tsunami came and Katrina came and then there’s all this controversy about whether you should have the Ten Commandments in the courthouse and all that, I thought “oh,

I look so present, like I can see into the future.” But the fact is all those things happened as I was well into the book. The events were fortuitous, but they didn’t have that much to do with writing the book.

Linda: I notice that all four of your YA novels have historical settings. How did you choose those settings?

Trudy: I love history and the research that goes along with it. My father was a true Southern gentleman, passionate amateur historian, and student of the Civil War. Our family vacations were spent combing battlefields, and my mother kept a special pair of shoes in the car—she called them her “battlefield shoes”—for slogging through the muck. I chose the early 60s and the Civil Rights Movement for *Spite Fences* because it was a period familiar to me. My high school was integrated when I was 14, like Maggie Pugh, and I was well aware of the Jim Crow

prohibitions that kept blacks from the beaches and lunch counters.

Kinship is a companion piece to *Spite Fences* and set in a trailer park in the 1960s showing that part of life where people were on the move with their cars, with the trailers. It takes the story of Pert Wilson, Maggie’s friend, and looks at her life. It’s a story of community where I tried to develop the setting of the trailer park and show a warm and loving community. In the course of the story Pert longs for her father who abandoned the family when she was born. She has this idea that if only she had a father, everything would be fine. When he comes back to town she realizes that she has people in her life who are much more like family than her father is—that she has people who love her even though they are not blood relatives.

I chose the year 1837 for *Uncommon Faith* because it was a period that fascinated me. It was much like our own radical 1960s. The Jacksonian can-do spirit prompted people to believe all things were possible, and it was a great reforming period. Activists like the Grimke sisters, Dororthea Dix, and Julia Ward tried to address issues of mental health, provide services for the blind, open colleges to women, and address the problems of slavery. The issue of education for women found its way into the novel because Faith Common is bright and talented and curious, yet she is only expected to cook and sew, which she detests. I thought it would be fascinating to develop a spunky character who was denied an education. I was curious about what she might do; the novel is the result.

Fallout, the new novel, is set in 1954, during the McCarthy era, and the suspicion and rumor that characterized that period are reflected in the high school setting of the novel. The current challenges to proclamations of religion in public buildings and monuments and in challenges to school prayer actually began in 1954 when the words “under God” were added to the Pledge of Allegiance. So I am looking at the tension that arises over this religious-secular turmoil in the novel.

Linda: I notice that two of your novels deal with issues of religion and personal faith. Considering that schools and society today hear so much about the separation of church and state, do you ever feel

that you're going out on a limb addressing such issues?

Trudy: Believe it or not, I always feel like I'm going out on a limb. My books have dealt with women's rights, racism, intellectual freedom, and other topics. Religion is just one of them. As I've continued to write, I've continued to develop more courage about addressing difficult issues because the response from readers tells me that they are hungry for these kinds of conversations.

Linda: I also notice that each of your novels has a strong female protagonist. Was that deliberate on your part? In other words, are there particular messages you want to send to young women—or to men about women—in your writing?

Trudy: I think the use of women as characters is just natural because I am a female. However, in *Uncommon Faith* I purposefully focused on John Common, Faith's brother, to show that the conventions of the time worked against men as well as women. John is musical and is uninterested in the education and career path—that of a minister—expected of him. Like Faith, he suffers because his natural talents are thwarted by the society in which he lives. In general I'm never trying to teach a "message," but I am trying to answer questions. In *Spite Fences*, it's "How can we pull down the fences between the races and build more bridges?" In *Fallout*, it's "Who is my neighbor?" In *Kinship*, it's "How do we define 'family?'" Or at least some kind of approximation of these.

Linda: What else would you want to say about the religious content of your novels—or if particular characters are intended to represent and critique religious viewpoints or paradigms?

Trudy: My books really are all about the questions I wrestle with personally and that I believe others are wrestling with, too. As far as religion goes, I wouldn't say that there's religious content per se in my books; instead, I think the characters experience spiritual struggles. The determination to confront injustice—like racism or sexism—is essentially, in my view, a spiritual struggle, part of

an ethical and moral choice made—not always easily—by individuals.

Linda: How might your books help YAs to work through—or at least more seriously consider—some of these deeper, spiritual issues as they relate to their own lives?

Trudy: My most recent book, *Fallout*, addresses religious and spiritual questions most directly. As Genevieve Hardcastle is challenged to develop her own opinions about the Cold War, nuclear proliferation, and the atmosphere of suspicion and accusation that abounds in her high school world and in the post-World War II world around her, she struggles with the overarching question, "Who is my neighbor?"

I hope the novel will prompt teenagers to try to define what is meant by "neighbor" or how their particular religion defines "neighbor." They also might want to think about what is required of a person who believes in helping his neighbor. How far can—or should—he go in doing this? Are there limits or boundaries to our obligations to others?

Linda: Please share some thoughts on using young adult literature as a venue for teaching history.

Trudy: We have kids now who have no sense of their historical past at all or why it's relevant. I think that using novels to get them interested is perfect. A lot of times students think of history as just a bunch of dry facts, and the way it's sometimes taught, I could see why they think that. But everyone is connected to their time and place. We're all part of history. When you talk about getting kids interested in history through literature, the issues that are in the past seem to so many people like they're dead and gone, but what I see is that they just have a life of their own. They may come forward in another form, but they continue to

Believe it or not, I always feel like I'm going out on a limb. My books have dealt with women's rights, racism, intellectual freedom, and other topics.

be around us. You think about racism in *Spite Fences*—it’s better now, but it doesn’t mean there’s not a problem still. And you can talk about

I believe that it may have made young adults even more compassionate, patriotic, and sensitive to the issues of the global world in which all of us seem even more tightly connected, especially since 9-11. I think that 9-11 may have challenged those of us who write for young adults to speak even more deeply to the concerns they face.

McCarthyism in 1954, and we’re not afraid of McCarthy anymore, but we are afraid of Muslims and terrorists. We have to be careful that we don’t falsely accuse.

Linda: How has the post 9-11 world affected your outlook on teaching history through literature or writing historical fiction in general? In other words, as an author, what has the impact of 9-11 been?

Trudy: I find that the impact of 9-11 is yet to be understood. Still, I believe that it may have made young adults even more compassionate, patriotic, and sensitive to the issues of the global world in which

all of us seem even more tightly connected, especially since 9-11. I think that 9-11 may have challenged those of us who write for young adults to speak even more deeply to the concerns they face.

Linda: When did you start writing with a young adult audience in mind, and what prompted that interest?

Trudy: As far as audience goes, I never really think that I’m writing for a particular audience like a “teenage” audience. I am totally just focused on the writing, the story itself. However, I am consistently drawn to the struggles of characters who happen to be teenagers; I think that the years from 12-18 are some of the most intense, change-driven years of any person’s life, and they are replete with opportunities for fiction. Any literature—including litera-

ture for young adults—is, in my view, about how a character grows and changes, and there’s no developmental period as rich with growth and change as the adolescent years.

Linda: Your International Reading Association Award-winning book *Spite Fences* celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2004. What do you think of that? How well has the book done over the years? What were your highlights with that book?

Trudy: I truthfully hadn’t realized that *Spite Fences* has already been in print for over ten years. The book has done very well, and I even met last summer with a screenwriter in Los Angeles who has optioned the novel and is hoping to turn it into a film. I suppose the most exciting thing that happened with *Spite Fences* was that it was used as part of an exchange program between Dayton and Sarajevo on the issue of racial healing. Young adults in Sarajevo read *Spite Fences*, and then they participated in a cultural exchange in which they were brought to Dayton and shared their stories, poems, and other artistic endeavors with young adults here in Dayton. I was honored to be the keynote speaker for this Dayton Peace Accords event.

Linda: Have any of your books become targets of censors, and if so, how did you feel about that?

Trudy: I’ve had one or two censorship challenges, and they astonish me. People will say things like “the book is anti-family,” and I’m just amazed. It’s very interesting to me. In one sense I feel bad about it, but in another sense I feel kind of proud because it makes me think “Gee, they’re really taking what I’ve written to heart.” My point of view is that when you write something, you just put it out there, and people are free to respond to it however they want to.

I also think about my preacher who is a close friend of mine, and he’ll say Sunday morning he gives a sermon that is about X, and people will come up to him after church and say, “Well, I liked that sermon about Y,” and he’ll think “Was that in there?” But I think people bring to a piece of writing who they are, what they need, their own

perceptions, and that kind of thing. I can't really be threatened by it.

For kids to grow up and know how to deal with the world they need to fill their minds with as much good stuff as they possibly can. They really need to be able to think through some tough things, so to the extent that we keep that from them, it can be a disadvantage. Kids can absolutely see a lot more than we give them credit for. Kids are not offended by things, their parents are.

Linda: Your website www.trudykrisher.com includes some really great information for teachers to include book reviews, classroom activities, suggestions for further reading, and thematic and interdisciplinary connections. How involved were you in creating that, and what are your thoughts on the site?

Trudy: As a teacher I think I can tell what makes a good lesson plan or assignment, and I was kind of afraid of who the publisher might have putting these things together. But at Random House they hire professional teachers and consultants. The

person who put together the information on *Spite Fences* and *Kinship* is named Pat Scales, and I think she did an excellent job. I can't say enough about the quality of the assignments.

Linda: As an author, what is it like for you to see students respond to your novels in the ways that Kirsten Lutz and Shannon Wensyel did? (see Figures 1 & 3)

Trudy: I have been an English teacher my whole life. I'm sort of like a writer who teaches, but mostly I'm a teacher who writes because teaching is what I do. So when I see things like this happening in the classroom with kids, it really does make my heart beat faster because that's really what you want to do is connect with kids. The speeches show that Kirsten really understood the book and was really relating to it. And with Shannon's example of repetition, a lot of students think they are not to repeat the same thing over and over again, but this shows how it can be a really effective dramatic device.

Student Shannon Wensyel assumed the role of character, Magnolia, from *Spite Fences* when composing this extended scene using rhythm and repetition.

Mama, Please

Mama, I see the way you look at me, and I know it's not the way a mother should look at her daughter. I know it's not the way other mothers do, and I know that if I ever have a daughter, I won't look at her this way. I see how angry you get when I let you down, when I make you ashamed, or when I am just in the way. But I don't understand, Mama. I don't understand why you get so angry. I don't understand why you act as if you hate me, as if I'm the worst of the worst.

I am tired of trying to understand you. That's why I am leaving—because I'm just plain tired. I don't want to have to be afraid to come home anymore. I don't want to have to lie about my marks and welts and bruises. I don't want to have to flinch when you raise your hand. I'm tired of being afraid of my own mama.

Mama, please—just love me. It makes me sick that I have to ask you—that I have to ask my own mama to care about me and not do me wrong. Doesn't it make *you* sick, too? Doesn't it make you sick that your daughter fears you, that your own daughter can't bear to be in the same house as you anymore? Well it makes *me* mighty sick, Mama.

I can't really believe I've stayed *this* long. Despite your beatings and abuse, despite the fact that my hard work went without notice or thanks, despite the pain of always being the "other" child—the lesser child—and even despite the fact that I was blamed for bringing shame to this family when the most shameful thing of all is your anger and ugliness, I stayed. Maybe I was waiting for things to change—for *you* to change. But it's all gotten to be too much, Mama; and if you can't love me, if you can't promise me here and now that you'll never say another word to hurt me or lay another hand on me, I am leaving. I will leave, and I will not look back. Mama? Mama, please.

Figure 3. Repetition for Dramatic Effect (From Linda J. Rice, *What Was It Like? Teaching History and Culture through Young Adult Literature*, Figure 7.7. New York: Teachers College Press, ©2006 by Teachers College, Columbia University. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.)

Linda: How did you get your start as a writer?

Trudy: I loved literature, and I loved to read, but nobody ever said “oh, you’ve got to be a writer.” When my first child Laura was born in 1976, I wrote part time for the newspaper. I wrote a book review column each week that I was paid \$25.00 for, and while I was reading all the stuff that was current, I realized “I might want to try this some time.” I always wrote on my own and quietly and never thought anyone would ever publish anything I’d written. When my daughter Kathy was sick and in cancer treatment things were so hard for our family. But when she was better, I took this children’s literature class and wrote this book *Kathy’s Hat* (1992). It was a positive look at a child’s struggle with cancer and how her friends tried to help her through it. My class liked the story so much, and Kathy and I had started a support group for the kids at the hospital, so I decided I would self-publish this book. It was really a home-spun thing. My kids and I walked around the table and assembled the book ourselves with a spiral binding. We had a signing at a local bookstore, and then somebody I knew took the book and sent it to an agent. The agent sold it right away to a real publisher, and they published it. The publisher asked if I had anything else, and I sent her what was a draft of *Spite Fences*, and that’s how things happened. We went from this really dark period of time in our family that was so sad to the writing—the putting stuff down in words somehow that turned things around for me. It’s hard to believe that it worked like that, but that little home-spun book gave me my life. Kathy is now a lawyer in Columbus; we’re just so blessed.

Linda: What book or author would you say has been influential in your development as a writer?

Trudy: One of my favorite books is Anne Tyler’s *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*. She has a real understanding for how unique and eccentric and odd all of us are in some way. She has a great sense of compassion for people, and I admire her work, especially her ability to develop characters. That’s what I’m really interested in as a writer—watching characters grow and change. Young people, of

course, are perfect examples of that intensity of change and growth that you like to create in literature.

Linda: I read on your website that you have two daughters and a son. What role have your children played in your writing, and how have they responded to your books and notoriety?

Trudy: Oh my [said with laughter], they don’t think I have any notoriety at all. I’m the person who makes their sandwiches. They think it’s cool that their mom writes novels, but they don’t see me as [an award-winning author]. They see me as the mother, the one who drove them to soccer games and irritated them when I reminded them to put on their seatbelts. But they have influenced me. I can’t think of anything I’ve done that has been more important to me than raising these kids. I was a single parent, and I decided many, many years ago that your kids don’t ask for you to be divorced, and so whatever I did my first effort was going to be that the kids were ok. One of the things that having kids did for me is give me a lot of insight about people and even myself. I used to think I had some strong points, but as part of a family, I’m growing right along with them and learning about myself. I happen to think, for example, I’m a good listener, but if you have teenagers [laughter], not so. When you’re a parent, you think you’re teaching them, but they teach you a lot. It’s sort of like being a teacher—the idea is you’re the font of all wisdom, but you know all good teachers will tell you their students teach them far more than they teach their students.

Linda: Besides being a writer, what are your major life passions in terms of how you spend your time?

Trudy: My whole life is pretty much about writing and teaching, which might sound really boring, except for I love what I do, and I think if you love what you do, then it doesn’t seem like it’s your job. So I’d say my biggest passion is really encouraging my students’ development—truly helping them to see that they have potential, that they are worth something. I think the biggest challenge for people is to figure out what their purpose is in life—what

is it that they're good at, and what is it they're supposed to be doing. So I see my job as a teacher as not only to teach my students English, but to help them to see that they have a purpose and to find out what that purpose is.

Also, I love nature. Last summer I went with some friends, and we got inter-tubes and floated down the Mad River on a hot summer afternoon—I love doing stuff like that. I love walking my dog. I love to swim. I don't have an exciting life, but that's ok. I'm a nester. I love my house. I love to sew.

Linda: What were you like as a high school student: Did you like reading? What activities were you involved in? What was your social life like?

Trudy: I was so busy with everything. I was in student government. I was always on committees—you know, the person who would always go and decorate for the dance. I had lots of friends. When I was in high school and they had “most likely to succeed” and all that, I was voted “most dependable”—a young person you could really count on. I've always been like that—very dependable, responsible, reliable.

I loved high school. I had a wonderful time in high school. I went to a great big high school in Florida. But I never kept a journal. I never sat around and read books; I was always climbing trees like Maggie [from *Spite Fences*]. I was always kickball and outside and would have enjoyed being on sports teams, but we didn't have them in those days.

I liked my English classes, and I used to feel my heart swell when I'd read poetry or something really good like that, but I never thought I'd have anything to do with it professionally. Writing is something I came to totally on my own. I had empathy for people and a way with words, but I didn't know you could put those things together until much later.

Linda: What else would you want teachers and readers to know about you?

Trudy: One of the things I most like to do is laugh. My friends tell me that I can make them laugh and have a sense of irony and play, even though at heart I'm a fairly serious person. But I do like to laugh, and you will find humor in my books even though they're about serious topics.

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Young Adult:

A Book by Any Other Name . . . : Defining the Genre

Children's. Bildungsroman. Adolescent. Juvenile. Teen. Young Adult—so many names for such a controversial body of literature.

As America's readership continues to shrink, marketing departments scramble for new strategies for getting books into readers' hands. Bookstores have reshuffled their shelves and recategorized their sections, drawing titles from both Children's and Grownup Fiction (Sadly, "Adult Fiction" doesn't ring the way I wish it could) to create the new Teen, or Young Adult, sections of their stores.

Because the Young Adult umbrella seems to shelter the many simpler, aimed-for-children books as well as the overabundance of catty, chick-lit-ish novels, this new category has brought with it certain negative assumptions from critics across the board. Young Adult Literature has been accused of being:

- For children only
- Somewhat simplistic
- Chick lit for teens
- Less than literary
- Not serious enough for use in schools
- A marketing ploy
- Written by less serious or amateur writers
- Experimental
- Not established enough to bid for spots in the canon

Indeed, a cursory riffle through a local bookstore's Young Adult section might lead a critic to these conclusions, especially with series

such as *The Gossip Girl*, *Clique*, *The Au Pairs*, and *The Seven Deadly Sins* deluging the market with what many consider pulp entertainment. If one were to judge the books by their covers, one might assume that the graphic-rich dust jackets, many pink with pop femininity, offer nothing but surface reading of candy writing. And indeed, many people have.

Other converted critics have embraced Young Adult so dearly that they have scoured the canon for any classics they could adopt into the Y.A. family. J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* are just a sampling of the claimed classics, not to mention more recent Grownup novels such as Stephen King's *Carrie*, Mark Haddon's *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, and Markus Zusak's *I Am the Messenger*.

Still other critics have rejected the Young Adult expansion by challenging and banning books they thought contained subject matter too mature for children and teens. Among the most contested titles are some that many would consider Young Adult classics—Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*, Judy Blume's *Forever* and *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret.*, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, and Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, among others.

As America's readership continues to shrink, marketing departments scramble for new strategies for getting books into readers' hands.

All arguments considered, the majority of the academic, serious side of society still seems to cast negative light on Young Adult Literature. Many have asked, “What exactly makes Young Adult any different from Grownup or Children’s literature?” and “What does it mean for a book to be Young Adult?” Discussion has arisen about:

- The look and age of the characters—from the lightning bolt on Harry Potter’s forehead (J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series) to the shaved head of Egg (Cecil Castellucci’s *Boy Proof*)
- The location of the stories—from a 1452 AD copy shop in Mainz, Germany (Matthew Skelton’s *Endymion Spring*) to the exotic tarpits (Margo Lanagan’s *Black Juice*)
- The action and plotting—vivid, fast-paced scenes and action
- The core conflicts—blackmail (Markus Zusak’s *I Am the Messenger*), date rape (Chris Lynch’s *Inexcusable*), telekinesis (Stephen King’s *Carrie*), performance enhancing drugs (Robert Lipsyte’s *Raiders Night*), and poverty (Markus Zusak’s *Fighting Ruben Wolfe*)
- Tone, voice, and point of view
- The linguistic and structural tricks the writers employ
- The characteristics that define what many are calling a “genre”

I can’t help but feel transported back to English class, the way the above list showcases the long-heralded elements of quality Literature—Character, Setting, Plot, Conflict, Tone, Voice, and Point of View.

I would be lying if I, as an aspiring Young Adult writer, were to say these conflicts have not affected my world. Questions immediately shot up regarding the fiction project I set out to accomplish for my Masters of Fine Arts thesis, a Young Adult novel featuring two high school seniors and the clash between one’s identity as the school clown and the other’s descent into the football gambling world. Accomplished writers of Grownup Fiction doubted the validity and literary capabilities of a juvenile novel, expressing concerns about whether creative writing of that kind belonged in a graduate program.

When asked about his goal as a writer of Young Adult Literature, Newbery Award-Winning author Christopher Paul Curtis said, “if the novel lets one child see that there is a real potential for beauty and

fun and emotion in a book, I’m not greedy, I’ll happily take that” (Carroll 106). And I might add truth to his list. His words make me wonder if his goal is any different from the majority of Grownup writers. If “child” were changed to “person” or “reader,” then his statement would still seem a noble writerly cause.

This led me to choose twelve recent Young Adult novels, a wide variety of books from the past five years (2002–2006), to study as a sampling of Y.A. Literature, through which I could analyze what is going on in the “genre” today. My reading list included award winners and new releases, historical and futuristic fiction, single and multiple P.O.V., straight and homosexual relationships, science fiction and fantasy genres, smart kids and mental patients, school lit and high culture, and the outcasts. My hope was to get an up-to-date look at the current trends and decide for myself what makes a Young Adult book any different from its Grownup relatives.

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12 Y.A. Novels under the Microscope

Feed by M.T. Anderson (Candlewick, 2002)

Hail the future of America! The moon, the 51st state, is an industrialized wasteland and not too different from Earth. Lesions are developing on people’s skin that turn out to be pretty cool when worn by the right celebrities. The Feed continues to provide the ideal entertainment experience for those who have taken the surgical step of progress. As Titus, a feed-wearing member of the teenage party scene, grapples with typical teenage issues cleverly translated for the future, he is driven to make the same decision we all have to make at some point—What are we going to let define us?

In this ALA 2003 Best of Y.A. novel, the voice is

the first thing to grab you—"The moon turned out to completely suck." "I'm so null." "I wasn't so skip when we were flying . . ." ". . . if any of them were youch." ". . . these fake birds that were the big spit."—all authentic and witty guesses at futuristic teen slang. People speak in post-email language, technobabble like "re: Violet" already a part of everyday use. Other linguistic tricks such as School™ and Clouds™ give the text a unique flavor. Just about when we begin to feel like "complete bonesprockets" in the face of this creative dialect, we meet Titus and his moon-partying friends. This cast of characters worries about clothing and social status, especially when celebrities start wearing their fashionable skin lesions with pride and popularity.

The Feed, an implanted device that sustains biological life and enhances communication, bombards them with advertisements of things they just have to have if they expect to keep up with the in-crowd. It also allows them to "null out" on some feed-altering drugs, which might not be considered drugs by some because of their lack of physical harm. In the middle of this party atmosphere, Titus is thrust into a relationship with Violet, a girl who teaches him more about himself than he was hoping to learn. This journey toward identity, combined with a budding relationship, pressure from friends, the hovering authority of the parental units, and the adolescent voice and use of language work together to fit this book for the label of Young Adult.

***Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi (Hyperion, 2002)**

Crispin does not know his name because his father died years ago in the plague. "Asta's Son" is all anyone has ever called him. Doing their best to survive in meager conditions, he and his mother live among the poorest of the poor in fourteenth-century medieval England. When his mother dies, Crispin tries to learn the truth about his name and his father, a search that puts him in the hands of Bear, a wise, traveling jester with the right questions and answers to help a lad find himself.

