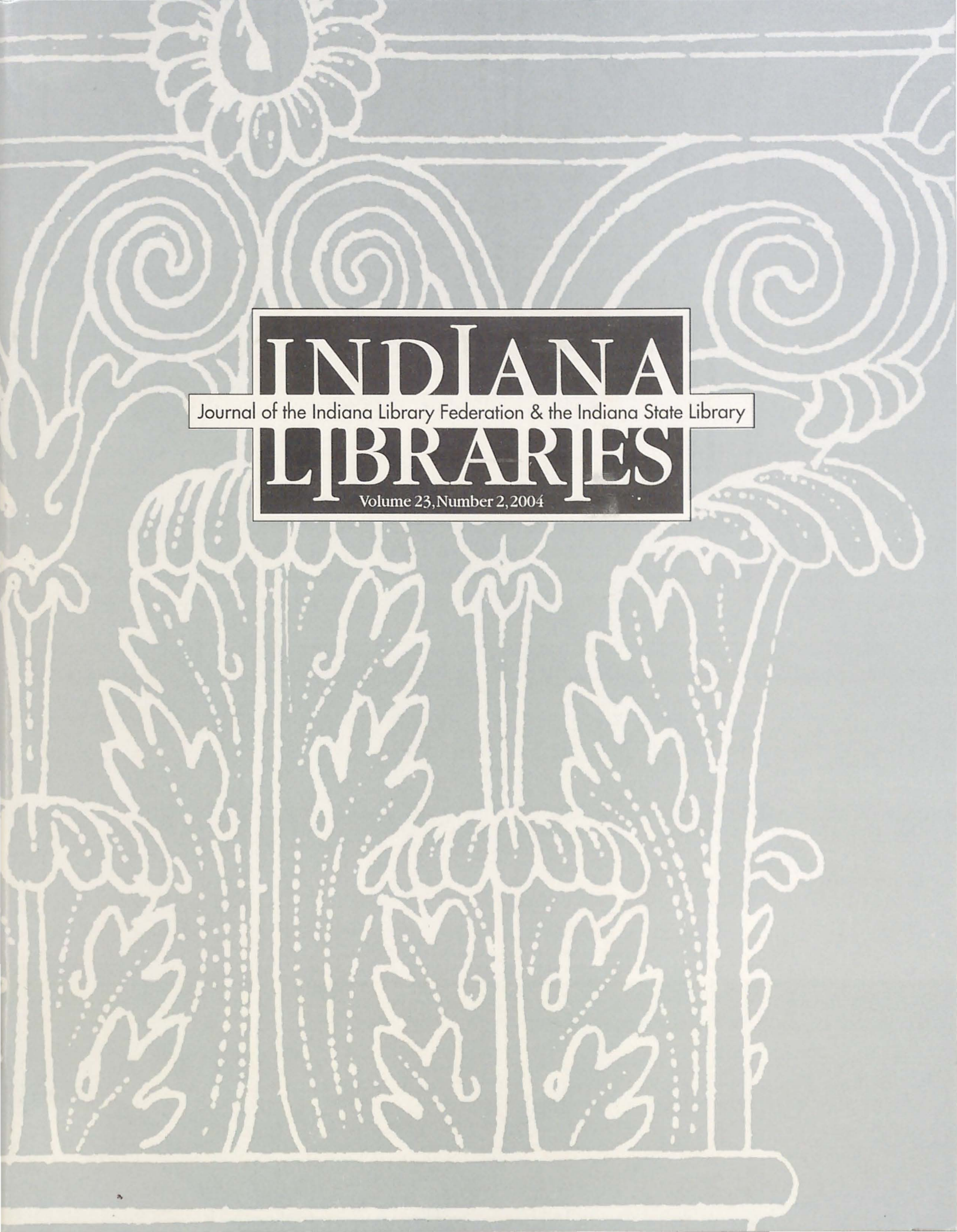

INDIANA LIBRARIES

Journal of the Indiana Library Federation & the Indiana State Library

Volume 23, Number 2, 2004

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C O N T E N T S

Indiana Libraries (ISSN: 0275-77X) is the professional journal of the Indiana Library community. It is published two times a year by the Indiana Library Federation (941 E. 86th Street, Suite 260, Indianapolis, IN 46240) and the Indiana State Library (140 North Senate Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46204)

Indiana Libraries is indexed by *Library Literature*, a publication of The H.W. Wilson Company, Inc.

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Annual Subscription Rate: $10.00

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESKTOP

by Jennifer Burek Pierce
Editor, Indiana Libraries

This general issue of *Indiana Libraries* focuses on Youth and Reading. A recent survey of *Indiana Libraries* readers indicates this is an area some would like to read more about. While youth services librarians are likely to find these articles most immediately relevant to their working lives, I'm hopeful that these essays will offer librarians in all venues insights into their patrons' lives as readers. These authors delve into the types of books, programming, and issues that have constituted patrons' experiences with libraries and reading during their formative years.

Lee Ann Kee describes her experiences working with the Young Hoosier Book Award committee. She notes both how the committee makes its decisions and the responsibilities of membership.

Lori Caskey Sigety offers ideas on youth programming. She provides an introduction to and a script for a creative, interactive program for young library users and their parents that garnered both patron participation and even media coverage at the St. Joseph Public Library earlier this year.

Mary Watkins explains her approach to working with younger patrons in the school media center. Her aims include both teaching students about effective use of the library and encouraging teens to think about librarianship as a career choice.

Encouraging reading is one common concern. Whether boys read as much as girls do and how to encourage male readers are topics that have been discussed by figures ranging from popular youth authors to scholarly researchers. Angie Woodson takes on this topic in her essay with some provocative ideas about the roots of the problem. Daniell Wilkins considers how comic books and graphic novels can encourage reluctant readers of either sex, explaining the merits of this genre and what librarians involved with collection development should consider when adding graphic novels to their collections.

Young adult literature sometimes engages sensitive social issues. Kathryn Jacobs discusses gender issues as they relate to specific young adult novels. Two authors approach the matter of depictions of homosexuality in young adult literature. Jennifer Chance Cook evaluates Indiana libraries' holdings of young adult literature with homosexual characters or themes. Dawn Savage of IMCPL offers a historical and analytical overview of the ways homosexuality is treated in young adult literature, identifying themes and issues to consider in collection development. Lisa Habegger looks at the phenomenon known as the bleak novel – works which portray realistic topics from a dark or gritty perspective.

The needs of youth from different cultures receives consideration from Rebecca Perkins. Her essay focuses on the needs of third-culture kids, or those who grow up with blended cultural norms.

Alberta Davis Comer, ISU librarian and ALA *Cognotes* reporter, had an opportunity to interview feminist author Gloria Steinem. Their conversation included a discussion of the importance of libraries to Steinem as she was growing up. The write-up, parts of which were first published in *Cognotes* at the Toronto convention, includes Steinem's reflections on a range of contemporary issues.

To complement these adult perspectives on youth and reading, I'm including just a few voices of teen readers themselves. Dakota Derryberry describes her interest in what might be termed trash fiction as a respite from her more serious reading. Caitlin Watt focuses on fan fiction – a genre of electronic reading and writing which uses established characters from published works as the basis for an online exchange of writers and readers.

Additionally, there are a few informal reflections from adult readers on selected, high-profile young adult novels. Rachael McClellan, Raenell Smith, and Tom Smith offer brief responses to works which have generated both kudos and complaints.

In a nod to this focus on libraries' younger users, *Indiana Libraries* columns consider youth as well. In Management Basics, Carolyn Wiethoff writes about the cultural differences between workers of different generations. In The Well-Read Librarian, Kathryn Franklin shares some key articles on providing reference services to young users.

As a final note, *Indiana Libraries* is in transition to the use of the American Psychological Association style sheet (see www.apastyle.org for details) for documentation of the use of sources. While there is some variability in the style sheet used by authors in this issue, in the future, we ask all authors to work with APA conventions.

Jennifer Burek Pierce, Editor, *Indiana Libraries*
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INDIANA'S CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD: THE YOUNG HOOSIER BOOK AWARD

by Lee Ann Kee

What do the books *The Monster Who Ate My Peas* by Danny Schnitzlein and illustrated by Matt Faulkner, *Ghost Cadet* by Elaine Marie Alphin, and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* by Ann Brashares have in common? They were all 2004 winners of the Young Hoosier Book Award. The Young Hoosier Book Award Program (YHBA) allows children throughout the state of Indiana to read a variety of books and vote for their favorite one.

Members of the YHBA committee select the twenty books that will be on each reading list. In order to select the books, committee members read all of the eligible books that have been recommended. They then meet to select the books and prepare the activity books that are available at each level. This is my second year as a member of the YHBA committee. I enjoy having the opportunity to read a wide variety of books and participate in selecting the books that students will read.

THE PURPOSE

"The purpose of the Young Hoosier Book Award Program is to stimulate recreational reading among elementary and middle school/junior high school children and to encourage cooperation between administrators, school media specialists, teachers, public libraries, and the community in providing reading experiences for Indiana school children" ("Young Hoosier"). The Association for Indiana Media Educators (AIME), a division of the Indiana Library Federation (ILF), sponsors the award. Students throughout the state of Indiana are eligible to participate.

According to Kristi Boyd, General Chairman of the committee, the main goal of the program is to encourage kids to read: "By participating in this program, they get a chance to vote for the books they like best and at the same time they are exposed to a variety of high-quality literature for children."

THE HISTORY

The Young Hoosier Book Award program began during the 1974-1975 school year. It was originally designed as an award for chapter books. In the first year, 4,861 students across the state of Indiana voted. The first winner was E. B. White's *The Trumpet of the Swan* ("Young Hoosier"). Kristi Boyd stated that before 1986 there was only one category and one winner. In 1985 the YHBA committee decided to create two lists, one for fourth - sixth grade students and another for sixth - eighth grade students. This allowed there to be two winners, one at each level. In 1992, the committee decided that younger students also needed to be able to participate. The Picture Book category was added, allowing students in Kindergarten – third grade to vote for their favorite book.

In 2003, the names of the categories were changed to Picture Book, Intermediate, and Middle Grades. This change allows schools to choose the list that they feel is most appropriate for their students. According to Kristi Boyd, 27,276 students voted for their favorite books in 2003. The increase in the number of participants is a testament to the success of the program.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Students, teachers, parents, librarians and media specialists can recommend books for the Young Hoosier Book Award program. Information about the program and how to recommend books is available on the YHBA page of the Indiana Library Federation website. (http://www.ilfonline.org/Units/Associations/aime/Programs/YHBA/yhba.htm). In order for a book to be eligible, it must meet the following requirements:

1. The author or illustrator of a nominated book will be restricted to one work in any particular year.
2. The author or illustrator of a nominated book must be living and currently residing in the United States.
3. The book must have been published within the last five (5) years.
4. The book must be in-print at the time of selection.
5. The book cannot be a previous nominee.
6. The book cannot be a Caldecott or Newbery Medal winner. Honor books are acceptable. (AIME)

Members of the YHBA committees read all of the selected titles that meet the requirements and choose the twenty books that will be on the reading list. The list for the following school year is made available at the AIME conference in the fall.