This historical novel and winner of the 2003 Newbery Award features Crispin, a thirteen-year-old peasant boy without an identity, who has been awarded the derogatory label "Asta's Son" because he does not have a father. His mother dies, and he is forced to flee through the English countryside after he

is falsely accused of a crime, earning him the different label of "wolf's head," a name reserved for criminals who can be killed on the spot. Bear offers Crispin shelter from his pursuers in addition to teaching him the trade of juggling, something a poor, orphan boy could not hope to survive without. This exploration of personal identity is a common enough thread throughout Young Adult literature. Mix that together with the missing family relationships, an action-packed narrative, the mentor figure and older guide, and the intrigue of the medieval world brought to life through the eyes of an outcast teen, and you have the makings of a novel that belongs in the "genre."

***Bucking the Sarge* by Christopher Paul Curtis (Wendy Lamb, 2004)**

This humorous story features Luther T. Farrell, a young black boy and freshman in high school, who lives with and works for the Sarge, the dictator mom. With his best friend Sparky, his love for philosophy, and his hatred for Flint, Michigan, Luther gets promoted to head of the Sarge's group home. At the same time, he is trying to find a way to win the school's science fair for the third year in a row and somehow not ruin things with Shayla Patrick, the cute girl who just happens to be his greatest competition.

Working an after-school job like many teens his age, high school freshman Luther T. Farrell helps run the Happy Neighbor Group Home for Men with the Sarge, otherwise known as his mother. This job, the Sarge tells him, is a great way for a young black man like himself to work his way out from under the oppressive hand of society. For as tenuous as his home and work relationships are with the Sarge, his school life is just as uncertain. Luther dreams of getting to know Shayla Patrick but balks before taking any steps toward intimacy. The only time they ever seem to meet is at the school's science competition, something Luther has won for two consecutive years, a feat which cannot be good for his chances with her. Luther's friend Sparky tries to get rich quick by consulting with Dontay Gaddy, the flimflam lawyer at 1-800-SUE-EM-ALL, and Luther takes it upon himself to set his friend straight. First jobs, friendship conflicts, girls, school drama, and a little detective work to unearth an enormous secret are what put this ALA 2005 Best of Y.A. novel on the Young Adult map.

***The A-List* by Zoey Dean (17th Street Productions, 2003)**

Welcome to Hollywood 90210, the world of couture, parties, and hot young bucks. Having just flown in to live with her father for the summer, Anna Percy is the new girl in town. Cammie, Sam, and Dee are her problem. There is no way in Neiman Marcus they are going to let the new girl somehow win the love (or lust) of heartthrob Ben Birnbaum. If anyone has a chance at the sort of wishes that money and power cannot buy, it is her, which means there is only one thing to do with a girl like that—make her life miserable.

Boredom is just not possible with A-List members Cammie, Sam, and Dee catfighting with Anna for the rights to Ben Birnbaum. Among the books accused of watering down the Young Adult market, *The A-List* highlights the high-class battles for teen social status, the dysfunctional family relationships, multiple party scenes, close attention paid to clothing and outward appearance, and the internal struggles for identity, in such a way that this novel does not deserve to be excluded from the company of Young Adult, even if critics cringe at its inclusion.

***Crunch Time* by Mariah Fredericks (Atheneum, 2006)**

Four students band together their own SAT prep group in a story that delves deeply into matters of identity, where the worst thing you thought about people turns out to be true and that is all anyone sees. I guess it comes down to who you are at the end of the day—the sweet guy, the hot guy, the girl with nothing, the girl with everything, or the cheater.

High school students Leo, Jane, Max, and Daisy alternate points of view to tell this story in a back-and-forth style that, on numerous occasions, ends up in all four characters' minds within the same scene. This approach allows a 50/50 split between the male and female characters' narrative lines, offering the reader the clearly-portrayed thoughts and emotions of four characters. This novel goes so much further in its utilization of common Young Adult tools than most of its peers.

The IMs, answering machines, emails, notes, letters, blogs, and lists add a highly multitextual layer while also including recent technological devices natural to today's teenage world. Additionally, the classics are referenced in relation to the characters'

academic classes in school, novels like Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Teachers and school administration are portrayed as the bad guys. Characters constantly compare their successes and failures to their peers. Money is an issue; alcohol is used and abused; and characters maintain a hyperawareness of their bodies in proximity to potential relationship partners.

Pretextual comments like "I want to scream . . .," "I'm about to say . . .," and "I don't ask any of this . . ." add to the already present internal monologues of the characters. The sections make frequent efforts to begin and end with strong lines. Fragments—"Bad moment. Really, really bad moment."—are employed to great effect, oftentimes coming in the form of active onomatopoeia—"Click"—and other times appearing in the form of repeated words—"Go, go, go, go." Nicknames such as "James the Pain," "Mr. I Know, Mr. I Tell It Like It Is," "Zo," and "The Big C" are doled out by characters in an effort to control their environments. Clever conceptual devices like the shaded "I., II, III, IV" are used to separate the different parts of the novel.

Crunch Time, arguably more than its eleven peers, efficiently and pervasively displays Young Adult tricks of the trade to tailor its narrative for teen markets.

***Boy Meets Boy* by David Levithan (Knopf, 2003)**

*Paul has known he was gay since his Kindergarten teacher wrote it in his report card. Since then, his life has not been as difficult as it probably should have been. The town he lives in is supportive, his family loves him for who he is, and Tony (also gay—they are just friends) and Joni (straight as a toothpick) are his best friends forever. Gay relationships and transvestite friends, such as *Infinite Darling*, the football team's quarterback, are commonplace at this school.*

This ALA 2004 Best of Y.A. novel relays the love story between two sophomores in high school who do not just happen to be boys. This openly ideological exploration of an inventively tolerant high school atmosphere is what allows unique characters like *The Infinite Darling* to flourish. As is often the case, characters are interested in some division of the arts, Noah being the one who introduces Paul to the secret art studio in his house. Parental relationships and their acceptance of the identities their children claim are

contrasted by Tony's oppressive home environment and Paul's accepting family.

Again, the classics are represented by Emily Dickinson, Oscar Wilde, and John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Multitextual layers like song lyrics, poetry, and notes passed in class add to the romantic nature of the story. Experiments with structure—a paragraph broken up by an A-Z list through the alphabet and parentheses used to add frequent inner-paragraph emphasis—are common in *Young Adult*. Lines such as “. . . every conscious part of me is in the hand that he holds” show the character's hyperawareness of his body. Characters are given nicknames that end up permanent in certain social situations—“ambisexual” and “duosexual,” “Seven” and “Eight.”

All things considered, *Boy Meets Boy* contains many of the markings of contemporary *Young Adult Fiction*.

Criss Cross by Lynne Rae Perkins (Greenwillow, 2005)

Debbie feels there is something more to this life, something she senses when she looks at her mother's old photographs and wonders if the people she sees had things figured out as much as it seems. Her wish for excitement comes true when her parents volunteer her to help with Mrs. Bruning, an elderly woman with fading health and a houseful of all things German.

Critics might argue that this 2006 Newbery Award Winning novel contains too many graphic illustrations to be considered *Young Adult*. Perhaps they are right. Or perhaps with a graphic novel such as Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese* winning the prestigious Michael L. Printz Award in 2007, *Criss Cross* is more on-target than its critics realize.

At a surface level, the multitextual use of lists and song lyrics, haikus and Nancy Drew, and the reading of magazines such as *Mad Magazine*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Popular Mechanics* help add a teen element. A number of the classics are again mentioned—Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, and Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*. Frequent sections are formatted with experimental purposes in mind—an entire page written in italics to signal a person's thought process, a chapter formatted into columns to separate out two narrative points of view happening simultaneously, and dialogue formatted as it would be in a play.

At a deeper level, fourteen-year-old Hector's guitar lessons with Pastor Dan introduce a character's desire to delve into the arts, a common thread among *Young Adult*, not to mention its portrayal of a young man's pursuit of a desired skill under the tutelage of a wise adult. Debbie's cramped living quarters lead her to the discovery of her mother's old photo albums, connecting her to family members from the past, allowing her to see them when they were happy. Hector's struggle to pick up on and function within the social norms of the dating environment illustrate his awkward transition into adulthood. Debbie's time spent volunteering to help with the elderly German woman Mrs. Bruning add a multiethnic layer, as well as a young girl's grappling with a dying woman.

However, *Criss Cross* does not *feel* like a *Young Adult* novel, its tone and voice more like a midgrade, or children's book, its tensions, conflicts, and character desires more middle school than high school.

King Dork by Frank Portman (Delacorte, 2006)

Holden Caulfield, step aside for the new king in town: Tom Henderson, great American nobody, Chimo, Hender-fag, Sheepie, and King Dork. His Hillmont High School life is a combination of disappointments—from his exploits with girls, to his wannabe band that does not even have a drummer and amps . . . or guitars, to his father killed in a hit and run, to his subterranean position on the social totum pole.

The main character, tenth-grader Tom Henderson, is an outcast, a fringe player in the strata of Hillmont High School society. His nicknames are just the first layer of the *Young Adult* voice that rushes through these pages. The numerous names that he and Sam Helleman come up with for their rock band that has yet to acquire any instruments or a drummer are as off-the-wall as their characters—Easter Monday, Ray Bradbury's Love-Camel, The Mordor Apes, The Chimos!, and Sentient Beard, to name a few of their twenty-five. When they change band names to the Nancy Wheelers, their first album is entitled *Margaret, It's God, Please Shut Up!*, a hilarious twist on the classic *Young Adult* novel by Judy Blume—*Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret*.

It is Tom's discovery of a forgotten box of his father's books, which includes a few of the Classics—John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*, and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*—that takes this deep into

Young Adult territory. The highlight of the stash is his father's copy of J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* from when he was twelve. The copy is scribbled up and spilled on, with secret codes hidden throughout. The mockery of *The Catcher* cult teachers at school continues during Tom's detective-like search for some truth about his father as a teenager. From Tom's sexual explorations with the mysterious fake-mod Fiona, to the scandals in the school administration, to the Intro and Outro chapters, nearly everything about this novel screams Young Adult.

33 *Snowfish* by Adam Rapp (Candlewick, 2003)

Boobie, Custis, and Curl are the dark survivors at the fringe of society. What is particularly amazing is the way everything in this depraved world feels so cool and clean through Custis' eyes. Even though the three of them are on the run from the police because of what Boobie did to his parents and are looking for a rich family to sell Boobie's baby brother to, he holds out hope that his gat, the Skylark, and Curl's trick money are somehow going to hold their lives together.

When a novel starts out with a line like "On top of everything, Boobie's got the clap," I know I'm in for something unique. Obviously enough, the gripping dialect unique to the different characters was the first thing to grip me. The darkness of these characters' situation follows close behind. Baby in tow as they flee from the police for murdering their parents, these teens have a rough road ahead. Through the multiple points of view of Custis, Curl, and Boobie, this narrative plunges the reader into the minds of the most outcast of outcasts.

Rapp does not employ any of the "tricks" that so many of his peers do. He uses the characters' desire for a place to call home, their unique vantage point on adolescent life, and the utter darkness of their situation to hit the reader with a blizzard of Young Adult hope at the end.

***It's Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini (Miramax, 2006)**

Craig Gilner looks like your everyday modern kid, chilling with Aaron and hoping for something more with Nia, until he sneaks out in the middle of the night and admits himself into a mental hospital. Not until the wild parties, Argenon (mental) Hospital, crazy roommates, Egyptian music, Brain Maps, and the

Brooklyn Bridge, does Craig finish his journey from Broken, to Healing, to Normal, to Real, and finally, to Alive.

Nominated to the ALA 2007 Best of Y.A. list, this journey of New York teenager Craig Gilner's is one of hope in the face of depression and suicide. After the SATs and years of academic labor to get into Manhattan's Executive Pre-Professional High School, Craig begins to see that he might not make it. This world is not for him. His world includes witty labels for serious things—Tentacles, Cycling, The Shift—alcohol, marijuana and amphetamines, suicide attempts, visits to shrinks, and internal dialogues with the soldier in his stomach that starves him at will. During his stint in Argenon, we see his hyperawareness of body when he is with Noelle, especially during the third best sex scene of the year according to the Henry Miller Award panel. We see his tendency toward doling out nicknames—Blue Streaks and Humble. We see an inventive display of onomatopoeia—*Ffffffft!—Hooooo-ee!—Bzzzzzzzt! —Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.—and Waaa-taaa. Waaa-taaa.*

Craig's story journals his journey toward identity, a discovery that he needs a place to call his own, a realization that other people's labels and expectations on his life may not be the best for him, an awakening to the fact that his family loves him and wants the best for him, no matter what he decides. Craig's time in the hospital allows him to discover his love for art, and specifically drawing. Along with the other teen elements, the personally-tailored brain maps that he draws for the people around him supply this narrative with a feel that is distinctly Young Adult.

***Peeps* by Scott Westerfeld (Razor Bill, 2005)**

When Cal Thompson moves to New York City and spends the night with Morgan, his desires and passions change forever. He finds out he has been infected by the parasite, but not in the worst way. Yes, he is a Peep, or Parasite-Positive, which means he will develop superhuman strength and senses, start to hate the sunlight and everything else he has ever loved, and begin to crave human blood. However, he is only a carrier, which means he may be able to control his desires, to a point.

This vampire story features a nineteen-year-old protagonist who is forced to locate his progenitor, the

girl who gave him the parasite. Their relationship hovers on the edge of romance and business the entire time, as Cal's detective work brings him ever closer to uncovering the magnitude of New York City's problem. The voice throughout the narrative goes the furthest toward making this book Young Adult. The first person and past tense allow Cal to get us to feel a bit of his paranoia through the every-other-chapter lessons on parasites. Fast-paced, grippingly action-packed, featuring teen characters and their love lives in light of the parasite, and explaining all vampire myths from the past, this book cannot help but feel like Young Adult.

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (Knopf, 2006)**

Narrated by Death and set in a small town outside Munich during World War II, this is the story of nine-year-old Liesel Meminger, a German girl taken into Hans Huberman's household as a foster child. As likeable as she is well-developed, it is amazing to watch a young girl remain so strong in the face of human tragedy, impossible hatred, and adolescent

love. This story pays tribute to the simple power of words, to their ability to change our minds, destroy our lives, move our souls, recount our memories, and yes, heal our world.

When Death starts telling stories, teens are likely to listen. When the story is about a nine-year-old girl in World War II Germany, teens might stop. Death often interrupts the narrative to insert his own factoids and commentary, the last of

which will chill readers to the bone. The center pages of the book feature an illustrated booklet designed over the torn-out pages of a copy of *Mein Kampf*. The frequent fragmented sentences give the language a structure geared for teens that conveys a much older voice, something Death cannot help but bring to his story about this pre-adolescent girl. First published in Australia as a Grownup novel, *The Book Thief* does not embody very many Young Adult elements, which

does not mean that it is not a powerfully-crafted novel. It only means that Liesel is perhaps too young, the narrative too grand, and the voice too somber to fit with the rest of the expanding genre.

Tying Up the Threads

The question still needs an answer: What characterizes a book as Young Adult? What makes it different from its Children's or Grownup relatives?

In her book *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*, Madeleine L'Engle says that "a children's book is any book a child will read." This approach would mean that a teen's reading of Plato's *Republic* would qualify the philosopher's writing for membership. Further exploration of this idea would mean that if a Grownup were to pull *Criss Cross* off the shelf for reading, it could be claimed as a Grownup novel. This definition seems deficient.

Brown and Stephens say in their book *Teaching Young Adult Literature* that if a book is written about teens and for teens, then it is Young Adult. This approach might allow critics to say that any of the classics with a teen protagonist belongs to the category. They might also look at "written for teens" and argue that no one can tell for whom a book is written. Marketed for Grownups in Australia and Young Adults in the United States, Zusak's *The Book Thief* is a prime example. When I talked with Zusak at the 2006 Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, he said that he did not completely understand the marketing strategies, that all he tries to do is write a good book.

Still others have claimed all coming-of-age novels as Young Adult, labeling them various German words: the *bildungsroman* to tell the story of a protagonist's growth into adulthood, the *kunstlerroman* to tell the story of a protagonist's growth into an artist, and, as Chris Crowe coins, the *sportlerroman* to tell the story of a protagonist's growth into an athlete. Despite which German words are used to categorize a novel, not all "romans" can be adopted as Young Adult. James Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, a *kunstlerroman* by definition, obviously does not fit the mold.

Since there does not seem to be a clear definition, please allow me to offer mine. As I see it, *the label "Young Adult" refers to a story that tackles the difficult, and oftentimes adult, issues that arise during an*

When I talked with Zusak at the 2006 Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, he said that he did not completely understand the marketing strategies, that all he tries to do is write a good book.

adolescent's journey toward identity, a journey told through a distinctly teen voice that holds the same potential for literary value as its "Grownup" peers.

1. Written about Teens

Out of my twelve Young Adult reading selections, all but Zusak's *Liesel* from *The Book Thief* are teen protagonists. Cal Thompson from *Peeps* is the oldest at nineteen. While adult characters may play prime roles, it is the adolescent we care most about in these novels. He or she is the one we follow and care for, and in the case of first person narratives, the one whose mind we know and live through.

2. A Distinctly Teen Voice

Eight of these novels are told in the first person, while only four are in the third person. This 67% told in first person is drastically higher than both Grownup and Children's fiction. Nine of them are in the past tense, with three of them in the present tense. Twenty-five percent may not seem like much, but in my experience, compared to Grownup and Children's fiction, it is significantly higher.

Statistics aside, the narrative voices of Young Adult novels, especially when in first person, are as unique as the protagonists who embody them. The lingo is modern. The pace, fast. The desires, youthful. The observations, distinctly teen.

3. The Journey toward Identity

Liesel's developing love for books, words, and writing in *The Book Thief*, Cal's grappling with his life as a vampire in *Peeps*, Paul's claiming of his sexual self in *Boy Meets Boy*, the four students striving toward college in *Crunch Time*—at the heart of all twelve novels lies this journey toward individual identity.

4. Tackling the Adult Issues in Teenage Lives

From the school administrator's videotaping of minors in *King Dork*, to the fraudulent finances and rampant litigation in *Bucking the Sarge*, to the mental sickness in *It's Kind of a Funny Story*, to the kidnapping and murder in *33 Snowfish*, to vampire mythology in *Peeps*—this sample set of novels mirrors its

field of Young Adult peers by daring to tackle the themes that critics continue to insist belong to the Grownups.

5. The Same Potential for Literary Value as Grownup Novels

In a perfect world, everyone would understand this concept, and a book's literary value would not be judged solely on the age of its audience. With a careful scan of the canon one can easily notice the numerous books featuring adolescent protagonists—Charles Dickens' *Pip* (Philip Pirrip), J.D. Salinger's *Holden Caulfield*, Jane Austen's *Elizabeth Bennet*, Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*, Alexandre Dumas' *Philippe*, and many more. These are, however, only the books that lasted. Many more did not. Things are not any different now. Some books survive, and most are forgotten, Children's, Young Adult, and Grownup books alike.

There are, of course, other smaller factors that add to the Young Adult environment—experimental form, technology, social status, self-image, young love, friends, work, and parental units—but these are not, what I consider to be, the crucial elements. For these twelve novels, the term Young Adult serves as both an age demographic and a genre. Sure, it might be a tool used by marketers to put more books in the hands of readers, but that tool is grounded in the reality of the writing itself.

Robert Cormier once said, "I write to affect people. Everything is to affect the reader" (Carroll 106), and that's what a quality Young Adult novel does. It takes its readers, youth and adult alike, to a place where adolescence lives on, a place where that journey toward identity continues to happen.

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The Death of Genre:

Why the Best YA Fiction Often Defies Classification

A few years ago, I received a phone call from a desperate sixth grade reading teacher. “Help!” she cried, “I have a literary mutiny on my hands. I need your help now!!” I immediately raced upstairs.

Our sixth graders read Louis Sachar’s *Holes* as a required novel. The teacher uses *Holes* as part of her unit on fantasy. In a time where many middle schoolers are steeped in Harry Potter and Paolini, *Holes* just did not seem to fit into that the same category of fantasy.

“Mr. Smith,” they argued, “It can’t be fantasy. It’s too real.”

What followed was a long discussion about the different types of fantasy. We debated over the effects of rattlesnake nail polish, the existence of yellow spotted lizards, the role of coincidence, Sachar’s use of the legend of Kissin’ Kate, the folktale qualities of Madame Zeroni’s curse, and the quest for treasure. We even delved into the archetype of the “hero” as we analyzed Stanley’s character. Most students remained unconvinced of the classification of *Holes* as a work of fantasy.

Sixth graders are not the only ones who struggle with the standard conventions of genre. As I revise my genre lists each year for my graduate level Young Adult Literature class, I find myself shifting books from fantasy to historical fiction and realistic fiction to fantasy. I have even considered

adding a list called genre-busters, novels which do not easily fit into a single category. The more I think about my YA favorite titles of the past few years, the more bewildered I become. Zusak’s *The Book Thief*—historical fiction or fantasy? Anderson’s *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing*—historical fiction or science fiction? Rosoff’s *How I Live Now*?—realistic fiction or science fiction? Shusterman’s *The Schwa Was Here*—realistic fiction or fantasy? I have come to the realization that genre might be dead, that many of recently published YA novels no longer fit into the predictable categories we typically designate for books. Is it time to despair? I think not. Rather, let us celebrate the innovative fashion in which today’s YA authors are bending the traditional definitions of genre. An exploration of early genre benders may provide some illumination, as well as an investigation of how many of today’s best YA novels are further blurring the lines between genres.

Young Adult literature has a long tradition of authors whose works defy genre classifications. Francesca Lia Block represents a genre unto herself with the fractured fairy tales that surround her quirky protagonist Weetzie Bat. Patrice Kindl’s *Owl in Love* mixes myth, fantasy, humor, and modern realism in her critically acclaimed novel. With innovative stories like *The Mind’s Eye*, *Whirligig*, and *Seek*, Paul Fleischman has long challenged the conventions of style,

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format, and genre. Elements of the supernatural run through the mysteries and suspense stories of Robert Cormier, Lois Duncan, Joan Lowery Nixon, and—more recently—Nancy Werlin and Kevin Brooks.

For the genre enthusiast, historical novels offer a variety of complex issues. The kingdom-and-the-castle story found in works like Megan Whelan Turner's *The Thief*, Gerald Morris' *The Squire Tales*, and Kevin Crossley-Holland's *The Seeing Stone* blend medieval

settings with magic and legend. Donna Jo Napoli's retold fairy tales (*Beast, Bound, Breath*) borrow much from traditional literature but abound with rich historical details. Napoli's novels are clearly fantasy titles; they also have much to offer to readers of historical fiction. Time-slip and time-travel novels present a similar dilemma—historical fiction or fantasy/science fiction? Jane Yolen's *The Devil's*

Arithmetic, Susan Cooper's *The King of Shadows*, Susan Price's *The Sterkarm Handshake*, and Edward Bloor's *London Calling* are filled with history yet are based on the premise of traveling back in time. One would be remiss to classify Philip Pullman's trilogy about Sally Lockhart and Eleanor Updale's Montmorency series as simple Victorian mysteries. One cannot deny the historical qualities found in these novels. What about speculative fiction, those historical novels that ask the difficult question of what if? In *The Year of the Hangman*, Gary Blackwood proposes the dilemma of what if the British had won the Revolutionary War. Finally, in which genre does one place Aiden Chambers' *Postcards from No Man's Land*? Chambers masterfully intertwines two narratives—one set in the 1990s and the other set during WWII—into his award-winning novel. Historical fiction or modern realistic? Neither or both?