In order for students to participate in the program, they must read twelve of the twenty titles for the Picture Book Award or five of the twenty titles for the Intermediate and Middle Grades Awards. After reading at least the required number of books, they are eligible to vote. All votes are sent to the Indiana Library Federation by April 15th. Each individual vote is tallied, so every student's vote counts. According to Kristi Boyd, "Over 1000 Indiana schools and public libraries are registered as places students can vote. If their school does not participate in the program, we encourage students and parents to talk with their public librarian who can also register and submit votes for students."

I read the Picture Book nominees to all of my kindergarten through second grade students, making all of these students eligible to vote. They have fun voting for their favorite book and anxiously wait to see if their favorite book is chosen the winner. I also make the books on the Intermediate and Middle Grades lists available to my older students, giving them the option of reading the books. Several students enjoy participating each year.

The annual AIME conference provides an opportunity to meet the previous year's winning authors. The authors sign books at the conference and speak at the Young Hoosier banquet. Often, the authors will also visit schools or participate in events where students can meet them. At the annual conference in November 2004, the winning authors from 2003 will be presented with their awards. Due to the author's busy schedules, the award is always presented the year after it was awarded. The winning authors from 2003 that will be at the conference are:

Maryanne Cocca-Leffler for *Mr. Tannen's Ties* (Picture Book)

Kate DiCamillo for *Because of Winn-Dixie* (Intermediate)

Jerry Spinelli for *Stargirl* (Middle Grades)

THE COMMITTEE

The Young Hoosier Book committee consists of three sub-committees, one for each level. The General Chair (currently Kristi Boyd) coordinates the efforts of the three sub-committee chairs. Each subcommittee consists of approximately twenty members. The majority of the members are media specialists, librarians or teachers. While there is much work involved, it is fun and rewarding to be on the committee.

In order to be on the committee, you need to make a two-year commitment and be a current member of ILF and AIME during the years of committee participation ("Young Hoosier"). Committee members have several responsibilities and obligations that include:

- Reading and responding to (as needed) all correspondence.
- Attending the Reading Kick-off Meeting.
- Spending the summer reading and completing book evaluation forms.
- Attending and participating in the Book Nominee Selection Meeting.
- Assisting in the development of an activity book.
- Volunteering, as needed, at the annual AIME conference.
- Supporting and promoting the sale of YHBA related items.

The committees are set up in December. The kick-off meeting usually takes place in March or April. At this meeting, reading lists are distributed and everyone goes over what they need to accomplish before the second meeting. Some publishers will provide free copies of their books and these books are distributed among the members before the end of the meeting.

Throughout the summer, the committee's main job is to read, read, read! Each committee reads approximately 60-80 books. Committee members complete an evaluation form for each book that includes information such as book talks, author information, discussion questions, suggested activities, subject correlations and related web sites. Many of the books are wonderful to read, while some are a challenge to get through. It is best to read as many of the books on the list as you can, in order to make informed decisions about the books for the list.

The book nominee selection meeting usually takes place during the beginning of September. This meeting lasts most of the day, as members have to choose the twenty books and alternates that will be the nominees for the following school year. This can be an exciting and interesting day, as the members debate the books they feel most deserve to be on the list. They take into consideration genre and topics, so there will be a variety of books on the list. After the committee determines their list of books, they use the information sheets to put together an activity book. The activity books are available through ILF.

I enjoy being on the Young Hoosier Book Committee. I have the opportunity to read many children's

books that I might otherwise not pick up. One of the perks of being on the committee is the opportunity to sit at the author table during the Young Hoosier banquet at the AIME Conference. Last year, I had the opportunity to sit with Gloria Skurzynski and Alane Ferguson, authors of the 2002 winner, *Cliffhanger*. It was so interesting to be able to meet the authors and spend the evening talking with them. The banquet offers a wonderful opportunity to hear all of the award-winning authors speak.

If you are interested in more information about the Young Hoosier Book Award or are interested in serving on the committee, please see the Indiana Library Federation Website at http://www.ilfonline.org/Units/Associations/aime/Programs/YHBA/yhba.htm.

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Young Hoosier Book Award. (n.d.) Retrieved May 19, 2004 from http://www.ilfonline.org/Units/Associations/aime/Programs/YHBA/yhba.htm.

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TOE DOGS, ELBOW CATS, AND PICTURE BOOKS: COMBINING LITERATURE, LOVE OF ANIMALS, AND THEATRE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY VENUE

by Lori Caskey Sigety

Last year, my manager and I engaged in several fun conversations about the differences between cats and dogs. Although we adore both felines and canines, she is the proud parent of a greyhound and I live with two cats.

Somehow our creative sessions merged into an idea of writing a play about cats and dogs. Although the concept of canine and feline rivalry has been used many times before, we wanted to put our own twist on the idea. We wanted the show to be big, fun and silly but with a message. We also wanted kids to associate the fun program with the library.

We opted for puppets (puppy and kitten puppets), life-size costume characters, and a snare drum with brushes and a cymbal to create a jazzy, poetic feel. The play was set in rhyme, and the fourth wall was broken before the show even started. Two student shelvers stayed out in the audience for crowd control. They passed out ears to the audience members, who chose either pink cat ears or brown dog ears. Audience members sat on the cat side or the dog side of the room, as the crowd was split up into two sections. One shelver sat on the cat side, and the other sat on the dog side to lead the audience.

As soon as the audience members sat down, they became part of the play. The entire show was held in the children's area at the Centre Township Branch Library, so kids could be exposed to the wonderful children's materials offered.

Our award-winning Publicity and Marketing Department promoted the play. In fact, the *South Bend Tribune* covered the play and wrote a nice article. According to Hennen (2003, p. 46), the St. Joseph County Public Library served 172,627 people in 2003. To our delight, 150 out of the population served attended the show!

Toe Dogs and Elbow Cats: A Participation Puppet Play

Written by Dana Labrum and Lori Caskey Sigety

Cast:
Woof the Toe Dog (Life-size puppet)
Meow the ElbowCat (Life-size puppet)
Elbowtoe Jo (or Joe) (Narrator)
Toe Puppies and Elbow Kittens (puppets)
Toe Dogs (audience)
Elbow Cats (audience)

Introduction: A Poetic Overture

Elbowtoe Jo: Okay, toedogs and toepups, elbowkittens and cats, we're gonna snap, or you can clap, or you can tap.... (Audience follows along) This is our theme poem called "The Elbowtoe Show." Can you keep the time while we talk and rhyme?

Elbowtoe Jo: Here we go: "The Elbowtoe Show!" (Puppets start dancing)
(Optional: Poem can be passed out, and everyone can rhyme along!)

"The Elbowtoe Show"

Puppies and kittens,
Doggies and cats,
Woof in the Backyard
Meow in the alley-Scat!

Scat Scat Meow the cat
Woof-woof the hound
Toedogs and Elbowcats
avoid the nasty pound!

They sleep the days away
and slink out at night
they meet at the Square
and all they do is fight!

(Let's repeat one more time...)

It's the Elbowtoe Show
the Elbowtoe Show
welcome to your
Elbowtoe Show!

(Elbowtoe Jo turns to Woof, Meow, and Puppets:)

Elbowtoe Jo: Now! Woof the Toedog! Meow the cat! Toepups and Elbowkitties on stage! SCAT! (They freeze and look indignantly at Elbowtoe Jo). Uh, please? (They shake their heads). Pretty please? (They shake heads again). Uh, Biscuits and catnip later? (They shrug and hide).

Great! Thank you.

Elbowtoe Jo: I guess it's better to be kind than catty; otherwise you might end up in the doghouse. Anyway, Speaking of good manners let me introduce myself. My name is Elbowtoe Jo. I'm part canine (that's dog) and part feline (that's cat). I love both cats and dogs. But the cats and dogs in the backyards and alleys just don't like each other at all! And it is causing quite a commotion here in this place called Neck of the Woods. The Toe Dogs and Elbow Cats also call this place "The Square." I wonder if it's because they are always squaring off and getting into spats. Sometimes I get so sick of it I call it the "Pain in the Neck of the Woods."

Elbowtoe Jo: Anyway, it's nice to meet all of you. For me to tell this story, I need your help. Without you, there wouldn't be much of a story. So I'm glad you're here. I'll need your help with sound effects, or making sounds, if you will.

How about this, whenever you hear "when the full moon rose and was in sight" we howl, okay? Let's try it. "When the full moon rose and was in sight". (Everyone howls) Good.

And I'll give you cues to help you along. Like this (make gesture of listening).

On this side are the toe togs and on the other side are the elbow cats. When the toedogs would say or do something...this side of the audience would become toedogs and make the sounds. When the elbowcats would do something...this side of the audience would do the sound effects. And I'll help you out.

We're keeping the toedogs on one side and the elbowcats on the other so we don't get a real fight. We keep our paws and toes and elbows to ourselves, okay? We'll use sounds and hand movements (called pantomime in the theatre world) to pretend.

Here we go into Scene 1: Showdown at the Neck of the Woods also known as the Square.

Scene 1: Showdown at the Neck of the Woods also known as the Square

Elbowtoe Jo: Toe Dogs from the Backyard would nip (grrrrrr) at the toes of the Elbow Cats from the Alley. And Elbow Cats would swat (making a swat gesture) at the dogs from where the Elbows would be. Right here, you see? (Elbowtoe Jo makes gesture at elbow) That's how they got their names.

They fought all the time at night... especially when the full moon rose and was in sight (owwwwooooooo). (Lights out). (Enter toepups and elbowkittens).

The Toe Dogs would howl (howwwwl)
Elbow Cats would shriek (raaaaaaawwwwhhhhrr)
The Toe Dogs would nip (grrrrrrr)
Elbow Cats would freak (hisssssss with clawing gestures)

And they did it again...

The Toe Dogs would howl (howwwwwl)
Elbow Cats would shriek (raaaaaaaawwwwwhrrrrr)
The Toe Dogs would nip (grrrrrrr)
Elbow Cats would freak (hisssss with clawing gestures)

And they did it one more time...

The Toe Dogs would howl (howwwwwwl)
Elbow Cats would shriek (raaaaaaaawwwwwhhhrrr)
The Toe Dogs would nip (grrrrrr)
Elbow Cats would freak (hisssss with clawing gestures)

And when the sunrise came up, the toe dogs and elbow cats would go home to sleep. (Lights on) Can you pretend to sleep? (Make snoring noises) We're drifting into dog biscuit slumber and catnip dreams.

Elbowtoe Jo: Now, we're snoring our way into

Scene 2: Insomnia Alley.

Elbowtoe Jo: It's daytime, you see, so most of the Toe Dogs and Elbow Cats wouldn't dare nip or step or elbow their way into the Neck of the Woods Otherwise known as the Square... alone. You see toe dogs and elbow cats are supposed to be sleeping but you can watch if you're really quiet during this scene. Because during the day it is quiet in the Neck of the Woods otherwise known as the Square.

Toe Dogs and Elbow Cats only dare go into the Square during the daytime in a pair for at night they're all in sight. But alone, they're not so brave and ready to fight.

As you toe dogs and elbow cats slumber and snore (can you all snore?) there was an Elbow Cat named Meow. (Enter Meow) Meow couldn't take your snoring anymore and wandered out of the alley and into the Neck of Woods otherwise known as the Square although Meow either knew it was not safe or was not aware.

Meow stretched and strutted along the Neck of the Woods otherwise known as the Square with her tail and her pride held up high. Meow is a proud Elbow Cat and that Meow would never deny.