Since the publication of his critically acclaimed *Skellig* and *Kit's Wilderness*, David Almond has blurred the lines between fantasy and reality in a genre that is often called magical realism. He has

returned to that successful formula with his newest novel *Clay*. In the best works of magical realism, one cannot easily determine where reality ends and fantasy begins. Popular chick-lit titles like Sarah Weeks' *So B. It*, Meg Cabot's *The Princess Diaries*, and Ann Brashares' *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* can hardly be considered completely "realistic." In *So B. It*, Heidi has developed a special touch with the slot machines; she always wins. Only after she has completed her quest to uncover the secrets of her past does her luck return to normal. The fairy tale quality of Mia's rise from social outcast to crown princess is a far cry from probable. The same can be said for those magical jeans in the Sisterhood series. Magical realism also plays a major role in numerous novels for tweens. From Hiaasen's *Hoot* to Hannigan's *Ida B.*, from many of the novels of Sharon Creech to the allegorical works of Jerry Spinelli, elements of the fantastic add a sense of mystery and wonderment to many novels categorized as middle grade fiction. The mixture of fantasy (the call of the sea, the seemingly supernatural powers of Mullet Fingers and Maniac Magee, the talking trees, anthropomorphic pigeons and owls) with realistic stories appeals greatly to readers on the verge of adolescence.

Numerous librarians and teachers have encountered the adolescent reader who devours one fantasy novel after the next but refuses to touch science fiction. On the other hand, there is the passionate sci-fi reader who dismisses every fantasy with the statement "I don't really like those types of books." Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* provides one blueprint for a genre now labeled as science fantasy. Following in L'Engle's innovative footsteps are authors like Philip Pullman, Kenneth Oppel, and Joshua Mowll. In his masterfully plotted novels *Airborn* and *Skybreaker*, Oppel begins with the premise of what if the airplane had not been invented. The adventures that follow take readers into a world of airships, sky pirates, flying felines, bat-copters, intricate diagrams, and high altitude monsters. Mowll's *Operation Red Jericho* and *Operation Typhoon Shore* are frequently classified as adventure fantasies. However, the detailed diagrams will indubitably please even the most devoted science fiction reader. Acclaimed science writers John and Mary Gribbin tackle the difficult concepts of string theory, the space-time continuum, and quantum physics in *The Science of Philip*

Pullman's His Dark Materials. After reading the Gribbins' book, teens (and adults) will begin to appreciate the theoretical physics that provides part of the foundation of Pullman's exceptional trilogy. Then there is the difficult question of Anthony Horowitz's Alex Rider series. These wildly popular novels touch many genres—spy novel, adventure story, mystery, and—because of the abundance of high tech gadgets Alex employs in times of peril—science fiction.

Having suggested that the lines between genres have been blurred in Young Adult literature, I will now look more closely at three distinct categories and the recently published novels which exemplify them: (1) historical fantasy as it moves away from the traditional medieval setting to different historical periods; (2) historical fantasy with magical realism and particularly the trend of narrators and characters “from beyond the grave;” and finally (3), science fantasy. I will conclude with an analysis of why, in today's world of YA literature, some novels make any discussion of genre irrelevant and how this “death of genre” liberates teen readers from the stereotypes associated with genre fiction.

History and Fantasy

The Middle Ages provide the perfect opportunity to blend history with fantasy. After all, witches were burned at the stake and medieval legend has knights hunting dragons and questing for treasure. From this combination of the historical and the fantastic comes that sub-genre known as the kingdom-and-the-castle. While Gerald Morris, Tamora Pierce, and Shannon Hale are still writing in this tradition, many authors are exploring different periods of history with fascinating results. Celia Rees, Julie Hearn, and Sally Gardner have written three haunting historical novels with *Witch Child*, *The Minister's Daughter*, and *I, Coriander*. Rees' *Witch Child* differs from traditional Witch Trial novels in that her protagonist—fourteen year-old Mary Newbury—is actually a witch, not merely a young girl accused of being one. Mary flees England after her grandmother is executed for practicing witchcraft and comes to America where she again falls under suspicion for her pagan ways. Rees writes *Witch Child* as if it is Mary's own journal, thereby producing a fiction-as-fact effect on the reader. Hearn's *The Minister's Daughter* expertly intertwines two narratives into one,

with an entertaining dose of fairies and pixies to help move the narrative along. Set during the Civil War between the Puritans and the Royalists, Nell is accused by the minister's unwed pregnant daughter of being a witch, an agent of the Devil. Hysteria reigns as Nell's grandmother is dunked, and Nell finds herself condemned to hang. As the novel alternates between two voices and two settings, the reader comes to understand the conflicts that led to the Salem Witch Trials and the deaths of innocent women who were healers and midwives. *I, Coriander* is much closer to traditional fantasy than *Witch Child* and *The Minister's Daughter*. Nonetheless, London at the time of Oliver Cromwell springs to life in this award-winning story. Coriander is the only daughter of a successful merchant and a fairy-princess whom the locals consider a witch. When her mother dies and her father's finances fall into ruin because of the Civil War, Coriander finds herself at odds with her evil step-mother and a Puritan minister. After her father flees persecution from the Roundheads, Coriander's life in London rapidly spirals downward until she is able to cross over into Fairyland where still more peril awaits in the form of the wicked Fairy Queen. Eventually, characters from the two worlds collide in a suspenseful conclusion.

During the past few years, Victorian England has become the setting for several noteworthy historical novels. As with the novels set during the 17th century, these Victorian novels obscure the lines between history and fantasy. Libba Bray's gothic novels *A Great and Terrible Beauty* and *Rebel Angels* plunge readers into the social conventions of Victorian England. Of particular interest are the arranged marriages of the young ladies at the Spence Academy. Bray explores the limited roles of women during this time of history. She also skillfully adds a haunted house, mysterious gypsies, visions of and trips into another realm, a

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gorgon, and an abundance of magic. Eleanor Updale's Montmorency series also portrays Victorian society. More mystery than fantasy, these fast-paced novels introduce readers to a career criminal named Montmorency. After a particularly horrific fall, the thief is "reconstructed" through a variety of experimental surgeries. After his recovery, he assumes two identities—the gentleman Montmorency and Scarper, a lowly thief with a special knowledge of London's new sewer system. As the series progresses, Montmorency becomes less of a thief and more of an amateur detective. While the books have no significant adolescent characters, they appeal to teen readers with their well-constructed plots, strong characters, and fascinating setting. If Dickens, Conan Doyle, and Poe were to collaborate on a project, the outcome might not be too far removed from Updale's successful series. Mystery? Historical fiction? Fantasy? A little of all three?

Two of 2006's most acclaimed novels could be simply placed into the category of historical fiction. However, there is no simplicity in either Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* or M.T. Anderson's *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing*. In Zusak's multilayered novel, a young German girl named Liesel rebuilds life with a foster family before and during World War II. After the arrest of her father and the death of her younger brother, she is abandoned by her mother at the home of the Hubermanns. Life on Himmel Street is certainly not heavenly. In this

working-class suburb, Liesel finds herself surrounded by angry neighbors intoxicated by the rise of Nazism, vicious bullies, and a spiteful foster mother. She finds solace first with her accordion playing foster father, her best friend Rudy and their neighborhood games of

soccer, and Max, a Jewish refugee whom her family hides in the basement. Ultimately, her love for books—the first picked up beside her brother's grave, another taken from a bonfire, others stolen from the mayor's wife—transforms the young Liesel. By learning to read, she learns to live. As she reads to others, she transforms their lives, too. Inspired by words and stories, she begins to write her own story, a

process which literally saves her life. Nothing fantastic so far, correct? I have deliberately failed to mention the novel's narrator, none other than Death. The brilliance of *The Book Thief* comes not only from Zusak's adept characterization and his delicate balancing of themes but also from the thoughtful comments Death interjects throughout the narrative. Death is no antagonist in this story. Rather, he portrays a sympathetic character physically and emotionally exhausted by man's inhumanity toward man. His observations about the tragic circumstances of the human condition and the horrors of war and the Holocaust are profound but are they the stuff of historical fiction?

From the title of *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume 1: The Pox Party* alone, the reader already knows that he/she is about to encounter a book like none other. Anderson does not disappoint in this National Book Award winner. Octavian and his mother, an African princess, live on the estate of the Novanglian College of Lucidity with a group of radical philosophers. The young boy receives a classical education. As he grows older, Octavian comes to understand that his lessons are part of an experiment to determine the intellectual capabilities of Africans. He also realizes that he and his mother are not free; they are slaves in Boston during the turbulent times before the Revolution. After a physical altercation with the College's benefactor, the boy and his mother are stripped and beaten. When the financial woes befall the college, Octavian's fortunes take a further turn for the worse. Like Liesel, he possesses a great love of reading, especially the Classics. His new master forbids him from reading his favorites and forces him to translate dull and difficult passages from meaningless texts. His mother dies after a failed experiment with small pox inoculation, and Octavian runs away. He is eventually captured, imprisoned in a wooden mask, and brought back to the College. The first book ends with the protagonist's fate unknown. As with *The Book Thief*, this novel is as much about style as it is about narrative. Anderson has written the story in a language much like the American English used at the time of the Revolution. That language helps to transport the reader back in time but did that "time" really exist? Could there have been a Novanglian College of Lucidity? Were such experiments actually conducted on Africans? *The Astonish-*

***The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing* is a stunning historical novel of a history that might never have been.**

ing *Life of Octavian Nothing* is a stunning historical novel of a history that might never have been.

Realism and Fantasy

If the narrator is dead but tells the story from beyond the grave, then is the novel realistic fiction or it is fantasy? Perhaps the trend of the dead narrator started with Alice Sebold's cross-over bestseller *The Lovely Bones*, but there is little doubt that many YA authors have used a deceased character to relate their stories. On the second page of Gary Soto's *The Afterlife*, Chuy is stabbed to death in a restroom. Ghost-like, Chuy floats around town checking on his family and his friends from school; he also spies on his killer. Before he dissipates, he begins to fall in love with the "spirit" of another teenager. Jeremiah's is but one of numerous voices in Jacqueline Woodson's *Behind You*. Miah witnesses and comments on the struggles of his friends and family as they try to deal with his tragic death, but he views them from above as his spirit floats over them.

In 2005, Adele Griffin received a National Book Award nomination for *Where I Want to Be*. Narrated with two voices in alternating chapters, this novel explores the difficult relationship between two sisters, Jane and Lily. The reader immediately realizes that Jane is telling her story "from the other side." Griffin's novel is a powerful coming-of-age story about a grieving family coping with death and mental illness. Chris Crutcher also employs a dead narrator in *The Sledding Hill*. Billy dies early in the narrative but continues to relate the events as they unfold. When a minister/English teacher launches a crusade against Crutcher's novels, the small community becomes embroiled in heated debate over free speech and censorship. Crutcher even interjects himself into the story. Dougie, the protagonist in Pete Hautman's *Invisible*, is alive for most of the novel but readers immediately have questions about his best friend Andy. An unreliable narrator if ever one existed, Dougie is a social outcast compulsively obsessed with his model train set and the bridge he is building for it. Andy is a popular football player and a talented actor. The two talk together each evening from their bedroom windows. As Dougie spirals deeper into mental illness, one is asked to question whether or not Andy is alive or if he represents another voice from the

grave. Hautman's suspenseful conclusion leaves that question unanswered for even the most observant of readers.

A Certain Slant of Light by Laura Whitcomb and *Elsewhere* by Gabrielle Zevin are farther removed from "reality" but still deserve consideration in this category. Although Whitcomb's protagonist Helen has been dead for over a century, she has been able to "live" by attaching herself to a human host. Her most recent host is a high school English teacher. She travels unseen and unheard, a mere observer in an always shifting world.

That changes one day when she notices a boy staring at her. James, too, is a ghost but one who has learned to inhabit the living body of a human whose spirit has died. His host is Billy, an abused, drug-addicted teenager.

Helen learns from James and finds a host in the spiritless Jenny, the troubled only child of fundamentalist parents. James-Billy and Helen-Jenny fall in love, have sex, and experience tragedy together. The ghost story might be fantasy, but the joy and pain felt by the characters are as real as it gets in YA fiction. In *Elsewhere*, Zevin depicts the life and death of sixteen-old Liz whose life on Earth is cut short by a hit-and-run accident. When Liz awakens in *Elsewhere*, she longs for her old life—her dreams of the prom, a steady boyfriend, her driver's license, college. From *Elsewhere*, she jealously observes her family and friends, wishing she could be with them. Slowly, she comes to terms with her new existence and begins to let go of her old dreams. Reality or fantasy? Fantasy or reality?

The voice from beyond the grave is but one way in which YA authors blur the lines between fantasy and reality. Neal Shusterman's humorous novel *The Schwa Was Here* features the character of Calvin Schwa. While he cannot disappear completely, Calvin is so normal, so run-of-the-mill average that he goes unnoticed as if he were invisible. He is the ultimate wallflower, someone who simply fades away into background. Teachers count him absent and ignore his raised hand during class discussions. Classmates look

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directly at him and never see him. His best friend Antsy conducts “invisibility tests” to prove the “Schwa Factor.” Calvin’s mission to be noticed often meets with humorous results. The most hilarious of these occurs when he uses his savings to rent a billboard with his photo on it only to discover that the Expressway has been closed for repairs and no one will see his picture. Calvin is also on a quest to discover what happened to his mother. Did she just dissipate into thin air one evening at the grocery store? Or did she merely abandon Calvin? *The Schwa Was Here*, winner of the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, provides that perfect mix of reality and fantasy that provokes younger teens to think about themselves and their peers.

Marcus Zusak’s *I Am the Messenger* provides a similar theme but for a much older audience. At nineteen, Ed Kennedy is going nowhere fast. He drives a cab, drinks and plays cards with underachieving

friends, and hangs out with his dog. Although he is not invisible like Calvin Schwa, life is certainly passing him by, and he does not seem to care. His “going-nowhere-fast” existence quickly changes after he thwarts a bungled bank robbery. He then starts to receive mysterious playing cards at home, all with coded messages. Once he deciphers the code, Ed realizes that he is being asked to help (and in a few cases, even hurt) total strangers. Some tasks are innocent and uncomplicated—buying an ice cream for a harried mother. Others are more

perilous and challenging—stopping a drunken, abusive husband from raping his wife each and every night. Eventually, the cards lead him to his friends and family. As he changes the lives of others, Ed himself changes. Is he a pawn in an elaborate “practice random acts of kindness” scheme? A puppet on a string of a “pay it forward” scheme? The fact that he

has no clue who sends him messages propels the plot and moves the novel away from the purely realistic toward the magically realistic. The novel’s “deus ex machina” conclusion is even more improbable. In a less successful novel, the implausibility of the climax might undermine the author’s intentions. Only because he had previously established the premise of magical realism could Zusak have successfully accomplished the finale of *I Am the Messenger*.

Science Fiction and Fantasy

Many students will ask me how far back in the past a novel has to be set for it to be considered historical fiction. Few ever ask how far into the future does a novel has to be set for it considered science fiction. That is, however, precisely the dilemma one has with classifying Meg Rosoff’s *How I Live Now*. Her Printz-winning novel takes place in England in the not so distant future. There are no aliens, space ships, robots, medical miracles, or alternative communities. After Daisy leaves New York to visit her aunt and cousins in the English countryside, she realizes that her relatives share an almost supernatural bond. Soon after she arrives, England is attacked by an unknown enemy, and the country is thrown into war. Her aunt is trapped outside the country, and the children are left to fend for themselves. As she and her cousin Edmond fall in love, Daisy begins to subconsciously connect with her cousins. As the characters adapt the crisis around them, they themselves seem farther removed from the real world. Indeed, they seem transformed by the inhumanity which engulfs them and their country. After Edmond and Daisy are separated, they develop telepathic capabilities; they are able to communicate with each other even though they are miles apart. Isaac and Piper display a psychic link with animals. After the war, Edmond is seen tending an elaborate garden; we are left to wonder if he possesses mystic powers with plants. As with Stephanie S. Tolan’s *Welcome to the Ark* and *Flight of the Raven*, *How I Live Now* forces us to question if the human psyche is capable of rapid evolution in response to a catastrophic future.

In her first novel for younger readers, Jeanette Winterson also explores the possibilities that might lie ahead in her time-bending adventure story *Tanglewreck*. The fabric of Time is literally coming

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apart at the seams. Time tornadoes are ripping through London, transporting people to and from different points of history. A young orphan named Silver may hold the key to saving the world, provided that she can find a clock called the Timekeeper and keep it out of the hands of a malevolent alchemist and a mysterious sorceress. Fans of Pullman's *His Dark Materials* and L'Engle's *Time Quartet* will recognize the similarities and relish the differences. References to quantum mechanics, parallel realities, time travel, and even Schrodinger's Cat—sometimes alive, sometimes dead—are plentiful. Is it science fiction or fantasy? Like Herbie Brennan's *Faerie Wars* and many of the works of Eoin Colfer, the line between fantasy and science fiction in *Tanglewreck* is indeed an arbitrary one.

Can We Declare Genre Dead?

While numerous outstanding works of YA fiction fit nicely into the traditional definitions of genre, many defy those same conventions. If award-winning titles like *How I Live Now*, *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, I, Coriander*, and *The Schwa Was Here* cannot be conveniently placed into standard categories, should we declare the death of genre or merely redefine genres to include titles like these? Classification by subgenre is an option but not a very appealing one. Fiction should not become subject to the rules of nomenclature; classification by genre cannot be reduced to a science.

If we announce of the death of genre, what are the implications for our students? For us as teachers, librarians, and educators? For teens, I hope that liberation, freedom from the familiar, would be one positive outcome. We have each seen a student (or adult) who reads one genre and one genre only. "I would rather die than read a book that isn't a mystery," "Do you have any sports fiction?," and "I am looking for a book with dragons" are the typical comments I hear every day. I receive similar comments from graduate students, some of whom fear reading outside their comfort zone. By denouncing genre, we may perhaps begin to expand the horizons of our adolescents.

Skim the reviews of *The Book Thief*, *I Am the Messenger*, *Where I Want to Be*, and other genre-bending novels and note that phrases like "for sophis-

ticated readers," "mature and complex," "groundbreaking," "thought-provoking," "rich and fresh," and "advanced" are commonly used. As we stand on the cusp of a new era in Young Adult literature, I say move forward and challenge every reader with fiction so magnificent it makes genre irrelevant.

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Getting Beyond the Cuss Words:

Using Marxism and Binary Opposition to Teach *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*

A brief return to the high school classroom in 2004 provided me with the opportunity to teach young adult literature for the first time in my career. In the six years I taught English and reading, from 1996 to 2002, I only used classic works—*Great Expectations*, *A Separate Peace*, *Romeo and Juliet*, etc. It wasn't that I didn't like or want to teach young adult fiction; my schools never provided such titles. Don't get me wrong. It is not that I dislike the canon either. Certainly, there are titles and authors I hope all students have the opportunity to read: *To Kill a Mockingbird* for its social justice theme, Faulkner for his use of the Southern grotesque, and *The Scarlet Letter* for its timelessness. However, most of the classic titles we read were not interesting to, or at the appropriate reading level for, my remedial and average level students, most of whom were at risk of failing. At one point, frustrated with the lack of relevant literature for my students of color, I purchased titles I hoped they might like: *Black Like Me* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. The students were excited, and we dived into them, moving beyond a great story to analyzing themes, symbols, and characters. Relating to the works and the characters, the students moved beyond their labels (remedial and/or average) and became honors students. Seeing the increased confidence, competence, and attitude among my students, I borrowed books from the Advanced Placement program—*Bless Me, Ultima* and *I Know Why the Caged*

Bird Sings—and we continued reading. It was this experience that taught me the most about labels and expectations. Perhaps I, too, had been guilty of shortchanging my students.

Never forgetting this lesson, I revamped two of my courses (Teaching Fiction and Adolescent Literature), choosing to pair young adult with classic literature and incorporate literary theory. One project requires students to (1) thematically pair a recently published, award-winning young adult novel with a commonly taught classic work (novel or drama) and use them to (2) create lessons to teach literary theory. Moreover, their lessons need to focus on regular or remedial students in grades eight through ten.

Pairing of novels by theme and using literary theory are integral for two main reasons. First, my experience as a high school teacher showed that upper track students, like those in honors and Advanced Placement classes, receive more in-depth instruction with an emphasis on critical thinking skills (see also, Applebee, 1989, 1993; Finley, 1984; author, 2004). Moreover, these students read a wider range of literary works, whereas students in lower track classes are

often relegated to a narrow range of literature. Second, as stated earlier, I was never provided with young adult novels to use with my students, novels which would have interested them and, perhaps, prompted them to participate more in class. I had either nothing or the abridged versions of classic works

Students in lower track classes are often relegated to a narrow range of literature.

(*A Separate Peace*, *Great Expectations*, etc.) included in the anthology which were at least two grades above most students' reading level.

Both of these factors—readings with little relevance to students' lives and literature too difficult for them to read—contribute to low interest and achievement levels and provide a justification for using young adult literature even if an exact definition for young adult literature may be elusive. Herz and Gallo (2005) note that there is “no agreed-upon literal definition of YAL [young adult literature]. Others have defined it as any kind of literature read voluntarily by teenagers, while some describe it as books with teenage protagonists, or books written for a teenage audience” (11). Young adult literature serves two primary purposes: It gets students interested in reading and allows teachers to provide challenging assignments. The latter purpose is where literary theory comes in. Young adult literature, according to Ted Hipple, “must be read with attention, not simply to its story lines, characters, or settings but also and very importantly to its themes” (2000, 2). Lisa Schade Eckert (2006) adds to the discussion, asserting that:

Teaching students to use literary theory as a strategy to construct meaning is teaching reading. Learning theory gives them a purpose in approaching a reading task, helps them to make and test predictions as they read, and provides a framework for student response and awareness of their stance in approaching a text . . . making literary theory an explicit part of instruction provides a teacher with opportunities to model ways of reading instead of merely translating a text (8).

In this article we attempt to illustrate these opportunities as we present aspects of one university student's (Candace) project, the pairing of two controversial novels—*Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*—aimed at ninth- or tenth-grade students. Along the way, we hope to provide access to literary theory for teachers who may not have background knowledge in it and how to make it relevant for students. We also hope to illustrate purposes of pairing a young adult novel with a classic literary work, such as showing students that classics still have relevance in their lives and that young adult fiction has significance beyond interesting plots and characters. First, we offer a rationale for pairing of *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*, brief summaries of the novels, and theme and theory connectors. Then, short introductions to applicable literary theories are given to provide

teachers with a starting point. Lastly, we present one idea in practice. Other young adult and classic literature pairing ideas are provided as an appendix.

Rationale for Pairing *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*

Many literacy experts advocate pairing young adult literature with classic works. In the edited series *Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics* (1993, 1994, 1997, 2000), Joan Kaywell's contributors offer dozens and dozens of pairings of young adult novels and classic works with teaching ideas. Herz and Gallo's (1996) text, *From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges between Young Adult Literature and the Classics*, offers pairings, thematic connections, and archetypes in the works. Their updated and revised edition (2005) has additional features including an example of an author paper and profiles of unique programs in libraries and schools. All texts make the same claim: Young adult literature, because of its focus on polemical and present-day problems and issues meaningful to adolescents, is a natural scaffold to the classics (Probst, 2004). By reading modern-day, relevant works they enjoy, adolescents will more likely read and understand the classic titles assigned in school.

Students in my fiction course were directed to read a recently published young adult novel and select a commonly taught classic work with which to pair it thematically. Out of the eight titles offered (*Ironman*, *Whale Talk*, *Postcards from No Man's Land*, *Inventing Elliot*, *A Northern Light*, *The House of the Scorpion*, *Mississippi Trial, 1955*, and *Crossing Jordan*), Candace chose *Ironman* and then paired it with *The Catcher in the Rye*. *Ironman*, by Chris Crutcher, is an excellent selection to use as a bridge to a classic text because it deals with several critical issues facing today's students, such as anger management, divorce, and moving beyond initial assumptions (race, sexual preference, etc.). Salinger's novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, pairs well because of the numerous thematic parallels that exist between the two works. The protagonists, Beau and Holden, experience some of the same personal struggles and discoveries. Both authors employ writing styles that are personal and easily accessible to high school students. Both novels would work well in the high school classroom, as

Crutcher and Salinger have a gift for tapping into the teenage experience through language and characterization.

Plot Summaries

Ironman by Chris Crutcher

Beauregard (Beau) Brewster appears to be your typical high school senior, making average grades, playing on the football team, and working at an after-school job. Two things, however, set Beau apart from most of his peers: his difficulty controlling his temper and his determination to compete in Yukon Jack's Eastern Invitational Scabland Triathlon. Through a series of letters to Larry King, Beau unravels the story of his senior year. He quits the football team, setting up a series of negative interactions with both his former coach and his father. He then is sentenced to three months of anger management classes, in lieu of suspension, for calling one of his teachers (the ex-football coach) an obscene name. Through this experience and the relationships formed with other group members, Beau begins to understand where his anger comes from and how to control it. He also starts to see some of the problems his peers face. As he gains this valuable experience, it helps him cope with some of the problems in his life. He attempts to address the volatile relationship with his father and learns the critical lesson of acceptance. All the while, Beau is training for competing in Yukon Jack's Ironman competition. In the end, Beau accomplishes his physical goals and is working toward repairing the relationship with his father. The reader ends the book with a more mature, responsible Beau.

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

From the outset, Holden Caulfield is not your typical high school junior, failing out of four preparatory schools because of what he calls their high levels of "phoniness." Holden begins his tale from an undisclosed mental institution in California, the narrative taking the reader through a series of events happening between the end of fall term and the start of winter break. Expelled yet again, and not wanting to inform his parents, Holden decides to leave school early and stay in a hotel until he is due home. In the city, Holden encounters and interacts with several diverse people: nuns, a hotel doorman, a prostitute,

and a few acquaintances. Because of his peculiar behavior, none of the encounters seem to turn out right, and he is constantly disappointed by the "phonies," "bastards," and "pains in the ass."

Holden is a teenager searching for purpose in life. The only times he appears happy are when he is with children or remembering his dead brother. Holden's tale ends as he decides not to run away from home after all. The reader does not learn how he ended up in a mental institution, only that he will try harder in school.

Theme and Theory Connectors

Candace chose the five themes listed below to focus on when creating her unit, believing that students would be interested in and identify with the stories and characters through them. For example, high school is a time when adolescents search to find their individual identities, balancing physical maturation and emotional self-control.

1. Search for identity
2. Maturation
3. Confrontation of the cultural other
4. Self-control
5. Truth versus deception/ Perception versus reality

Although the teen protagonists in *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye* are strikingly different (Beau is a goal-oriented athlete, while Holden is a chain-smoking failure), their personal quests are the same. Both Beauregard Brewster and Holden Caulfield are on a journey, with each striving to develop a sense of himself and the world around him. During their journeys, the young men confront various situations that contribute to their developing sense of self. Crutcher and Salinger establish similar contrasts in the worlds of their protagonists. Beau must learn to control his anger through distinguishing truth from deception, while Holden must learn to take responsibility for his actions by denying the fictions he creates in face of the reality in which he lives. The cultural other is represented in both texts through the presence of homosexuality. Beau must cope with his role model's admitted homosexuality; although Holden never receives confirmation of his suspicions, he thinks that one of his former teachers may be gay. Both texts leave the reader with a sense that both young men are on the road to adulthood.

Literary Theories

Two literary theories—Marxism and binary opposition—work well with the paired novels. As lack of power of his world is one of Beau’s major struggles, Marxist theory is a natural choice to introduce *Ironman* (and then use with *Catcher*). Binary opposition also applies, especially when using *Ironman* as the bridge to Salinger’s book, due to the paired concepts such as right/wrong, adult/child, gay/straight, and ambivalence/certainty. Table 1 highlights how Marxism and binary opposition relate to the two novels. Other literary theories also work quite well with these two novels, and these are provided in Table 2.

Marxist Theory

Marxist theory is accessible for teachers, even without having background knowledge on Karl Marx. Through Marxist theory students can investigate (1) how people are treated differently in texts (as in class systems), (2) the political context of texts, (3) how

texts and their readers are socially constructed, and/or (4) the form of texts (Appleman, 2000; Moon, 1999). Through this theory students can examine issues of power, class, resistance, and/or ideology. *Literary Terms* by Moon and *Critical Encounters in High School English* by Appleman provide ideas and activities for teachers to use. One exercise in particular works nicely with the novels. Teachers have students list social groups that are presented in each novel; then, they plot the groups on a social ladder, explaining the power struggles between and among them (Appleman, 2000, 164-165).

In creating a pre-reading lesson for *Ironman*, Candace combined ideas presented in the Appleman and Moon texts. To introduce Marxism, the teacher asks students to think about class and power structures, through the cliques and groups, at their school. Using the examples of jocks and nerds, students volunteer examples of some of these groups, listing them on the board. Students then rank the groups from most to least powerful, providing justification for their responses. Some key questions teachers could pose include: Are there specific groups with power? Without power? Where does the power come from in these groups? Is your perception of power affected by your personal experiences with some of these groups? Are class structures fixed or is it possible to move among the class designations (think of the American myth of rags to riches or the cycle of poverty)? She/he will then explain that power and class structures are a part of a literary theory called Marxism and that the novels they will be reading include issues of power between and among characters and groups.

Binary Opposition

Binary oppositions are words and concepts that a community generally deem as being opposed to each other. People often have a black and white view of the world which can impact the way power is distributed among groups (Moon, 1999). In studying binary opposites in a text, one does not necessarily have to look for direct opposites. Students can be led to examine how characters, actions, words, and events are positioned to be seen as contradictory.

Teachers can introduce the concept by writing pairs of opposites (such as rich/poor, liberal/conservative, or intelligent/unintelligent) on the board and asking students to make observations about the pairs.

Novel	Marxism	Binary Opposition
<i>Ironman</i>	A power struggle is represented by the conflict between the people in power, composed of teachers, parents, college students, and the adolescents. The adolescents struggle to find their voices in a world that often discounts their viewpoints.	There are many examples of binary opposites in the text: the presence of Beau, an athlete, in the anger management group with the delinquent students, Beau’s parents, the concepts of winners and quitters, Elvis’s and Beau’s family situations, anger and self-control.
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	A class struggle is represented in Holden’s plight to avoid becoming one of the phonies he so adamantly opposes. Holden’s privileged status is in stark contrast to the scenes and people he encounters in New York.	There are many examples of binary opposites in the text: success and failure, direction and misdirection, affluence and poverty, innocence and experience, reality and deception. All of these opposites are expressed in Holden’s experiences and observations.

Table 1. Two Books Seen through the Lens of Two Literary Theories

To shift the discussion to how an author crafts language, the teacher could place students in pairs and begin a discussion of word choice. For example, she/he places an example sentence on the board and asks the class how word choice might change the meaning of the sentence (examples: “the boy ran” versus “the boy fled;” “the winning team slaughtered their opponent” versus “the team squeaked by with a win”). Students could then create 2-3 sentence pairs where word choice impacts the meaning, then share and discuss the implications and interpretations.

Through studying binary opposition, students gain a better understanding of how an author’s choices create meaning within a text. Students are introduced to the idea that an opposite can be implied, rather than directly stated. Hopefully, they will become more observant readers, noticing and appreciating the deliberate choices and juxtapositions that authors choose. Key questions related to *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye* that could be posed are:

1. Why are binary opposites important in this/these novels? Think about opposing forces (such as real versus phony) and characters (such as Beau’s father and Mr. S).
2. Are all the binary opposites presented in the texts direct opposites? Why do we consider certain pairs opposites?
3. How do binary opposites work together to create meaning? How does Salinger use opposites to create Holden’s character? Consider the idea of a negative definition.
4. Can a binary opposite be implied in a text? In the texts are there any areas where an opposite is implied?
5. Why is word choice important? Find an example in one or both of the novels.
6. How does word choice affect the tone and purpose of a piece? Use examples from the text to explain your answer.
7. Consider the characters of Mr. Redmond and Mr. Serbousek. Can characters function as binary opposites? What about Mr. Nak?
8. Think about the language used in *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. Is the “foul” language necessary? Do you think the choices made by the authors were deliberate? Are they accurate, offensive, excessive, understated?

Idea in Practice

To test and practice some of the ideas presented in this article, an English teacher at a local high school agreed to let me come into her 10th grade class (31 students) and teach the introductory lesson for the novel *Ironman*. I combined the ideas of Moon, Appleman, and Candace in a two-part lesson. This pre-reading lesson works well because students begin to study how power is assumed, granted, and shown in their day-to-day worlds before they read about it in either of the novels. Because *Ironman* opens with Beau’s power and control issues, the class discussion will be fresh in students’ minds. Students were given a copy of the handout shown in Figure 1 and instructed to complete Step One.

POWER AND CLASS IN SOCIETY AND BOOKS

Step One
Think about the following public figures or groups and the power they have. Where does it come from? Why are they considered powerful? Who is the most powerful? In small groups, rank the people from most to least powerful. Take 10-15 minutes. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

George W. Bush
Paris Hilton
Oprah Winfrey
Bill Gates
Fox News

Step Two
Now, think about power at your school. In your groups, think about different groups here at _____ High School, such as “jocks” or “teachers” or “nerds.” How is the power spread among groups at school?

On a sheet of chart paper, list the groups here at school from most to least powerful. How did you arrive at this ordering? Are you a member of any of these groups?

Now, reconsider (and renumber if necessary) your list from the perspective of:

—the least powerful on your list
—teachers

Figure 1. Introductory lesson for *Ironman*

My initial assumption was that students would select George W. Bush as the person/group with the most power. However, the student groups were split, with some choosing him and others choosing Fox News and Bill Gates. For those groups that chose the President of the United States, the reason was that the U.S. is the most powerful country on earth; thus, its leader is the most powerful of the names listed. Those who chose Fox News justified their choice with comments relating to the news channels being able to manipulate information. Bill Gates was seen as powerful because of his wealth and control over a large section of the technology market.

I segued into the second part of the lesson by stating that just like there is disagreement over which public figures are most powerful, the same situation occurs in schools. Some people and groups, such as administrators and coaches, have power (or should) automatically due to age, title, and/or size. However, from school to school, that is not always the case. I went over the directions in Step Two, providing each group with markers and poster-size paper. The photographs in Figures 2 and 3 represent three groups' interpretations of the power hierarchy in their school.

What is interesting, and became even more so for the students and their teacher and I during the discussion (which lasted so long that we did not finish the lesson), is not only the difference in the number of power groupings that each student group identified, but some of the particular ones acknowledged as having power. For example, in Figure 2, students indicated that the "Promiscuous" group, though ranked last on their list, exerted influence because their sexual activity made them popular and powerful. Those expected to have power—administrators—were left off the list, and teachers were not listed at the top.

Two additional groups interpreted the school's power players differently, listing a wider variety and number of them (see Figure 3). While both saw administrators as having the most power, teachers were listed behind those in the senior class (and in one case, after student government members, coaches, and juniors). Students also noted power being held by some atypical groups, namely "emo kids." In fact, neither the teacher nor I knew what an emo kid was and had to ask the class. According to the students, emo kids are the ones who either display mood swings and/or emotional outbursts or cut themselves. Although this group displays unhealthy behavior, its

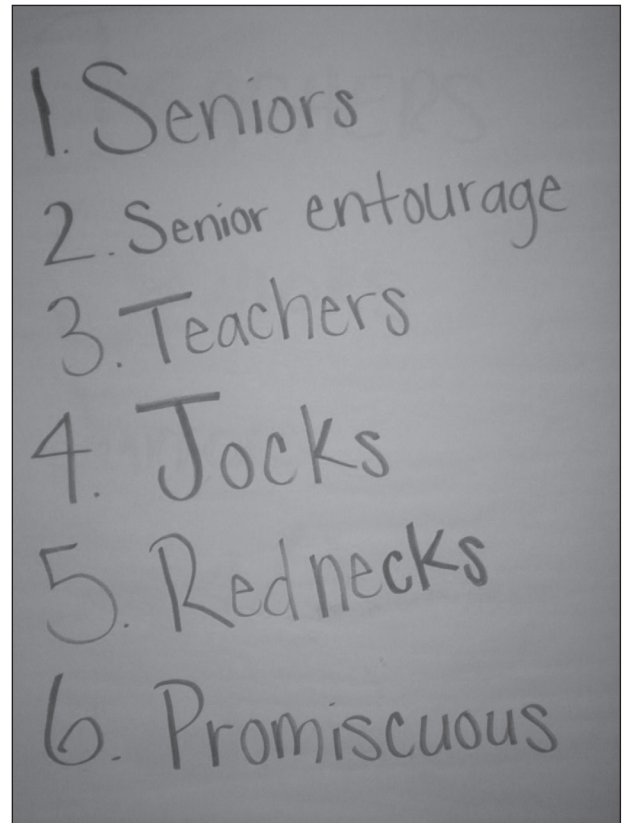


Figure 2. This group took a narrow, stereotypical view of school social hierarchy.

members are still power brokers over some in the school because of the attention they seek and receive from others. The discussion that ensued from this activity was beneficial not only as an introduction to the themes in the novels, but to open awareness and tolerance among the class.

Summary

What the teachers in my class and I learned is that pairing young adult and classic fiction and incorporating literary theory multiplies the benefits of both. First, young adult literature is a great hook to get students interested in and reading classic works. Because they are given a foundation of ideas, themes, and issues, the scaffold is in place for the more difficult reading. Second, when teachers use literary theory, students—especially those in the lower academic tracks—are provided with higher-order and critical thinking opportunities that they might not receive. While I am an advocate for reading young adult literature for its own sake, I do not endorse

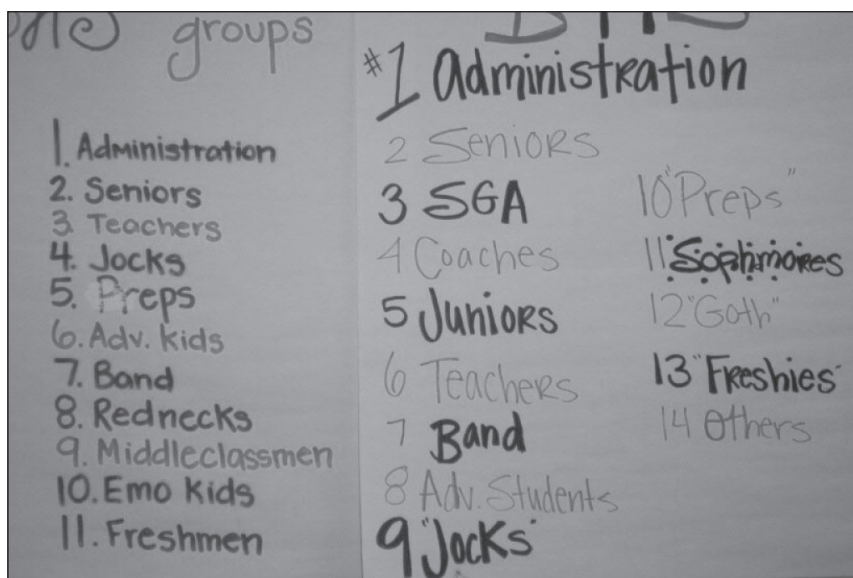


Figure 3. These groups took a broader, more detailed view of school social hierarchy.

reading it without integrating more complex, in-depth assignments and activities, a requirement that literary theory fulfills.

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Appendix











	Reader Response	Formalism	Feminism	Race	Cultural Studies
<i>Ironman</i>	 This approach can be taken using any of the characters or situations in the novel.	 The movement of the plot powers this critical approach. The significant events are aptly placed.	 The situations of Shelly and Beau's mom work with this approach.	 There is not a great deal of material dealing with race.	 The category is too broad to use as a critical lens.
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	 This approach can be taken using any of the characters or situations in the novel.	 The movement of the plot powers this critical approach. The use of a frame narrative could be discussed in detail.	 Female characters do not play a prominent role. However, one could make the argument for using feminist theory to examine Jane Gallagher or Holden's sister.	 There is not a great deal of material dealing with race.	 The category is too broad. One could use post WWII history, but it would be a stretch.

Table 2. Evaluation of Additional Literary Theories for *Ironman* and *The Catcher in the Rye*

Young Adult Novel	Classic Work	Primary Literary Theories	Rationale
<i>A Northern Light</i>	<i>My Antonia</i>	Feminist Race	Donnelly's <i>A Northern Light</i> and Cather's <i>My Antonia</i> share many features in terms of plot and theme. The pairing works well for these reasons alone, but also in light of the critical approaches of feminism and race theory. Because students can sometimes be resistant to the use of literary theory, teachers can introduce the unit with <i>A Northern Light</i> , a young adult text that is full of exciting events including a murder and the pursuit of a college education. This is a great strategy to create student interest for the more traditionally accepted <i>My Antonia</i> , which explores similar themes of farm life, death, and college education. After becoming familiar with the novels by exploring the connections of plot and theme, students will be better prepared to examine the texts through the literary lenses of feminism and race theory.
<i>A Northern Light</i>	<i>The Awakening</i>	Feminist Marxist	<i>A Northern Light</i> is an ideal piece of literature to teach with <i>The Awakening</i> because the themes and subject matter appeal to students, particularly females. Some themes covered include love, familial duty, feminine stereotypes, race, educational aspirations, and loss. Concerning roles and stereotypes of women in early 20 th century, both female protagonists Mattie Gokey and Edna Pontellier strive to achieve beyond their supposed place in society. Readers can examine the ways that education is a commodity only openly distributed to certain populations (men). As a woman, Mattie is already disadvantaged because she is supposed to rely on men for many things. Edna is similar to Mattie in that, as a woman, she is seen as under the control of a male, Mr. Pontellier.
<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Race Structuralism (binary opposition)	In <i>Crossing Jordan</i> , race is the line that divides the families, although the divide is not caused by current human interaction, but historical racial differences and past personal experiences. In <i>Othello</i> , differences in color and class are central characteristics of the play. By studying these texts through the Race Theory Lens, students can observe how misguided intolerance causes a disconnect in humanity that divides for the sake of division. The second lens of literary analysis is Binary Opposition. By analyzing the figurative and literal <i>lines</i> in these stories, students will gain a deeper and more educated point of view in the study of these texts. <i>Continued on next page</i>

Table 3. Additional Young Adult and Classic Literature Pairings with Applicable Theories¹

Table 3. Continued			
			They will see how the authors used this critical theory method to heighten the impact of separateness and compartmentalization within the whole of the texts.
<i>Whale Talk</i>	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Race	One of the most pertinent theories applicable to both novels is race theory. Both novels deal heavily with the issue: <i>Huck Finn</i> revolves around Huck's adventures and friendship with a runaway slave, and his battle between his conscience which states he must turn Jim in as a runaway, and his heart which tells him that Jim is human, and thus deserves freedom. <i>Whale Talk</i> deals with the expectations and stereotypes facing blacks today (good athletes, not that bright), and the hurt dealt to children by prejudice.
<i>Mississippi Trial, 1955</i>	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	Race Feminist Marxist	<i>Mississippi Trial, 1955</i> and <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> both have the obvious racial issues, both with a trial that comes to an unjust verdict because of the racist jury members who feel a sense of pressure from their community members. The novels are both set in the deep rural South during the time of Jim Crow Laws that enabled whites to have a sense of power and entitlement over blacks. Feminism can be used in <i>Mockingbird</i> to discuss the role of Scout and how she is expected to be something that she does not feel. In <i>Mississippi Trial, 1955</i> there are very few women. Can looking through a feminist lens help the reader understand why that the novel was written in that way? Is the story more effectively told with only three female characters, all of who play very small roles? Marxism can be used to look at the classes of the characters: Would the stories be different if the white families were of lower or higher classes than they are? Would there be a story at all?
<i>The House of the Scorpion</i>	<i>Brave New World</i>	Race Feminist	An excellent companion book to <i>Brave New World</i> is <i>The House of the Scorpion</i> which addresses contemporary issues such as drug cartels and cloning. Students will easily relate to the story's protagonist who must cope with thoughts that he is somehow different from everybody else. The main characters in <i>Scorpion</i> are Latino, a welcome change for minority students used to the traditional Anglo texts often found in their anthologies. Racism is shown through Huxley's social slave system and Farmer's clones. The women in <i>Brave New World</i> become the protagonists in sexual exploration while in <i>Scorpion</i> they are positioned in traditional roles, despite their strengths or weaknesses.

<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> *	Race	A great way to teach students about boundaries using race theory is through <i>Crossing Jordan</i> and <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> . Although the books are set in different times, one in the early 1900s and the other in the late 1900s, students are able to see how racial boundaries that were set have either changed or have remained unchanged. Students will be able to make personal connections between the books and their lives. Through this lesson, they will be able to understand how to begin to break down barriers that occur in their lives.
<i>Inventing Elliot</i>	<i>Chocolate War</i> *	Reader-Response Structuralism	<i>Inventing Elliot</i> serves as a great accompaniment to <i>The Chocolate War</i> . The novel portrays similar themes without any controversial language or content. The novels will reach out to most students and generate some type of reaction that will cause students to compare the text to their own lives. Reader-response theory can help students who are bullies try to relate to the experiences of victims, such as those found in both novels. Structuralism as a binary opposition works well with <i>Inventing Elliot</i> . In the opening, Elliot reveals his desire to leave his old life behind and to create a new life. Even though Jerry's life (<i>The Chocolate War</i>) is somewhat of a binary opposition because he alters from a sheer determination to "disturb the universe" to a panicked willingness to submit, this example is not quite as obvious as Elliot's two sides.

* Although considered young adult literature, because they were originally published in the 1970s, students considered them to be "classics."