Meow the Elbow Cat strutted and purred and rolled around and sat. (Meow sits anywhere in the audience on the Elbow Cat side) Who knew there would be trouble in the Neck of the Woods Otherwise Known as the Square when someone from the Backyard has the same sleepless plight! We now go into

Scene 3: Sleepless in Backyard

Elbowtoe Jo: Okay, Meow the Elbowcat thinks that the Neck of the Woods Otherwise Known as the Square is the cat's meow, so Meow lounges and soaks up the sunshine long before (pause) "when the full moon rose and was in sight". (howl)

Oops. Meow, did we disturb your catnap? We'll try to be quieter next time. Sorry toepups and elbowkittens! Didn't mean to wake you up, too! While Meow is trying to relax, another cannot sleep and visits the Neck of the Woods Otherwise known as the Square.

Woof (enter Woof from the Backyard) also couldn't take your snoring anymore and wandered out of the backyard and into the Neck of Woods Otherwise known as the Square although Woof either knew it was not safe or was not aware.

And Woof accidentally stumbled and tripped over Meow! And they looked at one another. Let's see what happens in

Scene 4: Showdown in the Neck of the Woods also known as the Square

Elbowtoe Jo: Normally, if this would happen at night, with all of the others:

The Toe Dogs would howl (howwwwwwl)
Elbow Cats would shriek (raaaaaaaawwwwwhhhrrr)

The Toe Dogs would nip (grrrrrr)
Elbow Cats would freak (hisssss with clawing gestures)

Again...

The Toe Dogs would howl (howwwwwwl)
Elbow Cats would shriek (raaaaaaaawwwwwhhhrrr)
The Toe Dogs would nip (grrrrrr)
Elbow Cats would freak (hisssss with clawing gestures)

One more time:

The Toe Dogs would howl (howwwwwwl)
Elbow Cats would shriek (raaaaaaaawwwwwhhhrrr)
The Toe Dogs would nip (grrrrrr)
Elbow Cats would freak (hisssss with clawing gestures)

But wait! Woof is a brave Toedog. Woof held out a paw. And Meow is a brave Elbowcat. Meow held out a paw. And they shook paws. (Triangle note) They sniffed one another. (Butt sniffing optional) And everything is okay. They sat and chased one another and played and soaked up the sun and didn't bother to wait "when the full moon rose and was in sight" (howl)

Woof and Meow howled to their heart's delight. And they woke up all of the toedogs and elbowcats and toepups and elbowkittens for a celebration!

Scene 5: Celebration in the Neck of the Woods Otherwise known as the Square

Elbowtoe Jo: Woof and Meow were so excited that they ran into the backyard and the alley where all the toedogs and elbowcats stayed and invited them to a celebration in the Neck of the Woods Otherwise known as the Square before sunset! There would be dancing and fun with everyone! The Toedogs and Elbowcats are so excited that they meowed with delight (meow) and the dogs barked with joy (bark bark bark).

Please, everyone stand up and join us for dancing! Toedogs and Elbowcats please meet new friends and keep the old! One is Meow and the other Woof!

(Conga drums play. Confetti is thrown. Toedogs and Elbowcats mingle and dance.)

End of Show but Start of a Beautiful Friendship!

Please feel free to try out this play in your own library setting. Also included is a list of picture books to share with little patrons before or after the play, or for a promotional story hour.

The criteria for choosing the following tomes is as follows:

1) Would be appropriate for a wide audience range (ages 0-5); keeping various attention spans in mind,
2) Available in the St. Joseph County Public Library (it was reviewed and selected by professional library staff for the library),
3) Fun and humorous and perfect for story hour and/or the play.

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are many books that would be appropriate. Here is just a sampling of children's literature that would work well in story hour:

Picture Books for Those Who Fancy Felines, Prefer Puppies, or Cannot Decide:

Feiffer, Jules. (1999). Bark, George! New York: HarperCollins.

This is a story about George the puppy learning how to bark like a dog. Eventually George visits the vet to get to the solution. This would be a great Mother's Day read, since George's mom plays a big role in the book.

Florian, Douglas (2003). bow wow meow meow it's rhyming cats and dogs. New York: Harcourt.

These hilarious rhymes and fun paintings of cats and dogs would enlighten kids of all ages! This would be great to choose a couple poems to open or close story hour or the play. Older kids would really enjoy this.

Harper, Dan (1998). Telling Time With Big Mama Cat. New York: Hartcourt.

This is one of my favorites. The kids enjoy the clock with movable hands on the front page. The humorous paintings of the cat are well done, and the words and pictures are balanced. The detailed timeline of the day of the life of a cat works well with the illustrations.

Kellogg, Steven (2000). Give the Dog A Bone. New York: SeaStar Books.

A fun version of the classic song with a twist! Instead of rolling home after each verse, various old men cobble home, purr home, hightail it home, etc. Kellogg also uses humor in the story. This book is fun and funny enough for kids to enjoy.

Masurel, Claire and Bob Kolar (2001). A Cat and a Dog. New York: North-South Books.

This is a fun read! This goes back to the rivalry of cats and dogs. There are few words on colorful pages. The cat is in blue and the dog is in a golden brown. The classic tale of enemies becoming friends. This book would be an appropriate read before the play.

Moxley, Sheila (2001). An Alphabet Book of Cats and Dogs. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

This is an eclectic mix of collage and photography with a mix of cats and dogs! The text, which consists of admirable alliterations, complements the illogical illustrations. One of my favorites!

Parr, Todd (2003). Otto goes to the Beach. New York: Little, Brown, and Company.

One of my new favorite canine creatures: Otto. Watching Otto's misadventures unfold at the beach with bright, bold colors, great expression, and large fonts will amuse and entertain! At the very end, Otto and Todd write a love note to the reader! Great for summer reading.

Thomson, Pat (2003). Drat That Fat Cat! New York: Scholastic Press.

This is a story in rhyme about a fat, fat cat that was in search for food. The fat, fat cat eats everything, but it is determined he is not fat enough. I suspect this is a spoof of The Little Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly. This is a fun read, and kids will laugh and enjoy!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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PROMOTING THE PROFESSION FROM WITHIN

by Mary Poston Watkins

Ask yourself the following two questions:

1. Does anyone in your school really have any idea on what it takes to run the school media center?
2. How can we interest students in our profession?

These are questions I ask myself on a regular basis. Last spring, I challenged myself to find an answer that would address both questions.

While contemplating the above questions, I developed a nine-week elective for middle school students, but the elective would work at any grade level. Class size is limited to ten students. At Yorktown Middle School, electives are scheduled the last period of the day. The purpose of the elective is two fold:

1. Promote the profession, and
2. Foster respect for the media center by developing a better understanding of what is involved in the daily operations.

For middle school students, four problem areas were targeted: attention span, problem solving skills, memory, and work ethic. The center does close occasionally to provide student training. The following educational strategies are used: lecture, one-on-one instruction, discussion, cooperative learning, conflict resolution and directed learning.

The syllabus states that although no specific text is used, the course will use the Nine Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning as its foundation. Students work individually, in teams of two, and in a group to provide services to library patrons. Those services include but are not limited to circulating materials; technical services (processing and laminating); conducting traditional and online research; developing new materials such as but not limited to spreadsheets, flyers, service logs, signs, request forms; and providing duplication services.

Periodically, students are called together to problem solve and trouble shoot, review the standards, set goals and assess their roles in providing library services. Class time is given to develop thinking and reasoning skills. Students discussed and voted on offering additional services to teachers, such as running copies for teachers, making bulletin boards, and trimming lamination.

Students developed the patron forms for requesting services. Students sign the service form before beginning work. This immediately identifies the student responsible for the project. All duplicated materials are checked before being delivered to teachers. If done incorrectly, the student must do the job again.

EVALUATION

The following criteria are used for student assessment:

- Participation – how well the student contributes and interacts with the class.
- Works with Others – see Student Handout titled Working with Others.
- Time on Task – completes the duty assigned.
- Patron Service – helps others and is polite.
- Work Ethic – dependability, attitude, works to potential, demonstrates initiative.

Students receive 10 points weekly in each category. Tests and quizzes are optional and can be given at the instructor's discretion. Beginning each grading period, students are given the syllabus, Information Literacy Standards, and several handouts.

During the first two or three weeks students are trained in all areas of library services. Then students are assigned stations on a rotating basis. This schedule is written in their agendas, and it is their responsibility to know when and where to rotate. The Media Services students take their jobs very seriously. It truly amazes me when a student will ask, "Will you please have someone else run that errand, I need to finish this job."

So, in reality how successful is the class? Quite simply, it has exceeded my expectations. These middle school students want to help and truly want to do a good job. The problem of accountability was solved by having students sign a service form prior to starting a job. At the end of the first nine weeks, I had the first

class develop job descriptions. Each succeeding class edits and revises the job descriptions as needed.

Another reality is that working with ten students might allow you to provide better services during that period, but it does not allow you to get additional work done. Middle school students need to be supervised, not only the patrons but also the media services students!

STUDENT HANDOUT SKILLS CHECKLIST

Thinking and Reasoning Handout

- Uses "if, then, not and or" in the thinking process
- Understands that information can help in making good decisions
- Understands that personal values influence conclusions
- Recognizes that several conclusions can be drawn from the same information
- Can explain their thought processes in making a decision
- Explores the impact decisions and policies can have on library patrons

Decision Making Handout

- Identifies situations in the library in which a decision is required
- Secures factual information needed to evaluate alternatives
- Identifies the values underlying the alternatives that are considered and the criteria that will be used to make the selection
- Predicts the consequences of selecting each alternative
- Makes decisions based on the data obtained
- When appropriate, takes action to implement the decisions
- Analyzes personal decisions in terms of the options that were considered

Working with Others Handout

(A) Contributes to the effort of a group

- Identifies what is not working
- Demonstrates respect for others
- Recognizes and uses the strengths of others
- Takes initiative
- Identifies the causes of conflict
- Helps meet goals
- Engages in active listening
- Keeps request simple
- Contributes to the group in a positive manner

(B) Works well with diverse individuals and situations

- Works well with the opposite gender
- Works well with different ethnic groups
- Works well with those of different religious orientations
- Works to satisfy needs of patrons
- Displays a willingness to work with others

(C) Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

- Discusses concerns with Mrs. Watkins as needed
- Displays friendliness with others
- Is polite to others
- Seeks information
- Is not bossy

Leadership Skills Handout

- Occasionally serves as a leader
- Occasionally serves as a follower
- Is trustworthy, reliable, and dependable
- Enlists others in working towards a shared vision-good library service
- Compliments others
- Celebrates accomplishments
- Recognizes others
- Offers to help
- Checks with Mrs. Watkins as needed

Work Ethic Handout

(A) Dependability

- On time
- Is organized/ has handouts in binder
- Completes projects on time
- Brings needed materials

(B) Attitude/Personal Best

- Cooperative
- Respectful to all
- Integrity
- Knows right from wrong
- Is an active listener
- Is flexible

(C) Initiative

- Effort
- Accepts responsibility
- Uses time wisely
- Is a problem solver

TEACHER FEEDBACK

"I am so impressed with your students! They come right into the library and get busy. You don't even have to say anything to them."

Kelly Brown, 6th grade Teacher

"The time your students have saved me is unbelievable! Now I have more time to do what I do best, and that is to teach."