Note

1. Additional pairings contributed by Zachary Best, Carmen Brown, Misty Daniels, Scott E. Jenkinson, Laura Keigan, Sarah McAffry, Beth Nelson, Elaina Robertson, Sherri Teske, and Hazel Tucker

<p><i>Am I Right or Am I Right?</i> by Barry Jonsberg Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, 256 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Brash and sensitive, literal and over-imaginative, stubborn and sarcastic, Calma Harrison makes her way through Year 11 at her Australian high school. Balancing a part-time job at Crazy-Cheep, where she snags a handsome checkout guy for a boyfriend, with frustration over her uncommunicative single mother and an unemotional best friend, Calma manages to engage herself in complications galore.</p> <p>Written in multiple formats including soap opera dialogue, refrigerator sticky notes between mom and daughter, email advice on writing poetry from a marvelous English teacher, and Calma's "unreliable narrator" voice, the novel rockets along with humor and pathos. Calma intersperses newly acquired poetic forms to reveal her own emotional growth. Problems range from the dramatic to the mysterious to hysterically funny. A not-to-be-missed scene occurs when Calma acquires a buzz cut at a snobby hair salon while prepping for her first date with Jason.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>	<p><i>Baby</i> by Joseph Monninger Front Street, 2007, 173 pp., \$16.95 978-1-59078-502-9 978-1-59078-502-7</p> <p>Abandoned by her mother, Baby has one last chance before juvenile detention: aged-hippy foster parents who run sled dogs. First the dogs and then the Potters win Baby over. Then Bobby, an old boyfriend, draws her back into street life and more trouble. The dogs have tamed her, though, and from her bonds with them, she finds her way back and her place in the pack, both human and canine.</p> <p>Monninger captures the thrill of racing sled dogs and Baby's struggle to learn new choices. His smooth plot and non-sentimental prose will pull both males and females effortlessly along the trail. Yet his understated comparisons of animals to humans will leave readers much to ponder after they reach the finish line. A simple story, beautifully told.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>
<p><i>Billie Standish Was Here</i> by Nancy Crocker Simon & Schuster, 2007, 279 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>In this tale of friendship and healing, Nancy Crocker tells the story of Billie Marie Standish, an 11-year-old girl from a small Missouri town, 1968. When everyone else flees town fearing a flood, Billie and Lydia Jenkins, an elderly woman across the street, form an unlikely friendship. While Billie's parents work the farm all day, Billie spends her afternoons with Miss Lydia, learning to cook, crochet, and cleaning her big, unused house. During that summer, Billie experiences a tragedy that she can't endure on her own, and Miss Lydia helps her keep the secret and heal from the pain.</p> <p>This story both tore at my heart and made it sing. Crocker teaches about the value of friendship as well as the value of being a part of the world around you. I would recommend this book to high school and mature middle-school readers, as it deals with some adult themes.</p> <p>Elaine Clincik Wichita, KS</p>	<p><i>Choices</i> by Deborah Lynn Jacobs Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 189 pp., \$16.95 ISBN-13: 978-1-59643-217-8</p> <p>Deborah Lynn Jacobs takes readers on a multiple reality odyssey in <i>Choices</i>. Told through the vulnerable voice of Kathleen, whose guilt over the tragic death of her brother is all consuming, the story is a psychologically thrilling emotional drama.</p> <p>When Kathleen seeks her brother Nick's rescue from a party she never wanted to attend, dangerous driving conditions contribute to a fatal accident. Soon after, Kathleen begins experiencing the unsettling feeling of having lived two realities, each with its own set of conflicting memories. The only crossovers between the two realities seem to be Nick's death and the mysterious appearances of Luke, a young man whose past loss and present situation resonate with Kathleen. Life becomes even more complicated, however, when more realities open up—one with Nick alive—and Luke reveals a secret, forcing Kathleen to make a heartbreaking choice.</p> <p>Mature content and a complex storyline make Jacobs's book fitting for the high school student seeking an original story.</p> <p>Jennifer Funk Raleigh, NC</p>

<p><i>The Christopher Killer</i> by Alane Ferguson Murder Mystery/Family Problems Viking by Penguin Group, 2006, 274 pp., \$15.99 ISBN: 0-670-06008-9</p> <p>This dramatic novel revolves around a young girl named Cameryn who becomes an assistant to her father, the county coroner. After several mishaps and crime scene viewings that make her sick, she becomes entrenched in a case that will change her life. Woven into this plot is a subplot of Cameryn trying to find out who and where her mother is. The incredibly detailed descriptions of crime scenes are akin to the current Crime Scene Investigators television programs. Along the way we meet a psychic, a gothic friend of Cameryn's, and a 1960s-style, spiritual best friend.</p> <p>Ferguson's character development is so strong that you come to know and care about these people, to the point where you feel their pain and joy. It is also refreshing to see how close Cameryn is to her father, a strong role model. Readers will be taken on a thrilling ride from the beginning to the surprise ending.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Kenan Metzger Muncie, IN</p>	<p><i>The Darwin Expedition</i> by Diane Tullson Adventure/High Interest-Low Level Orca Book Publishers, 2007, 100 pp., \$8.95 ISBN: 978-1-55143-678-1</p> <p>In a hurry to get in one more snowboarding adventure before the spring thaw, Tej and Liam take a little used, and extremely muddy, logger road up the mountain. When Tej loses control and the truck tumbles down the mountain, the boys find themselves lost and struggling to survive against the elements and an angry bear.</p> <p>The adventure is not only a test of their survival skills, but also a test of their friendship and self-confidence. After Tej is injured, Liam has to struggle to overcome his own self-doubt to save his friend.</p> <p><i>The Darwin Expedition</i> manages to combine an exciting adventure with a reading level suited to struggling readers. Tullson uses vivid descriptions and foreshadowing to draw the reader in.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>Defect</i> by Will Weaver Allegory Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007, 199 pp., \$16.00 ISBN: 978-0-374-31725-6 0-374-31725-9</p> <p><i>Defect</i> is Will Weaver's allegorical tale that explores a misfit foster child's journey of coming to terms with his physical abnormalities. The protagonist, David, was born with a variety of deformities, chief among them wing-like folds of skin that allow him to glide, almost fly, from high places.</p> <p>While David's deformities (gifts?) cause him to be ostracized and eventually expelled from a rural Minnesota high school, he begins to come to terms with his uniqueness in an alternative school environment where students are more accepting of each other's "defects."</p> <p>Central to the novel is the question of whether David is a contemporary angel or a freak of nature, and he is forced to confront this issue directly when he is presented with the opportunity for corrective surgery that would make him "normal."</p> <p>The book should prompt interesting and productive discussions about difference, identity, and tolerance with high school students.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Do Not Pass Go</i> by Kirkpatrick Hill Family/Prison Simon & Schuster, 2007, 240 pp., \$15.99 ISBN-13: 9781416914006</p> <p>Deet is pretty much a loner and a neat freak. Sometimes he seems more responsible than his own parents. His mother seems to rarely plan for anything, and his dad works two jobs to pay for things they think they need. Deet would rather they keep things simple.</p> <p>When Deet's dad is arrested for drugs he used to stay awake at work, Deet starts to rethink his family and friends. Worried about what others will say about having a father in jail, he is surprised when two of the popular students share they have brothers in jail. Deet's mom has to work, so Deet cares for his little sisters. Through Mr. Hodges' journal assignments, Deet begins to really see his life. He realizes he has two parents who love him even though they are so different from him, and that not everyone in jail is a bad person. Deet becomes stronger from this experience and realizes jail is not the end of the world.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Barbara Ray Tulsa, OK</p>

<p><i>Dramarama</i> by E. Lockhart Hyperion Books for Children, 2007, 311 pp., \$15.99 Fiction/Friendship/Theatre ISBN: 978-07868-3815-8</p> <p>Sadye and Demi are two teenagers who are tired of their non-razzle-dazzle lives in Brenton, Ohio, and decide to apply to the Wildewood Academy for the Performing Arts Summer Institute, run by a well-known Broadway director. Both are fans of Broadway musicals, and they adore Liza Minnelli.</p> <p>Their summer is one of friendship, jealousy, and new love. From “Cats” to “Guys and Dolls,” this book tells of the ups and downs of their summer, their new relationships, and just how hard the kids must work to be the actors they want to become in order to leave boring old Ohio behind them once and for all.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>	<p><i>Eggs</i> by Jerry Spinelli Little, Brown and Co., 2007, 224 pp., \$15.99 Fiction/Friendship/Loss ISBN: 0-316-16646-4</p> <p>Two kids find friendship, despite their age difference, in this thought-provoking book. David is a 9-year-old boy who is coping with his mother’s death, while his workaholic father is emotionally and physically unavailable to him. Primrose is a 13-year-old girl who tries everything to stay away from her eccentric mother and only knows her father from a framed photo that is one of her most treasured possessions.</p> <p>Both kids hide the secrets of their pasts, which are as fragile as eggshells. Both share a love for a drink called Mango Madness and a yearning to have one person whom they each can depend on. Told from the point of view of several different characters, this book is one that should not be missed if looking for a good tale of friendship.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>
<p><i>The Faerie Path</i> by Frewin Jones HarperCollins, 2007, 320 pp., \$16.99 Fantasy/Romance ISBN: 0-06-087102-4</p> <p>Anita’s handsome new boyfriend Evan takes her for a speedboat ride on the Thames River for her 16th birthday surprise. The boat crashes, and she awakens in a hospital ward, only to be guided out of her reality into the land of Faerie by a young courtier. Anita is really Tania, missing for 500 years from King Oberon and Queen Titania’s kingdom, where she is the seventh daughter foretold to be the one who can cross the portal between Faerie and the Mortal World of modern London.</p> <p>Not everyone is what he or she seems, including those she trusts most. There is a plot to gain power in Faerie, which has emerged from the twilight Oberon induced when his youngest daughter disappeared and his beloved queen drowned. Will Tania discover the one she truly loves? Will she learn who is friend or foe in time? Readers who love fairy tales, romance, and boundless adventure will love Anita/Tania and her story.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>	<p><i>Flawless, a Pretty Little Liars Book</i> by Sara Shepard HarperTeen, 2007, 330 pp., \$16.99 Mystery/Social Jockeying ISBN: 978-0-06-088733-9</p> <p>Glitzzy, smooth, and fast—just like the lifestyle of its characters—Sara Shepard’s novel <i>Flawless</i> reveals the scandalous secrets and deadly struggles behind the perfect makeup and designer clothes of four bad little rich girls.</p> <p>Seduced by gossip and glamour, girls will race through the pages of this novel, seeking the identity of A, who threatens to tell all the secrets, only to be left hungering for <i>Perfect</i>, the third book in the series.</p> <p>Judy Beemer Junction City, KS</p>

<p><i>Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall</i> by Wendy Mass Little, Brown, and Co., 2007, 251 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Self-Discovery/Relationships ISBN: 0-316-00218-6</p> <p>Sixteen-year-old Tessa tells her story through short poems in this quick read. Tessa is a lovable loser—a shy girl who seems nice, but doesn't have many friends.</p> <p>After being hit in the head during gym class, Tessa finds herself being whisked away from her body, eventually ending up in the mall. She figures it must be heaven, since she had seen her own crumpled body lying on the gym floor, but she can't figure out if she's dead or not. While in the mall, Tessa finds a new friend and a bag of her own possessions. She then goes on a journey through the various stages of her life, where each of the possessions comes into play.</p> <p><i>Heaven Looks a Lot Like the Mall</i> is a story that will have readers wondering about the death and the afterlife, but also about relationships, friendships, and all of those little mistakes one makes along the way.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>	<p><i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</i> by Brian Selznick Scholastic, 2007, 544 pp., \$22.99</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Mystery ISBN: 0-439-81378-6</p> <p>It is 1931, and 12-year-old Hugo has spent the past year winding and fixing the clocks in a Paris train station. Since the deaths of his parents and his uncle, who used to hold the job he now occupies, Hugo has been trying to repair the only remembrance of his father—an automaton. This mechanical man, whose pen is poised over a piece of paper, draws a secret message from the past.</p> <p>Selznick craftily combines print text with crosshatch sketches, stills from Georges Méliès' films, and photographs from current events. Selznick startles the reader by stopping sentences in mid-action and then continuing the story with a series of drawings. Or he follows a picture with prose to continue the revealing of Hugo's story.</p> <p>The result of these juxtapositions is indeed cinematic, and the pages are framed in black to resemble a movie screen. Part historical fiction, part mystery, Selznick's work will continue to inspire readers and authors to invent.</p> <p>Jacqueline Bach Baton Rouge, LA</p>
<p><i>Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac</i> by Gabrielle Zevin Farrar Straus Giroux, 2007, 271 pp., \$17.00</p> <p>Amnesia/Discovery ISBN-13: 978-0-374-34946-2 ISBN-10: 0-374-34946-0</p> <p>She lost one coin toss, then lost four years. Suffering from amnesia, Naomi has forgotten everything—how to drive, her parents' divorce, all her friends. As she struggles to reconnect with her "previous" life, she begins to question her role in many parts of it—her boyfriend, her best friend, her relationship with her mother—and discovers more about herself than she knew before her head injury.</p> <p>Gabrielle Zevin develops believable characters in a believable story of a 21st century teen. I enjoyed following Naomi through her journey of self-discovery, and I would definitely recommend this book to my high school students, especially the girls.</p> <p>Elaine Cimcik Wichita, KS</p>	<p><i>The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones</i> by Cassandra Clare Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007, 485 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 1-4169-1428-5</p> <p>When Clary Fray witnesses a murder at a popular teen club, her life turns completely upside down. One of the murderers, the very handsome Jace, starts following Clary, and her mother disappears.</p> <p>Clary finds herself joining forces with Jace and the mysterious Shadow Hunters in a race against time. The evil Valentine is seeking a powerful talisman, and demons are trying to destroy Clary. Slowly, Clary discovers that everything she once believed about herself and her mother may be completely wrong. The surprising revelations will captivate and astound readers.</p> <p><i>City of Bones</i> is a suspenseful and captivating fantasy. Clare creates a vivid and descriptive world of wonder and mystery that exists beside our own. The plot twist will surprise even the most astute reader. This book is recommended for ages 14 and up.</p> <p>Karolinde Young, Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>The Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Stewart Family/Science Fiction Little Brown & Co., 2007, 485 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 0-316-05777-6</p> <p>Four orphans answer this ad: “ARE YOU A GIFTED CHILD LOOKING FOR SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES?” Reynie Muldoon, an extremely gifted 11-year-old, is a super puzzle-solver; his best buddy, also 11, George “Sticky” Washington, has a prodigious memory; Kate Wetherall solves problems with ingenious use of common kid items, especially her bucket and rope; and Constance Contraire’s behavior matches her name.</p> <p>After a series of tests, the four answer Mr. Benedict’s challenge to save the world from a criminal mastermind by agreeing to infiltrate the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened. Their vague mission is to discover the means Ledropttha Curtain uses to send subliminal messages to the world’s population. Curtin uses young adolescents to control the minds and inclinations of his students, and the foursome must band together as a team to overcome evil and thwart his plans.</p> <p>A lengthy read, the novel will appeal to puzzle-lovers and those who love fascinating, complex plots revealed with wry humor.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Little Rock, AR</p>	<p>On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History Through the Spirituals by Nikki Giovanni African-American/History/Song Candlewick Press, 2007, 116 pp., \$18.99 ISBN: 978-0-7636-2885-7</p> <p>In casual, opinionated, and passionate language, <i>On My Journey Now: Looking at African-American History Through the Spirituals</i> examines the deeply complex past of Africans on American soil. Beginning with the kidnappings of Africans in their homeland and concluding with the Fisk Jubilee Singers at one of America’s first African-American universities, Nikki Giovanni highlights how the development of soulful melodies connected and carried an entire population through a treacherous, but, ultimately, triumphant journey from the bonds of slavery to the freedom of the future.</p> <p>The brief book recounts African-American history with the creative aid of interspersed spirituals to tell the story of capture, passage, escape, and freedom. Giovanni also includes the complete lyrics of nearly 50 spirituals, as well as the names and descriptions of influential African-Americans throughout history.</p> <p>A suitable source for learning the storytelling power of song, this text would be a suitable supplement to language arts, social studies, and music curriculums.</p> <p>Jennifer Funk Raleigh, NC</p>
<p>Perfect Girl by Mary Hogan Coming of Age HarperTempest, 2007, 196 pp., \$16.99 ISBN: 0-06-084108-7</p> <p>Ruthie, a high school freshman, needs to know more about love and boyfriends—she needs to become the perfect girl. She can’t talk to her overprotective mother, who knits baby blankets for a living. What would she know about love; after all, Ruthie’s dad was a sperm donor and not somebody her mother was once in love with. She can’t talk to her best friend, Perry, about her situation either because he happens to be the one she is swooning over. They only person who can tell Ruthie how to snag a guy is her suave, urbane Aunt Marty, who she has only met once.</p> <p>Ruthie calls Aunt Marty, New York’s “Goddess of Love,” to travel back home to Delaware and assist her in becoming the perfect girl. The only problem is that her mom will be furious with Ruthie for seeking Marty’s help. Now, she’ll be faced with learning about more than becoming the perfect girl.</p> <p>Lara Copeland Topeka, KS</p>	<p>Picture Perfect by D. Anne Love Family Relationships/Forgiveness Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2007, 291 pp., \$16.99 ISBN-13: 978-0-689-87390-4 10: 0-689-87390-5</p> <p>When Phoebe’s mother decides to pursue a business opportunity that takes her away from home for several months, Phoebe fears that her “picture perfect” family will fall apart.</p> <p>The different family and personal relationships and their issues that ensue from this situation are well written and defined. Young readers can easily relate to the themes of betrayal, feeling unloved, and distrust. This book is written in first-person narrative by 14-year-old Phoebe, who involves the reader in all the different relationship issues that beset her during the year that her mother is absent from their home. As Phoebe learns, though, such relationships can only grow and thrive when love, trust, and forgiveness are part of the survival equation.</p> <p>The relevant events and topics contained in this bright new book will capture the interest of readers ages 12 and up.</p> <p>Peggy Jewell Wichita, KS</p>

<p><i>Raining Sardines</i> by Enrique Flores-Galbis Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 160 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Fantasy/Justice/Nationalism ISBN: 1-59643-166-0</p> <p>Enriquito and Ernestina, adolescents growing up in pre-revolutionary Cuba, take a fantastic journey together as they try to save the culture of their community.</p> <p>It begins when a psychic, Clara, floats across the bay on a large couch while the two friends are fishing. She explains that, "There are big changes coming soon, and the people in Havana are going to need all the help they can get." (9) Enriquito and Ernestina watch as Clara floats on to Havana, never realizing their lives will change forever. <i>Raining Sardines</i> could be a useful demonstration of creative writing, because it contains elements of magic realism. This book could also be useful to a classroom with any native Spanish speakers or students studying the Spanish language. Flores-Galbis incorporates many Spanish terms as a way to emphasize the Cuban culture. At the same time, the Spanish terminology throughout the text may make this novel a difficult read for students unfamiliar with the language.</p> <p>Valerie R. Frye Muncie, IN</p>	<p><i>The Red Shoe</i> by Ursula Dubosarsky Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 178 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>War/Family/Suicide/Depression ISBN-13: 978-1-59643-265-9</p> <p>As the war in Iraq touches more and more lives, it is vital for teachers to find a vehicle to trigger discussion about war and its aftermath; we need to think about its effects on the families of those who serve.</p> <p><i>The Red Shoe</i> could function as such a vehicle. It is the story of three Australian girls, Elizabeth, 15, Frances, 11, and Matilda, 6 growing up in the early 1950s. Their father, in the Navy and a veteran of World War II, struggles with his horror of the war, while their mother battles isolation and fear. The plot is loosely interwoven around actual events of the year as chronicled by newspaper clippings interspersed throughout the book.</p> <p>The narrative part of the story is told from the limited third-person point of view of the girls, primarily Matilda's. Through her eyes the reader enters the world of a beach home in a remote part of Sydney and meets the spy who lives next door. The family survives a personal crisis that mirrors the strange fairy tale of the red shoes and the chilling events of the Cold War.</p> <p>Virginia Beesley Quinter, KS</p>
<p><i>Right Behind You</i> by Gail Giles Little, Brown and Co., 2007, 292 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Realistic Fiction/Violence ISBN-10: 0-316-00203-8</p> <p>"On the afternoon of his seventh birthday, I set Bobby Clarke on fire." So opens the story of Kip McFarland, who, when he was 9 years old, was responsible for the murder of a child.</p> <p>Kip is committed to a psychiatric ward for violent youth offenders and receives years of therapy before being released to his father with a new name and the hope of starting over in another state. Kip's house has burned down during the time he's been locked up, and his father decides to move them far away, so no one will know of Kip's horrible deed.</p> <p>Will Kip, now living as "Wade," be able to live life normally on "the outside"? Will he burn others? Can he ever escape his past? This book will leave readers on the edges of their seats, turning pages frantically to get to the end.</p> <p>Jennifer Lee Louisville, KY</p>	<p><i>Silent Echoes</i> by Carla Jablonski Razor Bill, 2007, 344 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Science Fiction ISBN: 978-1-59514-082-1</p> <p>Lucy and her father are spiritualists, or at least that's what they tell their wealthy patrons. In truth, they're nothing more than talented scam artists. That changes when Lucy hears a voice from beyond seeking help. Soon Lucy is making predictions about the future and finds herself caught between two powerful and intriguing men.</p> <p>Lindsay thinks she's going crazy when she hears the voice calling her in the closet where she is hiding from her stepfather. When Lindsay hears the voice again, she finds herself admitted as a schizophrenic. Over time, Lindsay discovers Lucy is not a hallucination, but a voice from the past.</p> <p><i>Silent Echoes</i> is the story of two young women connected through time whose only chance for survival lies in each other. Jablonski weaves an intricate tale that makes much of the limited opportunities available to Lucy in the 1800s and Lindsay as the victim of abuse.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Sold by Patricia McCormick Hyperion, 2006, 264 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>Lakshmi is a poor 13-year-old girl. Her family lives in a small village on a mountainside in Nepal. She has dreams of the day she will marry Krishna, to whom she is betrothed. Lakshmi loves her mother and dreams of the day they can have a tin roof on their small hut.</p> <p>When monsoons destroy the family's crops, Lakshmi's stepfather tells her she is going to the city to work as a maid. Instead, Lakshmi is sold into prostitution. She must fight against the despair and hopelessness that engulf her just to survive every day.</p> <p><i>Sold</i> tells the story of one girl sold into a heinous and terrifying way of life. Although Lakshmi's story is a work of fiction, through her, McCormick tells the story of many real girls who find themselves caught in the same web. McCormick's short and powerful verse brings their stories of despair and hope to the reader and cannot be ignored. The book is based on excellent research and survivor interviews.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>The Theft and The Miracle by Rebecca Wade Katherine Tegen Books, 2007, 351 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>This captivating story is about a junior high girl named Hannah Price, who lives in southern England. She struggles academically and has a remarkably good skill for art. Her world whirls in unexpected mysteries when on one stormy day after classes she takes shelter in a cathedral. This is the same day as the theft of the statue in the cathedral, right after Hannah makes a remarkable drawing of the Virgin and Child statue.</p> <p>The police and others suspect her because of her unusual behavior from that day. Hannah and her good friend Sam struggle to find the mysteries behind what has happened, but then they find they are up against a force much darker than an ordinary thief.</p> <p>Sarah A. Gale Muncie, IN</p>
<p>The Train Jumper by Don Brown Roaring Brook Press, 2007, 128 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Set against the backdrop of the Great Depression, Ed "Collie" Collier embarks on a cross-country adventure, jumping from one freight train to another, in search of his older brother, Little Bill.</p> <p>After the death of their father in a lumberyard accident, Collie and Little Bill quit school and work to help the family make ends meet. But when an argument between Little Bill and their mother drives Collie's brother to run away, Collie is left to fend for himself. His solution is to jump a series of freight trains to track down his older brother and bring him home. Along the rails—and with the help of Scarecrow, a skinny, gray-haired hobo, and Ike, an African American drifter about Collie's own age—Collie encounters one obstacle after another: angry railroad workers, crooked policemen, scamming missionaries, hunger, racism, dust storms, and the inherent dangers of the fast moving trains themselves.</p> <p>An action-packed story told in the stark language of the times and brought to life with vivid imagery, the novel conjures up connections to both <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> and <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>.</p> <p>Matt Copeland Topeka, KS</p>	<p>The Traitor's Gate by Avi Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007, 351 pp., \$17.99</p> <p>Adventure/Mystery/Historical Fiction ISBN-13: 978-0-689-85335-7</p> <p>Renowned author Avi's latest novel, <i>The Traitor's Gate</i>, is a page-turning adventure that will not disappoint those with a penchant for adventure, mystery, and unwitting detective work.</p> <p>John Horatio Huffam tried to tell everyone he was only 14 years old. It was unreasonable to expect him to restore his family's already questionable dignity. But, within hours of his father's humiliating public arrest, John is nonetheless thrust into the midst of a mind-bending mystery involving gambling debt, high-stakes military secrets, and an eclectic mix of memorable, shadowy characters.</p> <p>Ominous trappings of 19th century London—the Tower of London with its Traitor's Gate and the neighboring Church of All Hallows—loom in the background as John and his unlikely companion Sary the Sneak race through the city's crowded, maze-like streets in search of the truth buried beneath a puzzling jumble of lies.</p> <p>Jennifer Funk Raleigh, NC</p>

<p><i>Twisted</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson Viking, 2007, 250 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Do the right thing. Be a man.</p> <p>Tyler Miller—self proclaimed “zit on the butt of the student body”—is trying to accomplish both of these things. The trouble is that when he does the right thing, it gets <i>Twisted</i>.</p> <p>An act of school vandalism originally gets Tyler noticed. Not only do people at school know his name, but Tyler’s efforts to pay off his debt to society help him acquire muscles with confidence to match. Even the popular girl, Bethany, seems interested in him. Things are looking up—until Tyler attends a party with the “popular” kids.</p> <p><i>Twisted</i> is about more than fitting in with the popular crowd. It is about Tyler learning how to fit in with himself and his family. It is about thoughts and actions determining who you are, instead of letting someone else decide that.</p> <p>Anderson’s first book from the male perspective is intriguing. Readers will find themselves rooting for Tyler as he battles social hierarchies and power structures with integrity and honor. Tyler discovers what becoming a man is truly all about.</p> <p>Jill and Ryan Adams Lakewood, CO</p>	<p><i>Victory</i> by Susan Cooper Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2006, 196 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Sam Robinson is young sailor aboard the <i>H.M.S. Victory</i>, Nelson’s flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Molly Jennings, an English girl, is forced to move to Connecticut when her mother marries a “Yank.” When Molly buys a tattered biography on Nelson, the two teens’ lives become connected across time.</p> <p>Sam begins life as a poor farm boy with an abusive father. When his mysterious Uncle Charlie offers him an apprenticeship making rope, Sam leaps at the opportunity. Both Sam and his uncle are pressed into the Royal Navy, and Sam begins his transformation into a loyal sailor. Lonely, homesick Molly longs to return to England. Her homesickness seems to create an obsession over Nelson and the <i>Victory</i>.</p> <p>Sam’s story is told with a powerful and mesmerizing voice, especially the fateful battle that costs Nelson his life. Molly’s story is not as interesting or well developed, but the book is enjoyable nonetheless. <i>Victory</i> is appropriate for grades 5-8.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>The White Tiger</i> by Paul Park Tom Doherty Assoc., 2007, 304 pp., \$25.95</p> <p>Baroness Nicola Ceausescu is battling to maintain her power amid political upheaval in Romania. The kingdom’s rightful heir, Miranda Popescu, has been magically transported from her parallel life in Berkshire County, accompanied by the Chevalier de Graz and Lieutenant Prochenko, (in the Berkshires, Peter and Andromeda), pledged by slain Prince Frederick von Schenck to protect his daughter. Baroness Ceausescu uses sorcery and cunning to destroy Miranda, who must navigate a hidden world of surreal dreamscapes inhabited by sorcerers and shape-shifters to discover the powers that will make her mission successful.</p> <p>Park spins a complex, exciting tale peopled by richly drawn characters—evil yet sympathetic, noble yet flawed. Readers might benefit from his two previous novels in this four-book sequence.</p> <p>Dana Waters Fowler, KS</p>	<p>Fantasy/Coming of Age ISBN: 0765315298</p> <p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> <i>Lori Goodson</i> <i>409 Cherry Circle</i> <i>Manhattan, KS 66503</i></p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagoodson@cox.net</i></p>



with Paulette Goodman, Joann Pompa, and Joan Arrowsmith

Spontaneous Combustion:

School Libraries Providing the Spark to Connect Teens, Books, Reading—and Even Writing!

For the last Library Connection column, media specialist Lisa Bowen from the Stapley Junior High library in Mesa, Arizona, described how her library is a vibrant, attractive hub of much school interest and activity. In the last few years, I have discovered many other libraries like Lisa's that are becoming a school focal point by directly involving teens and developing a variety of fun, enticing, and educational activities. In schools that have such libraries, teens discover a place to belong, a place to express themselves through reading and writing, a place to explore literature, and a place to encourage them to see that books and libraries are wonderful for research and entertainment alike.

In this issue, I am featuring three school libraries that have ignited the spark and have made promoting the library, sharing books and reading, and reaching out to their communities an adventure. One library is from a junior high, one from a middle school, and one from a senior high school. All three have connected teens with their libraries through some impressive programs and

activities that you might think about suggesting to your media specialist if you are a teacher, or implementing if you are a media specialist. Of course, you will also want tell any interested students about these ideas!

How Our Library Resource Center Became Center Stage

Paulette Goodman, Library Resource Center Director at Kennedy Junior High School in Naperville, Illinois, shared with me information about the inspiring things she has done through her school library media center:

"In creating a new library environment eighteen years ago, I knew that it needed to be interactive, allowing students to not only roam the stacks, but also to partake of a different menu – a menu of authors, storytellers, poets, musical groups, read-ins, contests and anything that kept them coming into the library and discovering its riches. Books are meant to crown a library's mantle, and through connecting them with the authors of those books, young adult readers

can develop a desire to continue the process of reading into their adult lives. So with that philosophy in mind as our library began, several years followed that were filled with a smattering of visiting authors. The number of these visits grew and grew, until we reached an average of about eight authors/poets/storytellers per school year, and I contract for additional presentations that are supplied by our local book vendor, Anderson's Bookstore in Naperville, Illinois.

"In preparation for each visit, teachers and students throughout the school read a copy of the author's work and plan to have their students come to the library for an author fest. The authors are often surprised by the seasoned questioners and the quality of the critical inquiries they receive. Teachers have also hopped on the bandwagon with three adult book discussions each year lead by me, complete with a catered lunch and sprinkled with lively discourse. Reading is our mantle, and we wear it proudly!

"Among our students, fantasy is the genre of choice, followed by adventure and science fiction.

Inspired by the author fests, student interest in these and other genres has reached such heights that a unique young authors group was formed, sporting the name ‘Screaming Pens.’ These young adults have committed themselves to writing now, and they each foresee a future that will include writing as its main focus, whether as an author, reporter or newspaper columnist.

“The shining jewel of each year’s activities takes place during National Poetry Month in April with a program entitled, ‘A Night at the Blue Iguana Café: A Poetry Blast!’ Young adult poets seem to come out of the woodwork, and students, parents, siblings, grandparents, and even former students come to enjoy this glistening night of poetry, music and café desserts. It’s a wonder to behold and leaves each participant with satisfied sighs.

“Library work is a passion for me, and it is exciting to see my efforts gain momentum through the years. Each book, author, reader, or performer leaves an indelible mark with memories lingering for years to come. They say I may never know what effect my library will have on the students in my school, but I have had some hints. Sometimes a former student meets me at a restaurant or train station and remembers something that was significant to him or her from my library program and its strong connection between reading and writing. It is then that I know that what is being done here goes beyond a moment’s pleasure, leaving a taste for literature and a love for libraries that defies extinction.”

“In preparation for each visit, teachers and students throughout the school read a copy of the author’s work and plan to have their students come to the library for an author fest. The authors are often surprised by the seasoned questioners and the quality of the critical inquiries they receive.”

“Small but Mighty” Fosters Contagious Enthusiasm

Joan Arrowsmith, Teacher-Librarian at Summit Ridge Middle School in Littleton, Colorado, shared her perspectives on the LLAMA Book Club:

“This group was formed to meet a need I felt to have something similar to a teen advisory board at the public library. I was trying to do promotions throughout the year by myself, and not too successfully. The name LLAMA, League of Library and Media Advisors, was created by an assistant principal in response to my plea for help on a name for the club. I didn’t want it to just be the Summit Ridge book club. It is listed as a school club in the document

that is handed out in the fall to all students. There are always lots of questions about LLAMA and what exactly its function is.

“I asked the club what they felt our mission and purpose was, and they said it was to ‘be with people who like books as much as we do.’ However, it goes beyond that as the members also reach out to other students in the school, as well as to the community. Events and promotions they have helped with include a book fair (it doubled my profits the first year they helped!), promoting National Library Week, and doing a used book sale. The leftover books were sent to the Hurricane Katrina area with a group of teachers who drove down to help during our spring break that year.

“Our young adults have helped me decide on prizes for contests and figured out what those contests should be, made posters promoting events throughout the school, and have even given up eating with their friends to collect money for Heifer International, an organization dedicated to eliminating world hunger. For this project, they raised enough spare change to buy four flocks of chickens! They also wanted to promote reading with younger students, so they arranged to go read to the kindergarten students at a nearby elementary school.

“For the past two years, they have been presenters at the Colorado Teen Literature Conference. They hear the special speakers, attend the programs offered, and participate in teen panels and discussions. All of this is done by a group of five! Sometimes there are only two or three students at our

For this project, they raised enough spare change to buy four flocks of chickens!

meetings. They are truly small, but mighty!!

“At our meetings, we share information about books that we’re reading or have just finished, promoting reading within the group. All the books can be different. This is not a book club where everyone reads the same book to discuss. They get enough of that in class. The book sharing is always the highlight of any meeting. Otherwise, we plan for whatever promotion or event is coming up. Additional ways we’ve learned about new books is to go to the public library or to a local bookstore for book talks about new and exciting titles.

“Advice the young adults and I have for others considering starting a group like ours includes:

- Pick a day when everyone can come. We meet on Fridays because that worked best for most of the kids.
- Meet weekly.
- Don’t just talk about books. Do other fun stuff like the Colorado Teen Literature Conference.
- Let the kids do as much as you are comfortable letting them do. I always try to let it be their club. In fact, I’ve tried to have them be the ones to run the meetings, which sometimes works. It helps to have some kind of agenda to follow. Usually the book sharing is the priority.

- Relax and have fun!

“I have thoroughly enjoyed sponsoring this club. I usually get some really awesome kids who join, and their enthusiasm is contagious. They have been a great help with so many things. I seem to always have a new group each year with maybe one or two repeaters, which has worked out just fine. It doesn’t get old for anyone that way. I highly recommend it.

“I asked the kids what their favorite thing about the club was, and without hesitation, one girl answered, ‘Making new friends.’”

Book Drives, T-shirts, and More: Friends of the Library at Corona del Sol High School

Joann Pompa, the Librarian at Corona del Sol High School in Tempe, Arizona, described the active and involved ten-member group in her library:

“I am co-sponsor of the club with Mrs. Gail Finney, who is our Information Specialist/Circulation Clerk. This is our second year as a club, and the teens are now officially student members of the Friends of the Library USA. The club is promoted in the school handbook and at orientation.

“The purpose of the CdS Friends of the Library Club is to promote our library programs as well as to perform community service projects. We meet every Monday afternoon for about one and one half hours working on ‘monthly themes’ and creating a warm, hospitable place to come and work or just ‘hang.’ Every student is welcome to join us, and each person’s dues of \$5 goes

toward the end-of-the-year banquet.

“We have six officers: President, Anne Osborne; Vice-President, Sarah Nagaratnam; Secretary, David Leitman; Treasurer, Federica Scarcella; Historian, Sarah Harvey; and Publicity Manager, Anthony Eftimeo. Anne had contacted the Thomas J. Pappas School for the Homeless of Tempe late last fall and asked if we could do anything to assist the staff and students, especially after a storm had devastated the library. The principal gave Anne a wish list of books, flashcards, and workbooks. To support the school, we sold candy and worked closely with Jamba Juice for our main fundraisers. We earned over \$1,200 for this project, and donated \$1,000 in Teaching Stuff and Changing Hands Bookstore gift certificates, \$500 from each business. We have also donated \$100 to our CdS National Honor Society chapter to help the Pappas School and visited a teaching supply store to purchase the requested materials for the school. Our goal next year is to try and raise \$1,500 for the Pappas School.

“This year, the club has also collected books in conjunction with the Student Council to help other needy children. Last year, we did a book drive for the Katrina victims, as well as collecting eye glasses for the Lion’s Club. Collecting the glasses for the Lion’s Club is an ongoing project.

“To promote reading among their peers, the teens develop monthly themes and do promotional activities for our school. Here are some examples:

- In the entrance lobby to our library, we have posted in cut-

out letters in the school colors of orange and yellow that say, 'One School . . . Many Readers!' The two halls that lead into the library have in large letters 'CdS' on one side and 'AZTECS' on the other and within these letters, we have pictures of students and faculty caught reading! It is a wonderful collage.

- The students have come up with fitting themes such as 'Take a Break! Read a Book!' which was just used in March when spring break occurred. Last year, in March 2006, we had, 'Reading is your lucky charm!'
- We promoted the 'ONE BOOK. ONE MONTH. ONE GOAL' program for April. The 2007 'One Book AZ' selection was *Going Back to Bisbee* by Richard Shelton. The club purchased several copies of the books for the faculty and students to read for this theme.
- Our T-shirt theme this year is, 'Reading is an International Affair.' On the back of the T-shirt we have the word 'READ' in the languages taught here at Corona del Sol, plus all the English Language Learner students' languages!
- The students help to promote books by using our display cases in the library and setting up books related to that monthly theme on carts.
- The students also make posters for the AZTYKES, our 3- to 4-year-olds who attend a day care here, for their weekly reading themes. Club members are excited about helping the little ones to develop an early passion for reading.

"Students who participate in

the club get special credit for their participation. They must put in 20 hours, 10 hours each semester, by attending weekly meetings and helping out in the library for our community service needs. We have an 'awards banquet' at the end of the school year at a local restaurant where Mrs. Finney and I hand out certificates and small tokens of appreciation. After earning hours with us, students may earn community service hours through National Honor Society projects.

"Each officer in the club has special duties that help make everything gel. The President runs our meetings and coordinates with the Pappas School for its teachers' needs. She helps out everywhere she can. Our Vice-President fills in for the President when needed and is a very talented artist. She helps with the displays and AZTYKE posters. The Secretary takes notes. He is the 'gopher' of the group, doing just about anything he can. The Treasurer collects our money and helps with the themes. The Historian takes pictures. She works with Mrs. Finney in keeping our bulletin boards up-to-date with interesting articles that highlight our school and/or students. She works on the AZTYKE posters and the lobby displays. The Publicity manager helps make the posters and/or flyers for our fundraisers. He also fills in wherever he can. The members are just fantastic! We are small, yet hard-working!

"The members of the CdS Friends of the Library Club were anxious to share some of their comments with me, too:

"It felt really heartwarming to help out children who don't have much at all. I want to encourage

students all over to join their Friends of the Library club, or to start one if they don't have one.'

"We have done many things both inside and outside the Corona community to give aid and to promote reading and literacy.'

"All the members are totally committed to Friends of the Library and contributed their hard work and talents. Of course, we had a lot of fun too! We watched Harry Potter one day after school and ate pizza!'

"This club promotes great ideas, fun, and a great creative environment. Even though I'm graduating this year, this club showed me so many things and I hope that future members will enjoy it as much as I did.'

"I feel I that I had a part in helping spread knowledge, because through our hard work we helped spread knowledge of our library . . . I know that we all have busy academic schedules, but we still dedicated our time to do something bigger than ourselves.'

"More people like to go to the library now. One of my friends actually told me how she liked the library once the place started to be decorated. It is changing from a deserted place to the focal point of the school. It makes me feel better that people are appreciating our work.'"

There you have it: Three interesting examples of school libraries with a wide variety of relevant and enjoyable events and activities, including lots of teen participation. These libraries connect students, books, reading, and writing in ways that leave a lasting impression on their schools and communities. When you hear

about students and libraries like these, you can certainly envision many lifelong readers, learners, and library users developing as a result!

Diane P. Tuccillo is the former Young Adult Coordinator at the City of Mesa Library in Arizona, is ALAN's Past-President, and is the author of Library Teen Advisory Groups: A VOYA Guide

(Scarecrow, 2005). She also does other writing projects, presents workshops, and teaches virtually at the college level.

Paulette Goodman is the Library Resource Center Director at Kennedy Junior High School, Naperville No. 203 Community Unit School District, in Naperville, Illinois.

Joan Arrowsmith is a Teacher-Librarian at Summit Ridge Middle School, Jefferson County Public Schools, in Littleton, Colorado.

Joann Pompa is a Teacher-Librarian at Corona del Sol High School in Tempe, Arizona.

Briar Rose:

Jane Yolen's Magic Touch Revealed

If you ask me,
I would have to say
all the world's magic
comes directly from the mouth. (15-18)

—(from the poem “‘Once Upon a Time,’ She Said” by Jane Yolen)

As we grow older and supposedly wiser, most of us put away fairy tales and folklore as if they were merely childish things. But contemporary sages such as Joseph Campbell and Jane Yolen urge us to reclaim our birthright to this deep-rooted genre for our children and ourselves. Far more than fanciful stories to dream on, fairy tales and folklore are the primal language for communicating fundamental beliefs from one generation to the next throughout the centuries.

Dubbed “America’s Hans Christian Anderson” by many, Yolen speaks authoritatively about humanity’s basic need for fairy tales, fantasy, and folklore, and she contributes voluminously to that body of work. In her 1981 book of essays *Touch Magic—Fantasy, Faerie and Folklore in the Literature of Childhood* (updated in 2000), Yolen elucidated the vital functions and attributes of fairy tales and lore. Here we explore her haunting,

modern-day, holocaust novel *Briar Rose* (1992), revealing it as the full-bodied incarnation of her insights regarding the elements of a true fairy tale, which she so artfully argued in *Touch Magic*. (An American Library Association Best Book for Young

Adults, *Briar Rose* was originally published for adults but has become a popular young adult book selection.)

In *Briar Rose*, a mysterious, fractured account of the Sleeping Beauty tale is entwined with a riveting, classic search for identity amidst the historic horror of a Nazi extermination camp. Fulfilling a deathbed promise, a compassionate young woman embarks on her personal quest to exhume the cryptic past of her beloved, eccentric grandmother who steadfastly clung to the belief that she was the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, Briar Rose. The story of Becca’s search is compelling on its own, and the strangely disturbing fairy tale that her grandmother

The story of Becca’s search is compelling on its own, and the strangely disturbing fairy tale that her grandmother compulsively recreated—both lovingly and sometimes fiendishly—over the years, informs us that this story is dark and perhaps treacherous.

compulsively recreated—both lovingly and sometimes fiendishly—over the years, informs us that this story is dark and perhaps treacherous. The tale calls Becca (and the reader) to explore its depths and find herself among the shadows. The reader “hears” Gemma’s tale in flashbacks, presented in pendulum-like fashion, in alternating chapters of *Briar Rose*. The story swings back and forth in time, recounting the stories Becca heard as a child and in turns moving to the adult Becca’s story. This to and fro pulsation sets up the reader for seismic shifts of the heart and mind to come. In perfect counterpoint, each revelation of the tale is followed by a chapter in which Becca uncovers clues that painstakingly unlock Gemma’s past and support her outlandish story. In each chapter pair, deeper renderings of Gemma’s tale and her past emerge.

In *Touch Magic*, Yolen opens with a call for every child to be steeped in the traditions of myth, legends, and folklore, pronouncing it a “birthright.” She

contends that children have an inherent developmental need for these stories, which serve four critical functions in the education of every child. First, they “provide a landscape of allusion” by which children will begin to recognize archetypes and patterns that they must understand. The second function these stories serve is to help children view another

culture “from the inside out” and understand that stories and cultures build on the stories and cultures that preceded them. Yolen says, “This is mythic archaeology, probing now for then, splitting the present to find the past. It works because humans have always had, in folklorist Joseph Campbell’s fine phrase, ‘a long backward reach’” (17). Thirdly, symbolic functions serve as a useful therapy tool (as promoted by Bruno Bettelheim), helping individuals understand the human experience and themselves. Yolen introduces the fourth function as the most important: “The great archetypal stories provide a framework or model for an individual’s belief system.

[. . .] The tales and stories handed down to us from the cultures that preceded us were their most serious, succinct expressions of the accumulated wisdom of those cultures” (18). It is wisdom perfected and distilled as it looped through the centuries and became expressed unconsciously as metaphor.

Yolen’s *Briar Rose* exemplifies all these functions. It is a story that cultivates awareness of the elemental archetypes and allegories without requiring the vocabulary. As a child, Becca certainly was endowed with her “birthright” and steeped in story. Both Becca and *Briar Rose* readers experience all four functions within Gemma’s tale and Becca’s own story. Yolen paints a full “landscape of allusion” packed with archetypes, symbols and pattern, some quickly recognizable and others whose meanings surface only later, perhaps with a sudden shock of awareness. Becca’s quest leads her from her home in Massachusetts to the remains of a castle in Poland. This is mythic archaeology at its finest—“probing now for then,” as Yolen says, and then for now. This section of the story is set near Chelmno, Poland, the actual site of a former castle-turned-extermination camp. It was here that a youthful Gemma was gassed and dumped into a mass grave. In Chelmno, Becca meets the hero Josef (an allusion to Joseph Campbell?) whose memories inform her and provide that “long backward reach” to solve the mystery and resuscitate Gemma’s long-smothered story. It was this same Josef Potocki, a man of princely lineage, called Prince by his band of partisans in the woods, who breathed life back into the cursed, 16-year-old, “sleeping” princess—Gemma.

Briar Rose also clearly extols the third function: the therapeutic merits of fairy tales. It was the Sleeping Beauty tale that gave Gemma an identity when gassing by the Nazis seized her mind and her memory; Gemma’s tale was an effective, repressive tool to hold back the demons, allowing her to leave her horrors behind and start anew. Readers also witness the therapeutic nature of the sharing of the story and the satisfaction of the quest as these vehicles deliver Becca—helping her grieve Gemma’s death and discover her own identity, as well as her grandmother’s. (Becca’s editor and advisor Stan also reveals his need for shared story while divulging his own cloaked lineage.)