Heath Dudley, 6th grade Teacher

"This class has really been helpful. I now can get all my papers run by the students and I can spend time on science."

Dan Watkins, 7th grade Science teacher

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"I thought Library Media Service was a great class. It taught me communication skills and how to work with other people. It takes hard work and patience to be in the class and you have to listen to directions. Over all the class was a lot of fun and I learned a lot from it."

Erin Brumback, 8th grader

"I think this class was fun because you got to work with the copy machines and there was no homework."

Zach Thomas, 8th grade

"I thought this class was wonderful! You get to experience many different things. You also have to work with others and learn how to work as a team."

Katrina Ippel, 7th grade

"What I liked about this course was meeting other people that I did not know. I would recommend this course to anyone. We had a lot of different people in this class, which made it interesting. I also liked the different rounds we did each week. It helped us to find out how hard it really is to work in a library."

Jill Nowakowski, 7th grade

"This course is pretty easy. All you need to do is have a great attitude and pay attention! There is no homework and it is like study hall, but you are active. You get to deliver things to other people.

Aaron Heorst, 8th grade

SELECTED STUDENT TASK LISTS

Computer Log In*

1. After students check in, they come to the Computer Log In if they need to use a computer.
2. Have students tell you what they need. (Internet, Printing, OPAC)
3. VERY IMPORTANT!!!!!!! If a student needs to save their work, he or she must restart the computer and log on to his or her student account.
4. If students need the Internet, they must have their Agenda.
5. Tell them to open their Agenda to page 21.
6. Check to make sure the students have their Internet ID.
7. Make sure to write down the ID Letter after assigning them to a computer.
8. Students do NOT need their Agenda for OPAC.
9. Seat students where you can watch the monitors.
10. Absolutely no email or chat rooms.
11. If a student needs to email a website or Power Point project, he or she must speak with Mrs. Watkins.
12. Every Wednesday, clean off the monitor screens.
13. See Mrs. Watkins for supplies.
14. Walk around and look at monitors, if you see something that doesn't look appropriate, get Mrs. Watkins at once.
15. You are not a policeman, but it is very important to watch the screens.
16. If students leave the computer, check the box that says "OUT."
17. Computers with a red stop sign are not working.
18. On Thursdays, using the ID Letter, write down which computer is not working.
19. Mrs. Watkins will show you how to report non-working computers.
20. If you have trouble, see Mrs. Watkins.
21. Inform students when they only have 5 minutes left.
22. Every day at 2:40, turn off all computers!

** This job description was designed by the students in the 1st Media Services class.*

Copy Room*

1. Know which machine to use for each job.
2. Use the Risograph for more than 20 copies.
3. Get daily jobs from the task basket.
4. Check the due date on each form. Do the projects needed for the next day first.
5. Sign your name to the blue form. After signing your name, you are then responsible for the job.
6. If you have questions, check with Mrs. Watkins. If she is not sure, she will have you check with the teacher.
7. The stapler and 3-hole punch are kept in Mrs. Watkins' office. You must put them back on her desk at the end of each day.
8. If you cannot finish a job, put it on the bottom shelf of the cart in the copy room. Who ever signed the blue form is responsible for finishing the job the next school day.
9. If you have not finished a job and the next day is a rotation day, tell Mrs. Watkins when you come in and then finish the job before you rotate.
10. Some jobs are very large. If you need help, the person staffing Student Check In can either punch holes or staple. If you need additional help, use the person staffing the Back Room.
11. Make sure you check and recheck your work before having the Errand Runners deliver the materials.
12. If you have trouble, see Mrs. Watkins.

Errand Runners*

1. Know which day is your day to run errands.
2. Put on the ID first thing when class starts and let Mrs. Watkins know you are the runner.
3. Let Mrs. Watkins know when you have materials to deliver.
4. When running an errand, go directly to the destination and return to the Library immediately. Failure to do so, will result in losing the privilege of running errands.
5. Hand materials to the teacher.
6. If the teacher is not there, return to the Library with the materials.
7. Place the returned materials on the bottom shelf of the cart in the copy room to be delivered the next school day.
8. Always be polite, smile, and say "Thank you".
9. If you have problems, see Mrs. Watkins.

Lamination & Letter Machine*

1. Get daily jobs from the task basket.
2. Some laminating might be placed by the laminator, so check there also.
3. If there is something to laminate, turn the Power swith on.
4. The laminator takes 15-20 minutes to heat up.
5. When the yellow light turns green, the laminator is ready.
6. Before you laminate, remove the teacher's name from the material to be laminated.
7. Flip Monitor switch to run.
8. Count to 3 and feed the material in.
9. After the end of the material is through the roller, count slowly to 3 and feed in the next item.
10. When you are finished, turn off the Motor switch. You can leave the Power switch on until 2:40.
11. The last thing you do everyday is to make sure the Power switch is off.

Triming Lamination:

1. After trimming, pick up all excess and place in wastebasket.
2. If you have a lot of trimming, the students staffing Student Check In and Processing can help.
3. If you have a lot of numbers or letters, ask Mrs. Watkins for an envelope.
4. Put any job that is not finished on the bottom of the cart in the copy room.
5. Finish the job the next school day.
6. Give the job to the errand runners to deliver.

Letter Machine:

1. The first thing every day check the order of the letters to make sure each block has been put away in the correct slot.
2. Check the task basket for daily jobs.
3. Sign your name to the white form. You are then responsible for the job.
4. Check off each letter after you cut it.
5. Clean up all scraps.
6. Put any job that is not finished on the bottom of the cart in the copy room.
7. Finish the job the next day.
8. Give the job to the errand runners to deliver.
9. Always put letter cuts away after use.

If you need help, see Mrs. Watkins

** This job description was designed by the students in the 1st Media Services class.*

Processing*

Processing Magazines:

1. Check the magazines off in the ledger.
2. Place a checkmark on the 1st or 2nd letter of the title.
3. Those with information on the spine get clear tape.
4. All others get the white tape on the spine.
5. Each white taped spine must be marked with the month.

1=Jan	4=Apr	7=Jul	10=Oct
2=Feb	5=May	8=Aug	11=Nov
3=Mar	6=Jun	9=Sept	12=Dec

6. Use the purple marker.
7. Cover spine info with a label protector.
8. Display new magazines in the blue binders.
9. Put the old magazines away in the magazine room.

Staffing the magazine room:

1. Help students when they want magazines.
2. Do NOT allow other students in the magazine room.
3. Put any magazines away that are in the wire basket.
4. The magazines are on the shelves alphabetically.
5. There is a listing by the door and inside the room of all magazines and the shelf it is on.

Assigning bar codes to the most popular magazines:

1. Students like to check out certain magazines.
2. Take the following magazines to the computer sitting on the desk behind the circulation desk:

Seventeen	All car magazines
YM	All Beckett's

3. Open the file folder that says Follet.
4. Select Cataloging.
5. Mrs. Watkins will teach you the rest.

Student Check In*

1. Check in all students coming into the Library with the exception of a scheduled class.
2. Mrs. Watkins will let you know if there is a scheduled class.
3. Study hall students stay the entire time unless their pass says otherwise.
4. Transfer all student names from the pass to the appropriate list.
5. Write so Mrs. Watkins can read it.
6. If you are not busy, you might be asked to trim lamination, punch holes, or shelve books.
7. Always keep your eyes on the entrance and the Check In desk.
8. Smile when patrons come in!
9. Bring a book or homework in case you have time to read.
10. If you have questions, see Mrs. Watkins.

** This job description was designed by the students in the 1st Media Services class.*

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BOYS AND READING MOTIVATION

by Angie Woodson

As a children's librarian, I am painfully aware of how outnumbered the male population is at our library. The girls flock to the *American Girls*, *Junie B. Jones*, and *Olsen Twins* series. The boys trudge in with their mothers and grudgingly ask to see their accelerated reader list. At some point in time, boys lose the enthusiasm they once had for Clifford the Big Red Dog and become reluctant, almost embarrassed to be caught with a book in their hands. The issue of boys and literacy is in need of some serious attention. We all like to complain, discuss and berate the fact that we never see boys reading, but what are the real issues and how can we as librarians work toward improving the situation?

First, it's important to lay the groundwork and understand why boys are more reluctant to read traditional fiction literature than girls. Michael Gurian (2001), author of *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*! discusses some profound scientific gender differences in learning styles. In his book, Gurian states, "Girls, for instance, can acquire their complex verbal skills as much as a year earlier than boys. Thus, quite often a preschool girl reads faster and with a larger vocabulary than a peer boy does, and she speaks with better grammar. In general, female brains develop quicker than male brains" (2001, p. 26-27). Based on Gurian's statement, we can assume that boys get a slow start in the education realm and have a difficult time catching up. This helps to explain why we stop seeing boys in the library around 4th grade and typically don't see them again until they have reached adulthood. If you have any experience in the children's librarianship world, I'm sure you've witnessed this disappointing trend first hand.

Allison Haupt, coordinator of Children's and Young Adults' Services with North Vancouver District Public Library, wrote an article for the *Teacher Librarian* magazine discussing the biological and developmental differences between the genders. In her article, Haupt (2003) refers to a book by Anne Moir and David Jessel, *Brain Sex*. In the book, Moir and Jessel suggest that the very environment of schools is unnatural to boys. They argue that "His is a world of action, exploration and things. But school tells him to sit quiet, listen, not fidget, and pay attention to ideas; everything, in fact, that his brain and body are telling him not to do." These natural biological urges experienced by boys obviously make learning in a traditional setting very difficult at times. These studies indicate if teachers do not adapt their teaching styles, boys will continue to struggle in the academic world. Failure to focus and learn in their education setting quite succinctly affects the boys' reading skills.

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has conducted extensive research on a term he calls, flow, "joy, creativity, the process of total involvement with life" (Smith, 2002, p. 28). One of the characteristics Csikszentmihalyi uses to define flow is a sense of competence and control. In other words, people enjoy doing things they are good at. They feel a sense of confidence by participating in activities, which they excel in. According to the research conducted by Gurian, Moir and Jessel, boys are not likely to excel at reading. This failure to read well will create an attitude of awkwardness and reluctance that we as librarians must work to change.

In addition to scientific obstacles faced by boys, they are also confronted by several social factors, which prevent them from being enthusiastic readers. Jon Scieszka, author of the *Time Warp Trio* series, wrote an article pointing out the lack of positive male role models for reading. Contributing to this problem is the fact that seventy-five percent of elementary school teachers in the United States are women and the female elementary librarian is closer to eighty percent (Scieszka, 2003). Because of this demographic, boys are unfortunately subject to lesson plans, reading lists and activities that have subconsciously been geared toward girls. Although *Jane Eyre*, *Little Women* and *The Color Purple* are outstanding works of literature, they are not the type of material boys are attracted to. An important step in motivating boys to read is understanding the types of materials they enjoy and why they find these things stimulating.

I am always disappointed to hear parents discourage their sons from reading magazines, newspapers, or

comics. "No, you need to pick out a *real* book" is a common admonition heard by boys. The interesting thing that boys and adults fail to realize is that those non-traditional formats still require reading to communicate ideas. We need to drop the snobby attitudes and realize that these alternative forms of literacy are okay. In fact, they're more than okay, they're great! Graphic novels, comic books, websites, e-mails, magazines, and newspapers all require reading as the means of exchanging ideas. We, as librarians, need to expand our horizons and explore these different forms of reading. Let's start graphic novel book clubs. Why not begin a website club where the kids research and annotate different websites each month? The sites could be published on a bookmark each week and distributed to the public.