However, it is the fourth and most important function that Yolen discusses at length throughout

Yolen’s *Briar Rose* exemplifies all these functions. It is a story that cultivates awareness of the elemental archetypes and allegories without requiring the vocabulary.

several essays in *Touch Magic*: fairy tales and lore as the distillate of the passed-down stories, crystallized into a framework for living, expressed unconsciously through metaphor. And metaphor is the language, the heart, of *Briar Rose*.

In her essay “The Lively Fossil” (in Part One of *Touch Magic*) Yolen explains, “The old stories had a habit of changing as they passed from one tongue to another, kept alive by some sort of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation” (21), and later, “From mouth to ear to mouth, the old tales went. It was a generational art, a regenerative art, passed on and on” (22). These images are the core of *Briar Rose*. Like storytellers before her, Gemma changed the tale to suit her purpose. Becca’s two older sisters came to resist the strangeness of Gemma’s story, as did many others, not wanting to recognize its shadows. But Becca—the classic, good, fairytale protagonist—listened with her heart and was compelled to probe the story’s depths and pass it on in her own way, “from mouth to ear to mouth” (a phrase that appears repeatedly throughout *Briar Rose* and much of Yolen’s other work). One can’t help but see the parallel structure of Yolen’s words in *Touch Magic* “from its misty origins to the contemporary rendition” as they relate to *Briar Rose*. Gemma’s story was clouded in mist; it was frequently observed and integral to her tale; only later do we realize that the mist was the Nazi gas. And, this story of *Briar Rose* is certainly “the contemporary rendition.” Particularly recognizable in *Briar Rose* is that image of “mouth-to-mouth resuscitation” as Josef awakens the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood. Furthermore, we can see this story was changed by the culture—the atrocities and the legacy of the Nazis as the powerful “erosion/eruption.”

Yolen explores this passage of story in *Touch Magic*, “The best of the old stories spoke to the listener because they spoke not just to the ears but to the heart as well” (25). This motif presents itself in Becca—she who listened with her heart was the one who truly heard. (It is also true for this reader; this is a story whose images and symbols reappeared frequently in dreams and periods of near-wakefulness, sometimes gently and other times jarringly, spawning its wisdom.) Yolen says:

Storytelling is our oldest form of remembering the promises we have made to one another and to our various gods,

and the promises given in return; it is a way of recording our human emotions and desires and taboos. [. . .]

Further, the best new stories have something serious to say about the writer and his or her particular world. All writers write about themselves, just as the old storytellers chose to tell stories that spoke to and about themselves. They call it the world, but it is themselves they portray. The world of which they write is like a mirror that reflects the inside of their hearts, often more truly than they know. (25-26)

Gemma’s life ends, and Becca’s quest begins with an outright promise. The fulfillment of the promise in effect does record the emotions, desires, and taboos—Gemma’s, Becca’s, our culture’s, and Yolen’s, too, particularly as they relate to the Holocaust. Toward her closing of “The Lively Fossil,” Yolen quotes G. K. Chesterton, “If you really read the fairy tales, you will observe that one idea runs from one end of them to the other – the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition. This idea, which is the core of ethics, is the core of the nursery tale” (27). This is certainly the core of *Briar Rose* (though it is hardly a nursery tale): Peace cannot exist until the dark shadows have been exposed and stripped of their power.

In her *Touch Magic* essay “Once Upon A Time,” Yolen recounts the wolf and Red Riding Hood’s ritual litany of “Oh, Grandmother, what big ears you have . . .” and describes the listening child’s realization that “Something else, something sinister, is lurking under the bedclothes” (32). Readers observe Becca occasionally feeling that startling recognition as her grandmother spins her twisted Sleeping Beauty tale. Something is palpably wrong and frightening in her grandmother’s words. Yolen continues in “Once Upon A Time:” “But to filter out the opacities for the child

However, it is the fourth and most important function that Yolen discusses at length throughout several essays in *Touch Magic*: fairy tales and lore as the distillate of the passed-down stories, crystallized into a framework for living, expressed unconsciously through metaphor.

reader is to rob the tale of its magic. And this is a loss for the adult reader, too. If a story is totally transparent, it has no interest beyond that first reading or hearing” (36). Gemma certainly did not shield her young listeners from the shadows—although she never fully revealed their nature (to her listeners or herself)—and that was the pull that kept Becca wanting more. Yolen reminds us in *Touch Magic*:

Look back into folklore and legend, myth and religion, and you will find much of the emphasis is on the shadow. A shadowless man is a monster, a devil, a thing of evil. A man without a shadow is soulless. A shadow without a man is a pitiable shred. Yet together, light and dark, they make a whole. And these light/dark chiaroscuro figures walking about a magical landscape illumine all our lives. (36)

As does Gemma illumine ours. Yolen revisits and expounds on this theme again in the essay “The Mask on the Lapel:”

Every person’s father is a dragon—and also a dragon slayer, the two eternal opposites. Only very special fathers have the ability to integrate the two sides, and only very special children can actually see that integration. Mother and step-mother, godmother and witch, hero and villain, over and over the contrapuntal dance goes on. And so the children in their turn become dragons—and dragon-slayers. (66-67)

It is clear that Becca is one of those rare children who can integrate the shadow and light and accept the dark side of her grandmother.

A reader of *Briar Rose* likely feels a flash of recognition upon reading the title of Chapter Four of *Touch Magic*, “The Eye and The Ear.” Stronger flashes occur while reading Yolen’s opening words: “Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a child who loved to listen to stories. [. . .] We were there, all of us, caught up in the centrifugal force of the spinning story. And we would not be let go until the teller finished and the tale was done” (41-42). Here Yolen is describing herself as a young girl, and, interestingly, perfectly describing the child Becca, as well. Becca

resembles Yolen herself to a great degree in her interests and background: residence in Hatfield, Massachusetts; education at Smith College; journalism work; reading preferences (Robin McKinley’s *Beauty*); and Berlin family name; to list some of many commonalities. Yolen next proceeds to disclose the magic of the storyteller:

Each storyteller has the ability to select [. . .] the glass mountain that must be climbed, the thorny bush that must be passed or the ring or sword or crown to be won. The storyteller is an artist, and selection is essential to art. There are thousands upon thousands of characters, thousands upon thousands of details, thousands upon thousands of motifs. To know which one to choose requires a kind of magical touch, and that is what characterizes the great storytellers. (46)

This description is an intimate portrait of Yolen herself, and also of Gemma, with the magical story she spun of mystery and metaphor. This passage calls to mind the careful collection of telling talismans Gemma left behind in the carved wooden box (graced with a rose and a briar) that would ultimately lead Becca to the truth. The details Yolen selected for that paragraph also spoke foretellingly of *Briar Rose* (which wasn’t published for another 11 years): Becca’s story opens with her chugging up a “slippery hill” (a glass mountain) in her trusty, little car to attend to—and ultimately rescue—Gemma, who lies dying, restrained on the uppermost floor of a nursing home in a corner room (like a princess imprisoned in the high turret of a castle); the thorny bush is the briar thicket surrounding the sleeping princess, as well as the barbed wire that punctuates the ironclad grip of Chelmno’s walls; there is a man’s ring of unknown origin bearing the initials JMP and date 1928; and there’s a crown, too, although it is a figurative one, to be won.

Yolen continues in “The Eye and The Ear:” “Thus humans both shaped and were shaped by the oral tradition. The passage of culture went from mouth to ear to

Chelmno was a lesser-known Nazi camp, conceived solely for extermination, where 320,000 people were gassed in vans and dumped in mass graves. Only four men—no women—survived to tell of the terror there. In sharing this true story strengthened by allegory, Yolen shines glaring light on that dark evil, informing our culture.

mouth” (46). Gemma and Becca and those who hear Becca’s story, *Briar Rose* readers included, are shaped by that story and are an integral part of the passage of culture “from mouth to ear to mouth.” This is, in fact, true. Although Gemma is a fictitious character, Chelmno was real. Chelmno was a lesser-known Nazi camp, conceived solely for extermination, where 320,000 people were gassed in vans and dumped in mass graves. Only four men—no women—survived to tell of the terror there. In sharing this true story strengthened by allegory, Yolen shines glaring light on that dark evil, informing our culture.

Yolen further explains her craft in the fifth *Touch Magic* essay titled “Touch Magic:” “Using archetypes and symbolic language, they [fairy tales] externalize for the listener conflicts and situations that cannot be spoken of or explained or as yet analyzed. They give substance to dreams” (50). And she provides this caveat: “So when the modern mythmaker, the writer of literary fairy tales, dares to touch the old magic and try to make it work in new ways, it must be done with the surest of touches. [. . .] Unless the image, character, or situation borrowed speaks to the author’s condition, as cryptically and oracularly as a dream, folklore is best left untapped” (51).

Perhaps this is why *Briar Rose* did not appear until 11 years after *Touch Magic*. One takes great risk in treating the ultimate human tragedy of the Holocaust in tandem with a fairy tale; magic is surely required to create such a ghastly treasure that will speak the truth for those who cannot or will not.

“The Mask on the Lapel,” the following essay in *Touch Magic*, announces the great words of power that Yolen declares are largely absent from adult vocabularies: “Good. Evil. Courage. Honor. Truth. Hate. Love” (62). This is certainly the stuff of fairy tales. Yolen proclaims that “with these magical words, anything is possible: the transformation of human into beast, dead into living, night into day, year now into year then or year 3000” (62). Following this imagery, *Briar Rose* witnesses humans turned into Nazi beasts, humans treated as less than beasts, Gemma transformed from dead to living (literally and figuratively), a fairy tale transported into the far future, and the darkness in the vans of Chelmno brought to the light of day. *Briar Rose* conjures great acts of “Good. Evil. Courage. Honor. Truth. Hate. Love.” Readers discover that little Becca’s favorite part of Gemma’s Sleeping Beauty tale

is when the prince asks the duplicitous peasant, “But do you know courage?” (77) and the prince plunges himself into the thorns to free the princess, foreshadowing Becca’s own courage in recovering her grandmother’s past and rescuing her own future.

It is the chapter called “Tough Magic” in which connections to *Briar Rose* become crystal clear. Yolen states, “[. . .] it is not the expectation of a happy ending that carries us on. Rather it is the unraveling of the story itself; it is the traveling and not the destination” (71). In *Briar Rose*, when Stan warned Becca not to expect Gemma’s story to have a happy ending, Becca said simply: “I won’t. How happy can it be? Gemma’s dead, after all” (94). This young woman was raised on a fairy tale that lacked the traditional happy ending; why would real life be more charmed? Becca never discovered her grandmother’s inherited family name, so the bad fairy’s curse on all who bore her name held fast; but, at the same time, Becca did reveal her grandmother’s story as true, and that was enough. Yolen continues in this vein in “Tough Magic,” discussing “the joy behind the shadow:”

The same rule greets us in every age, in every mythology: without evil and the knowledge of its possible continuance, there can be no hope for redemption. This is what every memorable story, every tale of dimension is about: the working through evil in order to come at last to the light.

[. . .] Stories of “Tough Magic” are never easy stories, nor should they be. As they call upon the possible sacrifice of hero or heroine, they ask a similar sacrifice on the reader’s part: “Hold on,” they cry out. “Delve deep,” they call. “Dare to reach out and touch the face of the unknown.” (72)

Gentle, sweet, determined Becca is the unlikely hero here—with the love, faith, honor and courage to confront the darkness when others will not. (Josef and Stan, too, have been down other roads as unlikely heroes.)

Yolen finally closes in on the subject of “Tough Magic” and her own need to light the darkness:

It is important for children to have books that confront the evils and do not back away from them. Such books can provide a sense of good and evil, a moral reference point. If our fantasy books are not strong enough [. . .] then real stories, like those of Adolph Hitler’s evil deeds, will seem like so much slanted news, not to be believed.

Why do so many fantasies shy away from Tough Magic? [. . .] Because writing about Tough Magic takes courage on the author’s part as well. To bring up all the dark, unknown, frightening images that live within each of us

and to try to make some sense of them on the page is a task that takes courage indeed. It is not an impersonal courage. Only by taking great risks can the tale succeed. (73-74)

Is Yolen speaking of the courage that she must summon to make the journey she knows she must, to tell the true story of this horror and sufficiently endow

Is Yolen speaking of the courage that she must summon to make the journey she knows she must, to tell the true story of this horror and sufficiently endow it with allegory to give it the full power it deserves?

it with allegory to give it the full power it deserves? Here in *Touch Magic* Yolen highlighted the framework for the powerful and true tale of *Briar Rose*. Yolen's first story about the Holocaust was a young adult novel, the critically acclaimed and multiple award-winning *The Devil's Arithmetic*, published in 1988. The research and writing for it took several years. After that emotionally wrenching writing endeavor, Yolen swore she would never write another

Holocaust book. Fortunately, she had a convincing editor who persuaded her that this story of the Sleeping Beauty should be told. On her Internet homepage, Yolen says her idea for *Briar Rose* was inspired by the documentary program "Shoah," where she first learned about Chelmno: a concentration camp housed in a castle, surrounded by barbed wire, where people were gassed to death. The image of Sleeping Beauty came to her and would not let her go. And so it was Jane Yolen who resuscitated the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood in a form to speak deeply about our culture—its triumphs and its terrors.

Yolen consummates *Touch Magic* (the 1981 edition) with these words:

Knowing that, that magic has consequences, whether it is the magic of wonder, the magic of language, or the magic of challenging a waiting mind, then it is up to the artist, the writer, the storyteller to reach out and touch that awesome magic. Touch magic—and pass it on.

It will be changed by that passage, of course. But so, in the passing, will we. And so, too, will our *listeners*, those who come after. (91)

And so the magical human story continues, as Yolen refrains: "From mouth to ear to mouth," fairy tales—penetratingly true—speak across the ages.

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Pushing Good Books:

Alleen Pace Nilsen, Winner of the 2006 Hipple Award

As Alleen Nilsen pushes her heavily laden book cart down the halls of the Language and Literature Building on her way to class at Arizona State University, she is often lovingly teased about a resemblance to the librarian in the *Shawshank Redemption* film. “That’s not such a bad image to have,” Alleen laughs. And truth be told, seldom do her fellow passengers on the elevator fail to skim the colorful and intriguing covers and ask about this book or that book, often even asking to borrow one. Quick with a two-minute summary/review, Alleen most often says “Sure. Just bring it back to LL 215 when you’re finished,” unless they are asking for the newest Harry Potter book or for one of Stephenie Myer’s vampire stories, books which could fly off the English education bookshelves before Alleen could show them to her students.

“Guardian of Young Adult Literature” might be a good title for Alleen as someone who has served the genre well for many years. Like the late Dr. Hipple, for whom the ALAN Service Award is named, she was one of the founders of ALAN and has been a constant nurturer to the organization from its inception. On her way from Arizona to the NCTE Convention in Philadelphia in 1973, Alleen stopped off at the University of Iowa just long enough



to defend her Ph.D. dissertation, which was on the subject of sexist language in school materials.

The newly graduated Dr. Nilsen then proceeded east to the NCTE meeting in Philadelphia 34 years ago, mainly to work with the Women’s Committee, but she happened to see a handmade sign inviting anyone inter-

ested in adolescent literature to attend an organizational meeting. She went to the meeting and, as Robert Frost said, “and that has made all the difference.” Only a dozen or so people attended that very first meeting, and there might never have been an Assembly on Literature for Adolescents since the rules for forming NCTE Assemblies required twenty members.

Alleen went to work. She signed up her new friend, fellow University of Iowa graduate and Arizona State University professor, Ken Donelson, and her old

friend and University of Iowa professor, Bob Carlsen, and paid their two-dollar membership fees. Soon she was out in the hallway, canvassing for members and lending a dollar here or there to reach the necessary 20 members. Because of such generosity, she was appointed to be the treasurer. By the next NCTE meeting held in New Orleans in 1974, there were enough members that Alleen was

Soon she was out in the hallway, canvassing for members and lending a dollar here or there to reach the necessary 20 members.

afraid she would get the money confused, and so she asked if she could do the newsletter instead. The group was thrilled to have a volunteer, and she immediately went home and asked Ken if he would be the co-editor so that they could use Arizona State University's bulk-rate postage permit.

Ken also saw the potential for great things for young adult literature, and between 1974 and 1978, they developed the *ALAN Newsletter*. A major contributor to ALAN's growth

at the time may have been that to use bulk-rate postage, a minimum of 200 copies had to be mailed. Once someone's name was on the list, they never took them off. Based on their work as ALAN co-editors, Ken and Alleen applied to be co-editors of the *English Journal*. When they got this job, they turned the newsletter over to Guy Ellis at the University of Georgia.

Inspired by the success of these two partnerships, Dr. Donelson proposed the duo write a scholarly book on young adult literature. He went to Scott-Foresman publishers, who were already well known for their

textbooks in children's literature, and *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, currently the bestselling textbook on young adult literature, was born. *LFTYA* was the first comprehensive textbook used in English Departments, Colleges of Education, and Schools of Library Science. The first edition came out in 1980 and cost \$10.95, about one-tenth of its present price. *LFTYA* will soon be in its eighth edition and has been used at colleges in every state in the union, as well as in England, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

Alleen's contributions to ALAN and to the field of young adult literature have continued these 34 years. She was president of ALAN in 1978 and won the

ALAN Award in 1987. She was also recognized by the International Reading for lifetime contributions to reading and children with the Arbuthnot Award in 2005. Alleen has been a regular presenter at the ALAN Workshop, sometimes alone, sometimes with her husband, Don, and sometimes with ASU students. Dr. Nilsen recently authored a book on one of the most popular and most loved authors of young adult fiction, Joan Bauer, *Joan Bauer: Teen Reads, Student Companions to Young Adult* (Greenwood, 2007), but her most original contribution to YA studies may be an even more recent book, *Names and Naming in Young Adult Literature* (Scarecrow, 2007), coauthored with her husband, Don, Professor of Linguistics and also in the English Department at ASU. *Names* is the latest in Scarecrow Press's Studies in Young Adult Literature Series, edited by Patty Campbell. It illustrates how skilled writers use names for more than identification. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of naming ranging from having fun (M. E. Kerr, Gary Paulsen, Louis Sachar, and Polly Horvath) to establishing imagined settings (Yann Martel, Orson Scott Card, and Ursula K. Le Guin), and from building a dual audience (Daniel Handler and the Lemony Snicket books) to establishing tone and mode (Robert Cormier and Francesca Lia Block). What Alleen most wanted to establish in the book is that the best YA authors create their books with consummate skill and care.

This reflects Alleen's belief that the field of young adult literature is now so rich with both authors and scholars, that our next step should be to focus on establishing criteria for measuring quality and for working to advertise and promote the books that teachers can use to help students advance in their development of literary appreciation. She laughs at herself for sometimes being viewed as a "kiddie lit groupie," i.e. a cheerleader, rather than a "respected scholar," i.e., a critic. But all in all, she feels fortunate to be working and teaching in a field where it is possible to know authors who are *alive* in more than one sense of the word. She also loves working in a field that is so enjoyable that even when she's tired she can "Keep on Reading!"

Alleen Nilsen is very much loved by her students, undergraduate and graduate alike. In the state of Arizona, she and her husband, Don, recently received The Arizona English Teachers' Association Distinguished Service Award, and as a Ph.D. advisor in

Alleen's contributions to ALAN and to the field of young adult literature have continued these 34 years. She was president of ALAN in 1978 and won the ALAN Award in 1987. She was also recognized by the International Reading for lifetime contributions to reading and children with the Arbuthnot Award in 2005.

ASU's English Education program, she is always willing to read student articles and make suggestions. In the acknowledgements to his dissertation, recent ASU doctoral graduate Bryan Gillis, wrote: "I would not be a published author if it were not for the constant encouragement of Dr. Alleen Pace Nilsen. She is always available when I need advice on writing an article and will never let me submit my work until it exceeds even my own expectations . . . One of my goals . . . has to been to make Dr. Nilsen proud of my contributions to the ASU English education program." Alleen's former students now hold tenured and

tenure-track positions in institutions of higher learning including Arizona State University West, University of Louisiana at Monroe, University of Northern Colorado, Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, and Kennesaw State University in Georgia.

*Thanks to ASU doctoral student **Lisa Arter** for gathering information for this piece. Ms. Arter is a doctoral student and faculty associate in English Education at Arizona State University. Ms. Arter supervises student teachers and works in the ASU Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence.*

2006 ALAN Award Winners:

Virginia Monseau and Marc Aronson

J Jim Blasingame had the opportunity to visit with both 2006 ALAN Award winners by email. Here, those interviews give us insights into the philosophies and motivations behind two careers that have impacted our thinking and our profession.

Virginia Monseau

JB: You have made so very many contributions to English education (and so, also, to young people, teachers, schools, authors, librarians and parents). You were the editor of *English Journal*, president of ALAN, and editor or author of so many important books, such as *Missing Chapters: Ten Pioneering Women in NCTE and English Education*, *Reading Their World*, *Responding to Young Adult Literature*, *A Curriculum of Peace: Selected Essays from English Journal*, *Presenting Ouida Sebestyen*, and *A Complete Guide to Young Adult Literature: Over 1000 Critiques and Synopsis from the ALAN Review*. Which of these many contributions did you find especially rewarding?

VM: Wow, that's a difficult question, Jim. Each one of those projects has been special to me in a different way, so if you'll bear with me, I'll address each one briefly. *Missing Chapters* was my first "big" contribution to the field, and coediting the book with my friend Jeanne Gerlach was a wonderful adventure



in collaborative writing. As early members of NCTE's Women's Committee (as it was called then), we wrote together at the sentence level, meeting at each other's homes, enjoying/struggling with the pleasures and pains of writing and editing. It was truly a bonding experience. *Reading Their*

World, another collaborative effort, gave me a chance to publish a book with my longtime colleague and friend, Gary Salvner, whose teaching I have always admired.

Presenting Ouida Sebestyen was my first solo effort, and the joy of traveling to Colorado and spending time with Ouida Sebestyen is one of my fondest memories. I interviewed her as we walked among the flora and fauna of the foothills near Boulder, and we rode there in an old Volkswagen bus driven by her son Corbin. What an experience!

Doing the research for and writing of *Responding to Young Adult Literature* gave me a chance to go back to my dissertation roots by returning to the ninth-grade classroom and working with students and teachers there. It also allowed me to draw on my experience with an adult YA literature book club in which I participated with some of my Youngstown State University colleagues and local high school teachers. *A Curriculum of Peace* was a labor of love, giving me the opportunity to share with teachers the many fine articles on teaching for peace that had been published over the years in the *English Journal*.

Becoming president of ALAN, of course, was a dream come true. I remember sitting in the audience at the ALAN Workshops and watching with awe as former presidents so effortlessly (it seemed) presided over the proceedings. I never dreamed then that I would some day be one of them.

Finally, I must say that becoming editor of the *English Journal* was the highlight of my career—the most challenging and rewarding professional experience of my life! Again, I had been so much in awe of previous *EJ* editors that I never could even countenance having that coveted position. I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity. It really did change my life.

JB: If you were to characterize the evolution of ALAN over the years, how would you do so?