Motivating boys to read is a problem that deserves and needs our attention. Let's face this challenge. The ideas are endless, and I promise, the rewards will be too.

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GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMICS IN LIBRARIES

by Daniell Wilkins

Like many librarians (and would-be librarians!), I was skeptical of the value of comic books and graphic novels. My encounters with the genre were limited. I had once browsed through a friend's collection of Calvin and Hobbes, and I had seen fierce, scantily-clad warriors on the covers of comics at newsstands. I knew Superman, Batman and Spider-man began as comic book heroes. I dismissed comic books along with the super-heroes as adolescent male fantasies to be, hopefully, out-grown. I never entertained the idea that comics or their cousins, graphic novels, could have meaningful messages or be aids in teaching literacy.

Then one Saturday, my boyfriend dragged me into a comic store to pick up the latest edition of Ultimate Spider-man. He noticed a copy of Alan Moore's *Watchman* and exclaimed excitedly, "I've been looking for my copy of this. I think you'd like it. It's not your typical super-hero story. The super-heroes in it are these very flawed people; you'd have to be a little screwed up to dress up in tights and a cape. It really changed the comic book industry when it was published!" Well, I had to read a graphic novel for class, so we began reading it together. Not an easy read either from a comprehension standpoint or emotionally, *Watchman* stood every idea I had about comics on its head.

"GOOD" LITERATURE"

Moore's story is complex without the obvious good triumphing over evil I expected from comics. His characters have depth and he places them in history, making frequent references to actual events. He employs literary techniques writing a story within a story, using double entendre and symbolism and his depictions of women are statuesque with fairly realistic proportions (although they still fight in heels). My stereotypes of comic books proved to be shallow generalizations.

My experience is not unique. Maureen Mooney in her article, "Graphic Novels, How They Can Work in Libraries," recounts a similar story: "The intellect of the authors and illustrators...amazed me. Several included references to classic literature or had illustrations that only made sense if the reader has some prior knowledge of history and literature"(3). Reading such novels requires the reader to make connections not only between the text and pictures but also to previous knowledge developing skills of synthesis and interpretation. Moore's works are not the only graphic novels that break the mold. There are others including *Bone, The Tale of One Bad Rat and Maus.*

Besides being good literature, graphic novels belong in libraries because librarians have a mandate to provide materials "for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community"(Library Bill of Rights). Graphic novels have a wide readership that defies categories. Ranma ½ and the Elfquest series appeal to both genders (Crawford, 1; Bruggeman, 2). Some graphic novels contain adult material (Watchmen and the Sandman series), but some are aimed at elementary age children (Bone and Little Miss Adventures). While graphic novels often find a ready audience among reluctant and emerging readers, the widely-read and well-educated are also some of the biggest fans. Neil Gaiman, author of the popular Sandman series, recounts how teachers told him reading comics would stop him from reading more "serious" works. He would tell them, "But I've already read all the books in the library" (Gaiman, 1). A failure to collect graphic novels and comics does a disservice to many groups of people.

Michele Gorman, a young adult librarian who has written about graphic novels in the library community, says, "I think that if we as librarians only use tools that we understand, that we enjoy ourselves, then we're going to miss a majority of the kids whom we serve" (Foster, 2). Librarians are charged with not letting their personal bias in the way of providing access (ALA Code of Ethics). Graphic novels are no exception.

TOOLS FOR LITERACY

Educators have been discovering that comic books are an excellent way to get reluctant readers to read because of action-packed storylines and pictures which help interpret the text (Foster, 2). In "A Novel Approach: Using Graphic Novels to Attract Reluctant

Readers and Promote Literacy", Philip Crawford, cites research by Stephen Krashen indicating "light reading" is the surest way to influence kids to read (1). Giving children something they can succeed with, understand, and find enjoyable will hook them on the idea of reading.

Comics teach emergent readers about literary devices such as foreshadowing and flashbacks and actively engage the reader in decoding meaning by through the alternating interpretation of visual and textual clues (Mooney, 1). Graphic novels of a higher reading comprehension level, like Watchmen, employ allusions and metaphors while even the basic superhero comics teach plot, conflict and setting (Foster, 2). Because the pictures support the text, comic books can be useful in helping second-language learners master a language (Crawford, 1).

DEVELOPING A COLLECTION

How do you go about developing a graphic novel collection? Graphic novels are a relatively new genre to libraries and one with a unique format. Creating a collection can appear daunting especially if you're not a fan. Maybe you'll never love the X-Men as much as Little House on the Prairie, but you should familiarize yourself with what's popular. As recently as 1997, sources exclusively reviewing graphic novels were scarce and developing a relationship with your local comic book store was your best bet (Bruggeman, 3). This continues to be an excellent way to both chose and purchase for your collection. Browsing the shelves and talking with the manager keeps you in touch with what is popular in your community and you can get advice from an expert (Gorman, 2).

With the increasing acceptance of graphic novels as part of the library's collection, review sources and vendors are more readily accessible. Kat Kan writes a monthly column reviewing graphic novels and comic books in VOYA. Kan also reviews for Diamond Comics, the world's largest distributor of comics and a library-friendly vendor. (http://bookshelf.diamondcomics.com/reviews). Other mainstream publishers such as Baker and Taylor now carry graphic novels as well.

Comic books are written for a wide variety of audiences. Considering who you wish to target will help you choose appropriate books for your collection. Superhero comics are still the most popular especially with upper elementary students and teens. Manga (Japanese-style comics) are popular with girls. Many of the top-rated graphic novels contain adult material so be sure to investigate before purchasing for a juvenile collection. Look for age recommendations on top-picks lists.

Most libraries suggest creating a separate section for graphic novels and comics unless you want them buried in the 741s. Lora Bruggeman says her library organizes their collection either by author or character, whichever the book is more highly identified with (5). Place graphic novel and comics face outward so that their eye-catching covers will do their job. Get the word out that you have a graphic novel collection. Bruggeman's library sent out press releases to the local junior and senior high.

The controversial nature of some comics and the stereotypes some patrons will have of them often causes them to be challenged. Add a section to your collection policy indicating your reasons for collecting this format. Post information about graphic novels in general and reviews of specific titles to educate concerned adults. Shelve graphic novels and comics away from areas for small children (Gorman, 3).

The literature differs on whether to purchase paperbacks or bound volumes. Bruggeman recounts: "Our graphic novels covered with book tape have worn badly and have lost pages" (4). Gorman believes "kids are more apt to check [graphic novels/comics] out if they can cram them into their backpacks or back pockets" (3). She suggest taping the spines and the edges when they begin to show wear.

With some effort, your graphic novels will likely become one of the most highly circulated parts of your collection. You will be reaching reluctant readers, encouraging emergent ones and providing a service to some often-overlooked segments of your community.

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GENDER ISSUES IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

by Kathryn Jacobs

Whether we are expanding our lives through knowledge or imagination, there is no doubt that reading plays a crucial role in this process. Largely because of this, reading continues to be one of the most highly debated components in the education of our children. When they are young we argue the best way to teach children to read. Once we've taught them *how*, the arguments turn to the best way to actually get them do it. Any educator or librarian knows you can lead teens to a book but you can't make them read it. So we do everything from forcing them to read (mandatory school reading times) to bribery (reading incentive programs). Yet, in our quest to persuade young adults to read, we may sometimes forget that it is also important what they read and *what* they take away from the experience.

Like all other media bombarding us with images and information at every turn, books play a significant role in transmitting society's culture to our youth. Gender roles are an important part of this culture. Whether it is the topic of one's own sexuality or the ongoing struggle for equality among the sexes, gender issues factor into most every part of our society. How the genders are portrayed in young adult literature contributes to the image young adults develop of their gender roles and the role of gender in the social order. This issue is made more complex by the fact that gender plays an important role in the reading choices of young men and women.

While the study of gender issues has become a legitimate and growing field, almost all attention is focused on issues surrounding women and homosexuals. What follows is a discussion on the issue of gender in young adult literature as it pertains to both girls *and* boys. Educators and librarians must educate themselves on this critical subject. Moreover, we must pass on that knowledge to young adults, teaching them to read critically so that our youth will become skilled at forming their own opinions and not unquestioningly incorporate all messages they receive.

THE VALUE OF YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

For many years a bias has existed against young adult literature. The writing was considered simple and the plots of little real substance. As with any genre of literature, some young adult novels could still be described as such. Today, however, this is not the norm. Presently there are many books written by talented authors that explore a variety of important issues. Unfortunately, these works are still looked over by educators in favor of the "classics." High school teachers continue to try to teach works by Steinbeck, Hemingway and the Bronte sisters and continue to be frustrated when many of the students simply refuse to read the books. Young adult literature has a readability and high interest level that appeals to every adolescent, especially males who are notorious for being reluctant readers. Research has shown that introducing young adult literature to males improves their reading ability (Ballash 1994). That is not to say that boys are drawn to these books solely because they are easy to read. Young men also relate to books with adolescent male characters whose social and emotional conflicts mirror their own. Because of this mirroring of true life, research has suggested that reading adolescent literature can play a significant role in the emotional and mental health of an adolescent (Gill 1999). Our responsibility as librarians and educators is to find books that help our young males become more literate. But what books will draw in adolescent males?

GENDER BOUNDARIES IN YOUNG ADULT READ PRACTICES

Research has confirmed what we all have witnessed in practice; girls are far more likely than boys to read a variety of books, crossing perceived gender boundaries (Dutro 2001). This is encouraged in our culture. We support girls when they wish to read about romance and mysteries. We applaud them when they read a book about sports or science fiction. But does this same support exist for boys in their reading practices?

Recent research has found that, when it comes to recommending books to boys, teachers tend to use conventional understanding to reinforce traditional

ideas of gender and gender preferences, thus denying boys wider reading choices and chances to expand their tastes (Millard 1997; Telford, 1999). This behavior can be seen in other areas as well, including the library and library literature. There are many articles in journals with suggested reading for the reluctant reader we call the teenage boy. The vast majority of books on these lists are about an adolescent male character participating in sports or honing his survival skills while on some distant, dangerous adventure. These books are what the librarians are told to recommend, so it is no surprise to see this occurring regularly in practice in youth services departments all over the country. So what about the young man browsing the shelves for something new and different? Perhaps he was just about to pick up a book on a teenage girl who cuts herself compulsively when the librarian walks up and offers him a book about a teenage boy who got kicked off the football team. If we constantly push books about sports because we think it is the only thing we could possibly get a boy interested in, then we are perpetuating stereotypes and perhaps making it uncomfortable for young men to expand their horizons and read about new ideas.

Rather than suggest books by subject, consider recommending books with certain characteristics that appeal to boys. In 2001 researcher and educator Jeff Wilhelm published the results of an extensive and unique study focusing on the reading practices and preferences of boys. Wilhelm discovered certain common features of texts that adolescent males found especially appealing. The boys in this study preferred short books or books written in shorter sections, giving them a more immediate sense of accomplishment that longer books did not. They also favored highly visual texts. It should be noted that these works can either contain actual visuals or simply be written in a way that evokes strong visual imagery. Works containing humor, new perspectives and interesting facts were valued. These elements were sought after and often shared later in social situations, proving boys could be interested in book discussion groups given the right circumstances. Finally, although interested in factual information, the boys in this study preferred facts be presented in a storied way, bringing the information to life and putting it in a context that was meaningful to them.