VM: I'm so proud of the way ALAN has evolved from a tiny organization with a mimeographed newsletter to the polished, influential force it has become today. I believe that the publication of such books as S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* and Paul Zindel's *The Pigman* helped ALAN to be taken seriously as a viable professional organization with important things to say about literature for young people—views that were not being voiced by any other organization at the time. And ALAN is *still* the only professional organization devoted exclusively to young adult literature, its teaching, and its criticism. Seeing the attendance at the ALAN Workshop each year is evidence of how much teachers need and value this wonderful organization.

JB: What are your strongest memories of ALAN and the ALAN Workshop? What humorous moments and what emotionally moving moments stand out in your memory?

VM: My strongest memories involve listening to authors like Robert Cormier, Will Hobbs, and Chris Crutcher speak—especially in the early years. I remember sitting behind Will Hobbs at a workshop in Seattle, when Betty Poe was president, and not knowing who he was until he got up and took the stage to speak. I immediately went out and bought two of his books—and I've been buying them ever since. And Bob Cormier—the first time he autographed a book for me, I kept reading the

inscription over and over on the plane ride home. Little did I know then that he would later become a valued friend.

JB: When you think of young adult literature, where it has been and where it is now, what work do you see as needed for the future? What are your hopes for the genre and/or for ALAN?

VM: One of the criticisms of YA literature over the years has been that it lacks a strong “critical base,” that teachers and YA scholars focus almost exclusively on the pedagogical and sociological value of the books rather than examining them critically as pieces of literature. I know that's not completely true—there are plenty of thoughtful, insightful publications that delve deeply into the literature and its place in the literary world—but I would like to see more of that, both in the journals and at the ALAN Workshop. I would also like to see more YA authors take risks with the literature—break the mold, so to speak. I think more and more authors are doing that these days, and I see that as a positive force for the genre.

JB: As are all your books, *Teaching the Selected Works of Robert Cormier*, is a valuable resource. What can you tell us about the writing of that book and/or your relationship with Robert Cormier?

VM: Oh, this is one of my favorite topics. I have been an admirer of Robert Cormier's work since I first read *The Chocolate War* and *I Am the Cheese* as a high school teacher in the late '70s. I think I had been building up to writing a book like *Teaching the Selected Works of Robert Cormier* for many years. I was devastated by his untimely death, and I wanted somehow to help keep his work alive for teachers and students. As I mention in my introduction to the book, the idea came to fruition when I was teaching a graduate class I called “A Little Touch of Cormier in the Night.” So many of the teachers in the class expressed a need for a rationale to bring to their school districts and a desire for ideas on how to approach the books with their students. As we well know, Cormier's books have generated much controversy over the years, and I realized that there were probably many more teachers out there who wished to read his books

with their students but were fearful of censorship attempts. I really wish I could have addressed all of his works in my book, but that would have been quite a tome, so I came up with the idea of addressing just his later works, which perhaps some teachers are not as familiar with. Then I thought how great it would be to publish a series of these short books on teaching the works of various YA authors, which I proposed to Heinemann. They loved the idea, and here we are. I must say, too, how touched I was to receive a letter from Connie Cormier, Robert Cormier's wife, complimenting the book and thanking me for writing it.

JB: Youngstown State University has been such an important institution in the growth of the genre of young adult literature and its increasing presence in schools and libraries. What has it been like working there?

VM: I loved working at Youngstown State. Not only did it give me the opportunity to do English education work with my colleagues Gary Salvner and Hugh McCracken, it also gave me the chance to teach graduate and undergraduate classes in young adult literature. In addition, I did many summer workshops and institutes with area teachers, introducing them to various YA books and authors. YSU's English Department was a wonderful place to be for an English educator. All disciplines within English are valued there—English ed., professional writing, journalism, composition, and literature. We all worked with and learned from each other. In fact, even though I “retired” in 2005, I'm back teaching during the fall semester this year. The classroom still has a strong pull for me.

JB: What does winning the ALAN Award mean to you?

VM: This is another honor that I never dreamed I'd receive. All those years at the ALAN Breakfast, watching that impressive parade of honorees, I never thought it would be me joining them. When David Gill called to tell me I had been selected, I was speechless for several seconds. When it turned out that I couldn't attend to accept the award in person, I was devastated. My one chance to thank ALAN for all it had given me over the years was lost. I couldn't help but shed some tears. That

beautiful award occupies a place of honor in my living room.

JB: If you could pretend for a moment that accepting the ALAN Award is like accepting an Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and list all the people whom you would like to thank, who might be on that list?

VM: Oh, my! If I do a list, I'm afraid I'll forget someone important. But I'll try. First, I must thank my husband, Paul, who has encouraged me from the beginning to pursue my goals and interests. He changed many a diaper and gave many a bath to our two little daughters, while I went to classes, wrote papers, and studied for tests—and he never once complained. He still continues to support me in everything I do. I would also thank Gary Salvner, who encouraged me to pursue a Ph.D. in the English Education Program at the University of Michigan, the program from which he graduated. And there are several people who have passed away to whom I owe a debt of gratitude: Carol Gay, my YA literature professor during my master's work, who encouraged me to pursue the genre as a field of study when very few doctoral students were doing so; Stephen Dunning, my program chair at Michigan, for agreeing to let me do a dissertation in a field of study that no student at the University of Michigan had ever approached; and Ted Hipple, who somehow saw potential in me during my early ALAN years and encouraged me to run for the ALAN Board of Directors. Bob Small also deserves my thanks, as it was he who first suggested that I run for ALAN president. And there are many others I could thank if we had the space here, but I don't want to go on and on.

JB: What are you up to these days and what projects are on your horizon?

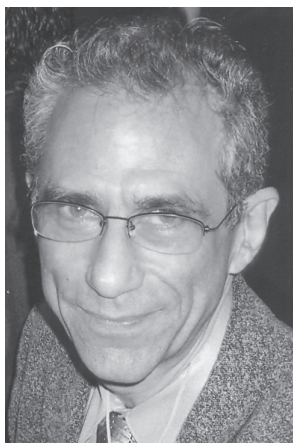
VM: I'm working as the series editor for Heinemann's Young Adult Literature in the Classroom Series, as I mentioned earlier, and I really enjoy that work. Along with Chris Crowe's *Teaching the Selected Works of Mildred Taylor*, which was published along with my Cormier book, we are releasing this fall *Teaching the Selected Works of Katherine Paterson*, by Lois Stover, and *Teaching the Selected*

Works of Walter Dean Myers, by Connie Zitlow. These will be followed by books on Chris Crutcher and Gary Paulsen in the near future.

I'm also working on promoting young adult literature in the area where I live in Central Florida. I hope to be doing a book signing at the local Barnes and Noble after the first of the year, where I can promote the books in the Heinemann series, as well as the works by the authors we're featuring.

Marc Aronson

JB: What are your views on world citizenship? In what ways can we be preparing our young people to make a better world?



Marc: When I was a kid, world citizenship was a choice—we took our orange UNICEF box with us when we went trick or treating; I joined the model UN in high school (we were Mongolia one year, not exactly a highly sought-after country). Today, world citizenship is not an option; it is a fact. American high school

kids are competing with kids in other countries for future jobs, and they are affected by the politics, culture, ideas of other lands—whether directly in the music, clothing, or causes they favor, or indirectly through the games and products they buy. Teenagers in Finland invented text messaging, which is why American teenagers can do it.

The first step is just to recognize the obvious: we are all global citizens. Once we do that, we can look at how, for example, we teach history, or read fiction; do we show kids the same connections in the past that they are experiencing today?

JB: You continue to make school visits even though your success as an author has made that an optional activity. Why do you still get out there and talk with young people?

Marc: Two reasons: I enjoy meeting kids—they ask tough questions, and they are, or can be, very responsive. But also, since I am not a teacher and my boys are quite young, I do not have a great deal of contact with my readers. Going out and meeting them helps me to envision them. I also like sending out early drafts of my books to teenagers—to learn from them what they are or are not finding interesting.

JB: Your regular column on nonfiction for young readers, “Consider the Source,” in *School Library Journal* is one of our favorites. What is it like coming up with something new each month?

Marc: Thanks, glad you like it. It is great fun to have a soapbox, and I have never had trouble thinking of things to say. But now I also have a blog on the *School Library Journal* site called “Nonfiction Matters.” I am a bit worried that I’ll use up my column ideas in the blog. We’ll see.

JB: What did winning the 2006 ALAN Award mean to you?

Marc: It was a thrill, and for a special reason. I started out working in books for younger readers in the late '80s. By the '90s people often said, “YA is dead.” I never believed that, just as I always thought there should be an award for books too old for the Newbery Medal, and that teenagers should be invited to BBYA (American Library Association’s Best Books for Young Adults) meetings. It has been so gratifying to see YA flourish—the ALAN Award felt like someone patting me on the head and saying, “Yup, we’ve been through the hard times together, now let’s look back and celebrate together.”

JB: What is the value of nonfiction, especially historical or sociological, in young adult literature?

Marc: I don’t think there is just one value—there can be many. Nonfiction should challenge you, invite

I enjoy meeting kids—they ask tough questions, and they are, or can be, very responsive.

you, to think. Teenagers, more than people at any other age, have epiphanies, moments when a truth (positive or negative) can strike them with life-shaping power. Nonfiction can provide those moments. But nonfiction is also a form of narrative, a way of organizing thought and telling a story. In that way, it can be a model not only for a teenager's school work but also for the kind of writing, and thinking, he or she will have to do in college, and as an adult. Thinking specifically in terms of history, social studies, or sociology, nonfiction can introduce teenagers to people, to events, to ways of thinking they did not know.

History books for teenagers should be, can be, an act of generosity—we who have a sense of the past feel teenagers are important enough to be given that knowledge.

I often hear people say that kids won't care about that. Perhaps. But I think there is a kind of adult miserliness behind that seeming bow to teenage interests. We are hoarding the past, hoarding our knowledge, we are refusing to share what we know with teenagers. History books for teenagers should be, can be, an act of generosity—we who have a sense of the past feel teenagers

are important enough to be given that knowledge. Like elders in some native community, we are inducting young people into a sense of their past, their place in the world. Refusing to do that under the cover of teenagers' busy and preoccupied lives is silly. Of course, teenagers are self-involved, that is what teenage is. Our job is to find a way to break into that world and bring wider knowledge, bring learning, so a teenager can grow.

Finally, not every teenager prefers fiction. Shaping thoughtful history books with teenagers in mind is saying that a teenager need not only love novels to be a reader. Why should fiction readers have all the fun? Every kind of teenager deserves a good book: the one who wants to read about teenage life, and the one who has no interest in that, and wants to know about battles, or presidents, or scientists.

JB: What might be people be surprised to know about you?

Marc: I love sports. This Father's Day my wife and older son planned to whisk me off to a chamber music concert being held in a beautiful part of central park. I am a classical music fan and would have enjoyed that. But I had bought an adjustable basketball hoop for my boys (who were 6 and 2 at the time) and me. It took my wife and me (and a helpful neighbor) all day to figure out the instructions and assemble it. We missed the concert, but I was thrilled. I grew up in New York playing ball on public courts, and I had never had a hoop of my own. Seeing that hoop in our driveway made me very, very happy. Someday I'll tell you the story about how Bruce Brooks beat me playing horse—and to whet your interest, we were playing in a court in a home once owned by a famous college basketball coach.

Virginia Monseau is Professor Emeritus at Youngstown State University, where she taught courses in English methods, young adult and children's literature, and composition. She is past-president of ALAN and former editor of English Journal. Among her many works are Missing Chapters: Ten Pioneering Women in NCTE and English Education, Reading Their World: The Young Adult Novel in the Classroom, Responding to Young Adult Literature, A Curriculum of Peace: Selected Essays from English Journal, Presenting Ouida Sebestyen, and A Complete Guide to Young Adult Literature: Over 1000 Critiques and Synopses from The ALAN Review. She is the series editor of Boynton/Cook's Young Adult Literature Series and wrote the first book in the series, Teaching the Selected Works of Robert Cormier.

Marc Aronson, winner of the 2006 ALAN Award, is an author, editor, publisher, speaker, and historian who believes that young people, especially pre-teens and teenagers, are smart, passionate, and capable of engaging with interesting ideas in interesting ways. As a spokesman for YA literature, he was directly involved in creating the Printz Award, the LA Times YA fiction Prize, and the revived young readers' National Book Award. Among his most recent books are Sir Walter Raleigh and the Quest for El Dorado, winner of the ALA's first Robert L. Sibert Information Book Award for nonfiction and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award; Race: A History Beyond Black and White (Ginee Seo Books); and, For Boys Only (Feiwei and Friends) [co-authored with HP Newquist]. Marc writes frequently on YA topics and appears both in a monthly column for School Library Journal and in a daily blog on their website.

Splish, Splash: The Story of a Book and a Bath

A Review of *Naked Reading: Uncovering What Tweens Need to Become Lifelong Readers*

[Lesesne, Teri S. *Naked Reading: Uncovering What Tweens Need to Become Lifelong Readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2006. 118 pp. US \$19.00.]

Who would have thought that the pink hotel would have a bathtub two feet deep? It was a wonderful surprise to discover this capacious basin when I arrived late on a Wednesday night after an interminable summer plane ride and a trip in a rented car through an award-winning rain storm. I could not resist the potential pleasures the petite pool presented and, as the young teachers in the room next to mine were relaxing to some rather loud heavy metal music, floating in a warm bath seemed like the right way to prepare for sleep. I had brought with me a book I was to read and review and, as it is my habit to read and do really deep thinking in the bathtub, everything seemed right for the occasion. The book in question, *Naked Reading: Uncovering What Tweens Need to Become Lifelong Readers* by Teri Lesesne, begins with the author's confession that she spends extra



Teri Lesesne

time in the bathroom reading books in uninterrupted quietude and that her granddaughter does the same after her bath. In this delicious tub, I would be in the proper place to peruse *Naked Reading*.

The inn provided a jar of fragrant bath salts, and I added a few dollops of these to the warm water along with some of the contents of the small bottle of shower gel displayed on the counter top across from the tub. Soft bubbles received my body as I slid into this pint-sized yet pungent

pond. I held the book aloft as I leaned back in the gently lapping water. Then I positioned the book on a hand towel that I had prepared for the purpose on the generous lip of the tub. After a moment of peaceful meditation on the pleasures of my present position, I opened the book and began to read.

I read this book in two ways. I read as a middle school teacher might who served in public school classrooms for thirty-eight years and collected a classroom library that swelled to the classroom next door. In that role, I witnessed the power of the proximity of books to captivate even the most reluctant reader. I also read this book as the teacher I-am-now, a teacher of Adolescent Literature at National Louis University. I am always searching for a textbook for my course. One that could fill in the blanks I must leave out because I don't have time to cover everything. As I read, I wondered, would Teri's book satisfy this essential requisite?

As still steaming threads of vapor rose off the water, I reflected on my Adolescent Literature course.

Students in my class are expected to read two to three books of adolescent literature every week. A professional text with long, windy chapters gets in the way of this requirement. Teri's book has concise, comprehensible chapters that can be simply scanned in a short stretch after the necessary reading is completed. Because this book is inexpensive, I don't think students will resent buying it and, I believe, they will retain it as a resource for their own use. It will also prop up my lessons by providing students with an extensive examination of the materials that I can only momentarily mention.

For example, I usually cover the psychology of adolescents by showing a few minutes of the film, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. This hardly addresses the topic. Teri's chapter entitled "Naked Reading: The Bare Essentials" describes the physical and psychological make-up of what she calls "tweens." Teri defines tweens as students between fourth and eighth grade who are, "between children's books and young adult novels." These students are among and amid in their interests and desires. Having taught this age group for over twenty-seven years, I can wholly champion this observation. Teri perceptibly portrays what she calls "the Five Cs," Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring. A useful figure inserted in the chapter lists the Five Cs and provides suggestions for texts to support thematic units in these areas.

Chapter 2 addresses a topic I usually gloss over. I observed that monthly publications jump-start

reading, my own daughter honed her reading skills immersed in the world of the *Sweet Valley Twins*, and students who claim reading is boring, find graphic novels irresistibly enticing. Teri candidly informs us that what teens like to read sometimes flies in the face of conventional thought. Yet these materials are the stuff that initially capture reluctant readers. Teri gives suggestions for "subliterature" such as comics, series books, and magazines. The list of current periodicals Teri provides in Chapter 2 is most useful. This chapter also includes a list of "Books to Tickle Your Funny Bone" and a fine list of mystery titles that have been "Winners and Nominees for the 2005 Edgar Award."

I took a moment to slide a lightly scented square of rose soap over my arms and neck, dab a soaking wash cloth on the soapy areas, and, after a gentle rinse-off, I returned to my reading. The classroom teacher in me was gratified by Chapter 4, "How Can We Energize Tweens? T-A-R-G-E-T: Six Ways for Teachers to Reconnect Kids to Books." T-A-R-G-E-T is a short form for these beliefs: Trust, Access, Response, Guidance, Enthusiasm, and Tween-appeal. The section entitled "Guidance" includes a description of reading ladders, a short list of books based on students' interests which literally scaffolds readers in short increments of difficulty from easy books to more challenging ones. Teri provides two sample ladders. "The Humor Ladder" takes the reader from *Captain Underpants* by Dave Pilkey to *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman. "The Graphic Novel Ladder" also starts with

Captain Underpants and ends at the graphic novel version of *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. I am always looking for good graphic novels so this list was welcome in that respect as well. Another suggestion invites the teacher to introduce books by setting up a survey in the classroom. Teri suggests covering the titles of five or six books and asking students to rank them for "read-appeal" by their covers alone. Students can be challenged to read the books and determine if their assessment was accurate. A similar survey and ranking can be done with books' titles minus the cover art. Teri warmed my heart by challenging the assumption that only long books are worthy of student consideration. She includes a fine list of "Skinny Books" for which size does not equate with easy reading.

My bubbles were disappearing so I added more bath gel and as I floated on the foam, I was delighted to discover that "A Baker's Dozen of Un-Book Report Ideas" veered from the usual offerings of diorama projects or conventional book reports. I am always searching for ideas that require little effort on the part of teachers and a great deal of effort on the part of students and I looked for that sort of suggestion in this book. Teri proposes that students write "Annotations" as a response to the books they've read. The "Annotations" are created in three parts: a brief summary addressing four questions, a short response answering one of the suggestions from a list of questions, a bibliographic citation. The results are a written reading response that is only about

six sentences long. This could be easily read and graded by the teacher in a very short time, yet it holds the students answerable for their independent reading. Another check for accountability is SWBST. This is an acronym for “Somebody Wanted But So Then.” Students are asked to draw five columns on a sheet of paper. Each column is headed with one of the words from SWBST. Using the book they are currently reading, students write the name of the main character in the first column, the goal of the character in the second column, the obstacles facing the character in the third column, what the character does about it in the fourth column, and in the fifth column the student places a prediction of what might happen next in the story. The teacher can collect and assess these pages at a glance. Students can be asked to fill out the sheet once or twice a week and the resulting notes can be used by the students to create a summary or an annotation.

It may have been because my fingers were pruned, but before I got to the “Appendix: More Than One Hundred Great Books for Tweens,” the book slipped into the water. I swiftly pulled it out and dabbed the soaking pages with a fluffy towel. I hoped little damage had been done, and, although the pages were wet, I was able to read the book list and the excellent

annotations that accompanied it.

The water was turning tepid when I realized my refreshing respite was almost over. I would leave the tub with only one objection to this book and it is not a serious one. In two places Teri cites research describing what motivates students to read. I felt so many connections to this book, that when the results of these surveys did not match my experience, I was interested in determining what questions had been asked. Perhaps the questions were phrased in such a way that they would provide answers that might not actually mirror students’ real interests? When I went to the bibliography, I discovered that the studies reflected the results of unpublished doctoral dissertations. Short of requesting these studies, there was no way I could check on the details of the surveys. It would have been helpful if Teri had included the questions the researchers asked, or cited published accounts of such surveys. I am humbly suggesting two articles that describe investigations regarding student interests and what motivates their book selection, Katz, Claudia Anne, and Sue Anne Johnson-Kuby. “Visit from the Vampire.” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 39.2 (October, 1995): 156-59. This article, in the form of a story, presents research results regarding parents’, teachers’, and

students’ observations about the students as readers, and their goals for the students as readers. The role of the teacher as researcher is also discussed in Johnson-Kuby, Sue Ann, and Claudia Anne Katz. “Return of the Vampire.” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 40.2 (October 1996): 144-48. In the form of a conversation with a vampire, this article details the results of a teacher’s research on middle school students’ reading preferences. It includes a list of favorite books mentioned, favorite authors mentioned, and how students found these favorite books.

Unfortunately I must report that the book did not survive the drenching it suffered in the tub. Even though I carefully dried each page, I learned that soapy water is not easily removed. When I returned home, I discovered that the pages were cemented together. I had to purchase a new copy of *Naked Reading*. However, I am hoping that this review will forever link a book and a bath.

Claudia Anne Katz is past-president of the Illinois Reading Association and past-president of the Middle School Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association. She taught middle school English for 38 years before joining National Louis University in Chicago, where she now teaches classes in adolescent literature as an assistant professor.

The Center for Young Readers Honors M. Jerry Weiss



Gathered at the dedication were (from left): Mr. Fleischman, Helen Weiss, an author and wife of the honoree; Dr. Weiss; Dr. Allan De Fina, an associate professor of literacy education and a member of the Center's Advisory Board; Dr. Carlos Hernández, president; Dr. Fran Levin, an assistant professor of literacy education who was then interim assistant vice president of academic affairs, immediate past president of the New Jersey Reading Association, and a member of the Center's Advisory Board, and Dr. Joanne Z. Bruno, interim vice president for academic affairs.

The M. Jerry Weiss Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature was dedicated on the Jersey City State University campus on October 5, 2006 in honor of the distinguished service professor of communications emeritus who is a nationally recognized expert in the field of children's and adolescent literature.

The dedication of the center, located in Grossnickle Hall, Room 103, included addresses by award-winning author Paul Fleischman and Dr. Weiss; vocal presentations of selections by Mr. Fleischman

"For so many of us who studied with Dr. Weiss, we learned not only what and how to teach, but we learned by Dr. Weiss' daily example, the power of the teacher's position," said Ms. Winkler. "As a role model, Dr. Weiss shaped my commitment to teaching and my passion for young adult literature."

Lisa K. Winkler, eighth-grade language arts teacher at South Orange Middle School.

(*The Gothic: The Magazine of Jersey City State University*, winter 2005, p. 27)

with Donna Connolly, an assistant professor of music, and adjunct faculty Adria Firestone and Michael Hirsch of the Department of Music, Dance and Theatre; and the presentation of a plaque.

Dr. Weiss taught at NJCU for 33 years before retiring in 1994. He created and coordinated the "Adolescent in Literature" series, which brought many distinguished authors to campus.

The author and editor of dozens of books, Dr. Weiss has held leadership positions in the New Jersey Reading Association, the National Council of Teachers

of English, and the International Reading Association. The New Jersey Reading Association's "M. Jerry Weiss Book Award," affectionately known as "The Jerry," was established in his honor in 1993, and he was also the first New Jersey resident to receive the International Reading Association's Arbuthnot Award.

*Many thanks to **Ellen Wayman-Gordon**, Jersey City State University Press. Reprinted with permission from Jersey City State University.*