It should be noted that like adults, adolescents are individuals and their reading preferences will thus be individualized. Both boys and girls are interested in new and different reading opportunities. Librarians and educators must work to consciously recognize stereotypes and avoid them.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GENDER REPRESENTATION IN YA LITERATURE

The manner in which genders are represented in adolescent literature has the capability to impact young adults' attitudes and perceptions of gender-appropriate behavior in society. As author Mem Fox (1993) states, "Everything we read...constructs us, makes us who we are, by presenting our image of ourselves as girls and women, as boys and men." Young adults may be particularly susceptible to gender portrayals in literature as they work through a stage in life in which they are searching to define themselves. Gender stereotypes in literature can prevent young adults from reaching their full potential as human beings by depriving them of suitable role models and reinforcing age-old gender constraints in society. These stereotypes exist for both genders and are equally dangerous. While girls are portrayed as passive and weak, boys and men are rarely presented as feeling and vulnerable human beings. These typecasts limit the adolescent's freedom to express him/herself and pressure the young person to behave in ways that may not be best suited to his or her personality (Fox 1993, Rudman 1995).

FEMALE GENDER REPRESENTATION ISSUES

Teenage girls spend a great deal of time trying on new roles and searching for examples by which to define themselves. It has often been suggested that the media play a significant role in the development of the female gendered identity. Every form of media from film to advertising to popular music has been criticized for presenting insidious messages about femininity to society. Not only do these messages shape and sometimes distort the way males view females in our society, but also they can shape the way females define themselves. Magazines targeted at teenage girls are overflowing with fashion advice, beauty secrets and tips on how to attract that perfect boyfriend. These publications do little to show girls that they have anything to offer society other than to be attractive to men. Popular icons such as Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera enthusiastically promote sexuality and little else, leaving their young fans obsessed with trying to appear sexy. But what messages is young adult literature sending to our young girls?

As Finders (1996) explains, "Literacy events in and out of school provide an area in which the individual girl learns to read an write her roles and relationships." If books are helping to teach girls how to be girls, then what exactly are they teaching? A study of popular young adult literature by Julia Motes (1998) suggests that books targeted at the female reading population are "dominated by an obsession with appearance as well as a linkage of appearance to success with males and/or positions of prestige."

In these popular titles, initial descriptions of characters are wrought with detailed narrative of the girls' physical features, loaded with adjectives and

sometimes filling a full page of text. While this study focused on series fiction for girls, this same detail can be found in other critically acclaimed novels. Ann Brashares, in her 2001 novel *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, introduces the four main characters early on in the novel as all meet one last time before parting ways for the summer. Each of the characters is described in glowing detail as they take turns trying on a pair of pants. One character's description begins:

> They were used to Lena, but Carmen knew that to the rest of the world she was fairly stunning. She had Mediterranean skin that tanned well, straight,shiny dark hair, and wide eyes roughly the color of celery. Her face was so lovely, so delicately structured, it kind of gave Carmen a stomachache. Carmen once confessed her worry to Tibby that some movie director was going to spot Lena and take her away, and Tibby admitted she had worried the exact same thing (p. 14-15).

The description continues to explain how particularly stunning Lena is and how amazing she (and the other three girls) look in the pants. All the main female characters in Brashare's novel are characterized as attractive, but this is not unusual in a young adult novel. In teen literature, it seems to have become important the girls are beautiful or sexy. Orenstein (1994) claims that "girls know, in spite of the overt messages of success and achievement proffered them, that their body is their most valuable commodity; indeed, they believe it defines them."

If the characters in these novels are not particularly beautiful, they are miserable and self-deprecating. Take, for example the notorious Georgia, the leading character in Louise Rennison's 1999 diary-format novel *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*. Georgia, it would seem, is not your typical teenage ravishing beauty. However, it is difficult to accept she is as hideous as she would lead us to believe. A large portion of Georgia's diary is devoted to criticizing her own experience. Early on she lists six things she feels are "very wrong" with her life (p. 3). Four of these six things relate to her physical appearance. Later, after describing her ideal boyfriend (p. 17), Georgia flatly states, "Anyway, I'll never have a boyfriend because I am too ugly." It is possible, conversely, to see Georgia's self-deprecation as a reflection of how girls truly feel in our culture today. Bombarded by messages that the only real illustrations of femininity are models of physical perfection, impressionable teens and pre-teens feel increasing pressure to be gorgeous. This often-unattainable goal leaves adolescent girls obsessed with beauty and appearance, much like the fictional Georgia.

Another criticism of young adult literature for girls is that it is often dominated with the notion that attaining a boyfriend is the ultimate success in a female's life. If the main female character does not already have a boyfriend, she seeks one throughout the book and wins him in the end. "To have a boyfriend is presented within the text as the ultimate goal and the inevitable course of events" (Motes 1998). Rennison (1999) provides us with a fine example of this common theme in *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*. The reader witnesses the irrepressible main character Georgia fumble through a few dreadful relationships with less than appealing boys before the book concludes with her winning the eye of the boy she's been pining after all along, prompting her to scrawl cheerfully in her diary, "All is well that ends well. I am now nearly Robbie's girlfriend" (p. 234). While not overt the message presented by these books is that females are not sane, successful or happy people without a boyfriend.

But it is not enough to have a boyfriend; it must be the *right* boyfriend. While it is certainly commendable that a girl be selective in choosing a significant other, it is the way in which these characters choose that causes concern. The study by Motes claims that boyfriends are rarely described as or valued for anything other than their looks or coolness-factor (1998). Little to nothing is said about their internal traits or personal characteristics. Are they kind? Honest? Thoughtful? Moreover, do these girls even care? In *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*, Georgia begins her obsession with her future boyfriend (whom she refers to as "the Sex God") after seeing him only for a brief moment (p. 48). It is the fact that he is "gorgeous" and a member of a rock band that draws her to him. In truth, they spend much of the book not speaking to each other over a misunderstanding, and the reader learns next to nothing about his personal character as a human being. This same situation is repeated once again in *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* when Bridget decides Eric is the boy for her moments after laying eyes on him. She knows nothing more about him than the fact he's a soccer coach and "beautiful" (p. 69).

"Beautiful" is exactly the same term LaVaughn uses to describe Jody, the boy she has a crush on (p. 22) in Virginia Euwer Wolff's 2001 National Book Award Winner *True Believer*. She is so overwhelmed by his beauty that she never gets to know him for who he really is. This leads to heartbreak when she eventually discovers quite by accident that Jody is a homosexual.

To be fair, not all books starring teenage girls present these stereotypes. In fact, Wolff's *True Believer*, stands in the face of stereotypes and rejects them. The main character, LaVaughn, is not described as exceptionally beautiful. In fact, she's not described at all. Her height, weight, facial features and race are left entirely up to the reader to decide. While LaVaughn does develop a crush on Jody and thinks of him often, she

also is depicted studying, taking advanced classes, getting a responsible job and planning for college and a career in nursing. This teenage girl clearly has more to offer than her body and she knows it. Finally, LaVaughn's mother is an example to all girls and women, breaking-up with her boyfriend when it becomes clear he has nothing to offer the woman but hollow compliments (p. 184). LaVaughn, herself, is left without the boyfriend at the conclusion of the book. It is plain that this teenage girl does not require a boy to feel whole or successful. She is content to be surrounded by her friends, facing a promising future.

MALE GENDER REPRESENTATION ISSUES

While, in recent years, girls have been encouraged to develop and celebrate their girl power, boys do not have the equivalent boy power. "Boys need, and yet are still left wanting, the moral and functional force that our society now eagerly and properly grants to female human beings" (Brooks 2000). What is this "power" that girls enjoy but boys are being denied? It is the fundamental right to discover whatever one is and, then, fully be that without fear of judgment or rejection. We as a society have worked toward this for decades and have won it—for girls. Girls are encouraged to expand their roles and enter fields once considered traditionally male. On the other hand boys are not encouraged to cross gender boundaries for fear of being criticized as sissy or effeminate. There is no doubt that boys are just as capable as girls of being intelligent, creative or imaginative. But to participate in activities that highlight these abilities considered unmanly. Boys, too, need the right to discover and explore their talents, whatever they may be, without being judged as less of a person.

There have been recent critical studies of the themes and subject matter in young adult literature including female gender roles, the portrayal of racial minorities and homosexuals, sexuality and even spirituality. However, very little attention has been given to the portrayal of male characters in adolescent fiction or non-fiction. This is alarming. If girls and young women are having their ideas about femininity shaped by the fiction they read, then surely the same must be true for boys and masculinity.

Nodelman (2002) suggests that books for children and young adults perpetuate negative stereotypes of men and boys by reinforcing the assumption that concern for others is a feminine trait. He proposes that boys and men are forced to disguise their more tender feelings of love for or need for others. To care for others is to feel a sense of responsibility for others. Accepting these responsibilities is a sign of weakness and will lead to a loss of freedom. The general idea is that the portrayal of a responsible, conforming man is the portrayal of an emasculated man or a repressed man. As Nodelman puts it, "Real men revel in their anarchic impulses; do not necessarily obey the law or any presumed authority; and flee constraint by domesticity, or orderly employment, or the duties of good citizenship." Because of this, when boys appear in adolescent fiction, it is often so writers can characterize them as rebellious or aggressive.

Perhaps one of the finest examples of this "real man" in young adult literature can be seen in Gary Paulsen's novel *The Beet Fields* (2000). The nameless teenage boy depicted in this gritty novel flees domesticity, choosing to live a transient life doing migrant farm labor and working for a traveling carnival. The boy eagerly joins the carnival, modeling himself after the rough, sleazy carnival owner who "summed up everything he ever wanted to be in a man" (p. 106). Paulsen's novel concludes with the boy joining the Army, probably out of his avid sense of adventure and danger more than any desire to be responsible or conform.

Another example of this impulsive, rebellious man appears in Chris Crutcher's novel *Ironman* (1995). Crutcher's teen hero, Bo Brewster, repeatedly finds himself in trouble thanks to his aggressive and rebellious behavior. He is punished by isolation when, at the age of nine, he refuses to accept his father's degrading discipline and slams the front door so hard it cracks the windowpanes (p. 23). Later in life, when his football coach questions his masculinity, Bo quits the football team and storms off the field in a rage (p. 3). He continues this defiant behavior and is eventually sent to anger management class for an incident in which he calls a teacher an "asshole" (p. 8).

Writer Mem Fox (1993) has expressed her concern over the lack of emotion male characters have been allowed to show in children's and young adult novels. Fox worries the effect these books may have on young males, presenting the idea of manhood as being stoic, brave and bearing the overwhelming responsibility of providing for a family. She asks, "Could children's literature be partly to blame for trapping males in a frightful emotional prison and demanding intolerable social expectations of them?" In *Hanging on to Max* (2002), Margaret Bechard's novel about Sam, a teenage single father, the reader is presented with the image of an emotionally repressed boy bearing the crushing responsibility of raising his infant son. Although we see female characters cry in stressful situations like leaving a baby at daycare for the first time (p. 19) or being witness to a child's injury (p. 121), it is not until Sam decides to give his son up for adoption that he is allowed to break down and cry (p. 138). Even then, it is only for a few moments. Also, whereas the teen mothers are depicted as loving and nurturing toward their children, Sam is continuously portrayed as logical and emotionally distant. When teenage mother Claire

discusses her decision to keep her baby she phrases her choice in terms of "want," asking Sam if he felt the same way. Sam describes his choice in terms of responsibility, saying, "I'd known what I *had* to do." Because the tidy resolution of the novel may lead readers to believe that, since everything turned out well, Sam's behavior and choices were correct and, therefore, ideal. This message reinforces the belief that males should be unemotional and logical.

Stoic, macho and aggressive behavior is presented as natural to all boys, maybe even celebrated. This does not benefit boys, but only furthers stereotypes and discourages other behavior. Literature might do well to expand the definition of masculinity to include more positive characteristics. Brooks suggests "we can try acting as if boys were *nice* rather than surely dangerous, *intelligent* rather than merely instinctive, *moral* rather than selfishly opportunistic, *sensitive* rather than emotionally crude" (2000).

SUGGESTIONS FOR AVOIDING GENDER-BIAS IN LITERATURE

Whether writing or recommending books for young adults, there are steps you can take to recognize and avoid gender bias and gendered stereotypes. Rudman (1995) suggests several criteria appropriate to adolescent literature. First, fiction should avoid stereotypes, portraying characters as individuals. There is no shame in presenting a male or female character with negative characteristics, as long as that character is clearly drawn and unique, avoiding implications that he or she is typical and representative of his or her entire gender. Next, occupations and activities should be presented as accessible to both genders with typically male activities not being the standard for which all should strive. Achievements should be judged equally, not through gender role differences. There are few things more condescending than hearing "she's athletic...for a girl" or "he is a good artist...for a boy." Also, if physical descriptions of characters are necessary, they should be more representative of reality. Females need not always be portrayed as weaker, smaller, more delicate and exceptionally attractive. Males need not always be tall, strong, muscular and dreamy. Finally, males and females should be depicted as being both logical and emotional, depending on the situation and independent and dependant when appropriate.

Equally important is that the literature avoids being obvious in its attempts at equality. While well meaning, if the author does not approach the issue with finesse, the text easily becomes boring and preachy. Mem Fox, when discussing the issue of writing gender-equal books for children, expresses her belief that it is the insidious subtlety that has conditioned readers until now. To reverse the negative effects, writers need to be equally subtle. In her simple words, "Laboring the point kills the point of laboring" (1993).

CONCLUSION

Seek and you shall find. If one looks hard enough, one can find anything he or she wishes. It can easily be argued that critically acclaimed and award-winning books such as these are of such literary excellence that the characters are presented as individuals and the events and behaviors that occur are unique to their experience and not a general stereotype. Most studies regarding gender stereotypes in young adult literature, in fact, are based on the much maligned, cookie-cutter variety of adolescent literature such as series books. Others argue that, although it is clear gender bias does exist, literature is simply reflecting society. All literature reflects the author's experiences and knowledge, which are shaped by society. Still, Lehr (1995) suggests, "Perhaps it would be wise to acknowledge that there is much in literature that reflects the 'way things are,' but this reflection reinforces the status quo."

Perhaps the best strategy for combating gender bias in literature is to teach young adults literary awareness. The growing consensus is that we owe it to our youth to teach them to think critically about what they hear, see and read (Temple 1993). By teaching young adults to evaluate and question texts, we need not worry if they are unconsciously digesting harmful and distorted messages. Even as they grow old, teens will always be confronted with biased messages, whether it is in advertising, television or literature. What matters most is that they are aware of the messages being delivered and what they decide to do with them. As Motes (1998) states, "If readers are conscious of the gendered messages found in tests, they can choose to adopt those understandings or rebel against them." Done this way, reading holds the ability to entertain, educate and empower our youth.

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GLBTQ TEEN LITERATURE:

IS IT OUT THERE IN INDIANA?

by Jennifer Chance Cook

ABSTRACT

Fiction resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning (GLBTQ) youth are often difficult to find. Many libraries do not make a conscious effort to collect such materials, and some actually make an effort to avoid doing so. This is an extremely troubling pattern, since GLBTQ teens are a group that is desperately in need of strong support from caring adults. This article describes a preliminary study that explored whether such titles are available to Indiana's teens.

BACKGROUND

Research studies estimate that as many as one in ten people is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered (Endersbe, 2000, p. 8). An even higher percentage of young people may question their sexuality as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. GLBTQ teens grow up in a world that often assumes that they are heterosexual and one that poses both physical and psychological dangers. The need for role models and social support consistently comes up in the literature regarding services for GLBTQ youth.

Providing young adults with literature that features GLBTQ characters and themes helps homosexual youth to find role models and to recognize that they are not alone (Webunder and Woodard, 1996). Additionally, such literature offers heterosexual youth a way to experience diversity and broaden their understanding of what life is like for their homosexual peers. In Sanelli and Perreault's 2001 study, GLBTQ youth consistently expressed a desire to have "more books" with homosexual characters and themes.

METHODOLOGY

A list of 24 titles published in the U.S. between 1996 and 2000 was compiled from the children's and young adult novels listed in the annotated bibliography Lesbian and Gay Voices (Day, 2000). All of the works included in Day's bibliography are well-reviewed, present positive views of GLBTQ characters or themes, and are available in English. More than two-thirds of the 24 selected novels (Appendix A) include homosexual teen characters, while the remainder involve teens who have homosexual friends and family members.

Following the method suggested by Coley (2002), searches for the selected titles were made in forty-two county public library catalogs in Indiana. The sample was one of convenience and consisted of those county library systems with web-accessible OPACs. These libraries are located throughout the state and represent urban, suburban and rural communities with patrons who span the socioeconomic spectrum.

RESULTS

Of the forty-two Indiana library systems selected for this study, the vast majority had at least one title on the list. However, half of the systems held fewer than five of the twenty-four selected titles, and nine of those systems did not include a single one of these well-reviewed novels in their collection. Eleven of the sample library systems held ten or more titles and four held at least twenty titles, with the largest number of titles held being 22.

These novels were found in various sections of the libraries that held them. In fact, three of the selected novels could be found in children's, young adult/teen, and adult sections depending on the library system. While the novels selected for the test list were all ones which Day's bibliography listed as recommended for young adults, fifteen of the novels were placed in the adult section of at least one of the sample libraries. Additionally, seven of the titles appear in the children's section of one or more libraries.

All twenty-four of the sample titles were found in the catalog of at least one Indiana county public library system. However, only eight titles were held by at least one-third of the sample library systems and only one title, the Printz Honor Book and Eliot Rosewater Award nominee Hard Love, was held by over half of the library systems.

Table 1: Library Holdings Averages*

	Mean	Median
Number of Volumes	14.9	4.5
Number of Titles	6.7	4
Adult Titles	1.2	0.5
YA/Teen Titles	5.3	2.5
Juvenile Titles	0.6	0

*Note on Table 1: The large difference in the mean and median number of volumes is due to the sizable collections of the county library systems which serve our larger cities. The median is a better reflection of the number of volumes held in most Indiana county library systems.

DISCUSSION

Researchers have identified three primary reasons that young adults have difficulty accessing fiction with GLBTQ themes. Firstly, these works represent only a very small percentage of the market for young adult novels, less than 1% of the total number of titles. Secondly, many libraries do not make a concerted effort to collect what materials are available in this area. Finally, when such works are collected, shelving and cataloging choices frequently inhibit the ability of teens to access them (Clyde and Lobban, 2001.)

While libraries have limited control over how many GLBTQ themed books are written and published, we are in control of which titles are selected for inclusion in our collections and how thoroughly they are cataloged. It is those two factors that were examined in this study.

It is disappointing, although not altogether surprising, that most of the library systems in the sample held only a few of the well-written and well reviewed novels that made up the test list for this study. The data indicate that Hoosier librarians, like their counterparts in other regions, exhibit a tendency to self-censor by not collecting so-called "controversial" books.

Clyde and Lobban (2001) showed that in many places, those works that do make it into the collection are sometimes placed on restricted shelving or cataloged as adult materials, making it more difficult for teens to access them.

These trends were observable in the libraries selected for this study. One particular library system placed ten of the eighteen titles that it held in the adult section. The remaining libraries placed anywhere from zero to five titles in the adult section of the library, although in some cases titles were placed in both adult and teen sections, reflecting a broader readership.

Three of the titles (Girl Walking Backwards, Coachella, and Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit) were consistently placed in the adult section of each of the libraries that held them. This might be a reflection of the book genuinely having an adult audience as well as appealing to teens, or it could reflect a publishing industry trend of marking GLBTQ novels as the territory of adult fiction.

One final, and much more subtle, barrier to access is incomplete cataloging. While many of the studied libraries did indeed include subject headings such as "homosexuality – fiction" or "lesbians – fiction" in the catalog records for several of the titles, much room for improvement was observed. Most tellingly, five of the selected titles were not given any such subject heading by any of the sample libraries.

CONCLUSION

Although a few county library systems have obviously made a concerted effort to collect young adult literature with GLBTQ characters and themes, Indiana as a whole is not doing a sufficient job of providing literature for the GLBTQ teen population.

Quality works must be sought out, included in our collections and cataloged in such a way that they are easily identifiable. Librarians that serve young adults can also help to make these types of books more accessible through displays, booklists and awards programs. We also need to bring our catalogers on board and ensure that all books with GLBTQ characters and themes are given appropriate access points that will help teens to locate them more easily.

Because of the extreme pressures on this particular segment of the population, it is important that librarians take an activist stand on this issue. While such activities may open Indiana libraries up to pressures from censors, the stakes are simply too high for the profession to stand aside and do nothing to help this vulnerable section of our young adult population.

Table 2: Total Holdings Per Title

	Volumes	Libraries
Baby Bebop	57	16
My Father's Scar	16	11
Good Moon Rising	20	11
Out of the Shadows	10	6
The Blue Lawn	12	8
Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit	14	9
Breaking Boxes	38	18
Dare Truth or Promise	17	12
The Year They Burned The Books	41	18
"Hello," I Lied	45	19
Blue Coyote	9	5
What I Know Now	19	12
The Necessary Hunger	10	9
Ain't Gonna Be The Same Fool Twice	23	10
Tomorrow Wendy	14	7
Coachella	1	1
Girl Walking Backwards	9	5
The House You Pass On The Way	40	16
If It Doesn't Kill You	21	15
Holly's Secret	18	8
Oasis	21	12
Whistle Me Home	41	19
Hard Love	108	24
Name Me Nobody	21	11

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APPENDIX A: TEST SAMPLE OF 24 GLBTQ TEEN BOOKS

Books with GLBTQ Protagonist:

Baby Be-Bop, Francesca Lia Block

Dare Truth or Promise, Paula Boock

My Father's Scar, Michael Cart

Good Moon Rising, Nancy Garden

The Year They Burned The Books, Nancy Garden

Out of the Shadows, Sue Hines

"Hello," I Lied, M.E. Kerr

Blue Coyote, Liza Ketchum

What I Know Now, Rodger Larson

The Necessary Hunger, Nina Revoyr

Ain't Gonna be the Same Fool Twice, April Sinclair

Tomorrow Wendy, Shelly Stoehr

Coachella, Sheila Ortiz Taylor

The Blue Lawn, William Taylor

Girl Walking Backwards, Bett Williams

Oranges are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson

The House You Pass on the Way, Jacqueline Woodson

Books with a Straight Protagonist:

If It Doesn't Kill You, Margaret Bechard

Holly's Secret, Nancy Garden

Breaking Boxes, A.M. Jenkins

Oasis, Gregory Maguire

Whistle Me Home, Barbara Wersba

Hard Love, Ellen Wittlinger

Name Me Nobody, Lois-Ann Yamanaka

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HOMOSEXUAL THEMES, ISSUES, AND CHARACTERS IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE: AN OVERVIEW

by Dawn Savage

INTRODUCTION

Statistics on the proportions of homosexual individuals in the U.S. have important consequences for young adult literature and young adult collection development. For example, "According to the Kinsey Institute, ten percent of our population is homosexual, so in an average American high school of one-thousand, one-hundred teens may be gay."[1] Young adult literature that addresses the issue of homosexuality is very relevant when it is considered that in 1994 two million young adults aged 13-19 claimed to be homosexual.[2] This is certainly a sizeable number, particularly given that many "fear rejection by their parents and other relatives should they choose to reveal their sexual orientation."[3]

When authors use homosexuals as main characters, they have the opportunity to give readers more insight into the physical, emotional, and social relationships that occur between two people of the same sex. When authors use homosexuals as secondary characters, the effect often is to distance the reader from any involvement in the issues surrounding homosexuality by viewing them through the eyes of a heterosexual. Many young adult books featuring homosexual characters are often stereotypical. Many also portray negative consequences as the result of the homosexual lifestyle.

Librarians should be aware of these two prevalent approaches in order to better tailor the collection to the needs of different audiences. Some readers may be struggling to identify their sexuality. Others may know someone who is homosexual and may simply be curious about that lifestyle: "Young adult books frequently show young teens that they are not the only ones who experience problems and even turmoil when dealing with their bodies and sexuality, with changing relationships with parents and friends, with more philosophically advanced ways of thinking about themselves, the world, and their place in it."[4] Young adults experience dramatic physical and emotional changes and the literature they read can reaffirm the way they feel about their sexuality or about those who differ in sexuality from them. Young adults who have friends who are struggling with their sexual identity will be hard pressed to find literature that could alleviate these uncertainties. They will be even less likely to find literature that portrays the homosexual lifestyle in a favorable light.

"Young adults have many questions and much misinformation about homosexuality and reading is one of the few private ways for adolescents to gather information about this subject."[5] It is suggested that "Reading a book is safer for a gay teenager than talking to a person...because there is no risk of rejection from a book."[6] The books that the libraries provide them can help "assuage the fears of gay and lesbian YAs, assuring them that they are not alone. But just as importantly, it will give heterosexual youth a picture of and perhaps some insight into the larger world around them."[7]

Unfortunately there is bias in many fiction novels written for young adults that feature homosexual characters. Many of the books that have been written for and about gay or lesbian teens portray retribution for teens being gay and "may inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes."[8] Because of the rarity of books about homosexual young adults, the views found in these books often express "the social attitudes prevailing at the time in which they were written and published."[9] There are numerous examples that clearly show such retribution for being homosexual: *"I'll Get There*; Isabell Holland's *The Man Without a Face*; *Trying Hard To Hear You* by Sandra Scoppettone; and Lynn Hall's *Sticks and Stones*—either the gay character or someone... close to the gay character dies, usually in a car crash."[10]

Stereotypes can also lead the reader into believing the worst about the homosexual population through homophobic main characters in many books. When writing about homosexual characters "beginning in the eighties, the gay/lesbian character often became secondary (like Jerry in Robert Lipsyte's 1981 novel, *Summer Rules*, for example) —the character becomes a friend of, neighbor of, teacher of or relative of the heterosexual main character."[11] This is evident throughout contemporary young adult novels such as *Angus,*

Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging by Louise Rennison; Virgiana Euwer Wolff's *True Believer*; and Chris Crutcher's *Ironman*.

YA NOVELS WITH MINOR CHARACTERS WHO ARE HOMOSEXUAL

This approach allows the author to broach the topic while still distancing the story from the central issues relating to homosexuality. When using secondary characters, the author does not need to describe the personal relationship that occurs between two same sex people. Therefore the reader is able to view the lives of homosexuals through the eyes of the main character. Such stories typically remain uncensored, unlike books that have carried homosexuals as main characters.

In *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison, the main character Georgia believes her gym teacher, Miss Stamp, to be a lesbian. Georgia is outraged that they had to play a new game in gym and expresses it in this diary-like book: "Miss Stamp is obviously a sex pervert as well as clearly being a lesbian. Why else would anyone make girls run around in sports knickers hitting a ball with sticks?"[12]

This is not the only occasion in which Rennison expresses homophobia through her main character Georgia. Later in the book, Miss Stamp, who is merely a secondary character in this novel, is talking with the class about personal hygiene and body odor. The girls get so disgusted they all run to take a shower. The main character describes the event thus: "Miss Stamp was amazed—she usually has to prod us and shout at us to change at all in winter. She came and looked at us in the shower in amazement. Then we remembered she was a lesbian. So we ran screaming out of the shower. It's a bloody nightmare of pervs, this school."[13] Such portrayals encourage the reader to believe the stereotype that all lesbians are perverts. It also gives the impression that one would not be safe in a locker room around anyone who has a different sexual orientation. Rennison's character also falls into the stereotype that lesbians cannot be feminine women and talks of Miss Stamp growing facial hair.

For some young adults, this characterization will be unimportant because they have had other sources of information. However, there will be some young adults who will take this simplistic description of lesbiansim at face value. Due to the fact that Miss Stamp is a secondary character, the issue of homosexuality is peripheral to the story. The attention that is given is negative and can provide overly simplistic and stereotypical information about homosexuality for young adults.

True Believer by Virginia Euwer Wolff follows LaVaughn who has fallen in love with a homosexual boy. Jody is therefore unobtainable as a boyfriend because of his sexual preferences. LaVaughn's reaction to this discovery is violent and hateful: "I went to my closet with scissors in my hand and I cut my blue crushed velvet dress up the middle, laid it open like a wound. I never did such a thing as that before in my life."[14] LaVaughn is angry and jealous of the boy who is with Jody when in her mind it really should be her.

LaVaughn's character then chooses to ignore Jody because of this. She describes how "I already knew how to avoid his schedule going through side doors and back ways. But everything was inside out now. Two boys kissing. Would I dream such a thing? No."[15] LaVaughn struggles with this new discovery regarding Jody's sexual orientation and refuses to share it with anyone. Yet while she shuns Jody, she later realizes she misses her friendship with him.

Although this is a story of a homosexual boy being pursued by a heterosexual girl, Wolff does recognize the need to develop some finality to the choice the boy has made and the acceptance that finally comes from LaVaughn, when her character observes that "I knew I could keep freezing myself away from Jody pretending I could change him or I could quit doing that."[16] LaVaughn realizes that she can't change Jody for who he is or his homosexuality.

The author shows Jody's homosexuality through the eyes of LaVaughn. Because Jody is a secondary character, the reader does not learn the name of the boy he was kissing. Nor does the reader learn of homosexuality as a relationship other than it is obviously seen by LaVaughn, as a physical one. Certainly, a disadvantage to using secondary characters is that it may lead young adults to believe that homosexuality is based upon purely physical responses.

Chris Crutcher also uses a homosexual character as a secondary character in *Ironman*. This character takes the role of Bo's swim coach, Mr. Serbousek, whom Bo respects. He is angry and defensive when his father suggests that Mr. Serbousek is gay, saying,"Dad, Mr. Serbousek is not a homo."[17] Bo's father insists that if he does not have a wife or a girlfriend than he must be a homosexual and that Bo should be careful because, "You never know what those guys have in mind."[18] Within this very short conversation the reader is exposed to the point of view that homosexuals can not be trusted and that they make unwanted advances on people of the same sex. This conversation between father and son allows the author, using the father, to show bigotry and hatred to homosexuals that later reflects on Bo's actions toward his coach. While Bo learns to accept his coach's homosexuality, a reader must process these negative messages and Bo's confusion about his own attitudes before arriving at a more accepting perspective. The author is able to introduce

Mr.Serbousek's homosexuality through the perspective of the main character, Bo, and still keep some distance from any relationships that may occur between Mr. Serbosek and his lover.

Crutcher uses the secondary character of a swimming coach to bring out some very difficult issues concerning young adults and homosexuality such as insecurity, curiosity, bigotry, and isolation. When Bo finds out from Mr. Serbousek that the rumors are true and that he is a homosexual, Bo is shocked, "He sleeps with a man. I mean, he doesn't sleep with him, necessarily; he has sex with him."[19] Although Crutcher is distancing the reader from the homosexual relationship between Mr. Serbousek and his lover, the reader gets a glimpse of what that relationship is like, "I have a male roommate, and he met Jack at a faculty Christmas party a couple of years ago."[20] This one sentence allows the reader to see that there is a relationship between the two men. The roommate has a name, Jack, and Mr. Serbousek is confident enough that he takes Jack to a Christmas party. These clips are all glimpses of a relationship between two people that the reader never meets.

Crutcher also masterfully shows the insecurity and uncertainty that young adults such as Bo face, when his main character explains "I mean, I don't think there's any danger, because I certainly have never felt anything like, you know, sexual, coming from Mr. S, But I can't help wondering if it means anything about me, that he likes me."[21] Similar to Louise Rennison's character, Georgia in *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging*, Bo finds himself wondering if he could be attacked or converted to homosexuality.

What makes Chris Crutcher's *Ironman* stand out above the other young adult novels that use secondary characters to introduce homosexuality as an issue is that small glimpse of the relationship between Mr. Serbesouk and Jack, his roommate. Crutcher uses a defining word that for their relationship; they are a "couple."[22] Bo confronts his insecurity, curiosity, bigotry, and isolation to renew his friendship with his swimming coach. Young adults learn through *Ironman* that as individuals there will still be strong feelings and emotions to overcome, but to ostracize a person because of their sexual orientation is damaging to that individual.

ADDITIONAL YA NOVELS WITH CHARACTERS WHO ARE HOMOSEXUAL

Books that have used homosexuals as main characters have historically been in danger of being censored. *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden is an important novel for lesbian young adults because it "examines what reality is for two young women coming to grips with their sexuality and trying to find models around which to structure their lives."[23] Young girls who struggle with their sexuality can read this novel and feel like they are not alone. The author uses the main characters of Liza and Annie to relate to the reader a lesbian relationship that begins innocently between two young adult females and blossoms into a loving relationship between two young women. When using a homosexual as a main character, the author has the ability to allow the reader to experience what the character is experiencing and to learn from the character.

Liza had not thought previously of being a lesbian prior to knowing Annie. Annie had a sexual attraction to Liza and after the two experimented, Annie wrote Liza a letter to confront the issue: "The thing is since you haven't thought about it—about being gay—I'm trying to tell myself very firmly that it wouldn't be fair of me—I don't know, influence, you try to push you into something you don't want, or don't want yet, or something." Annie really wants to love someone her own age. It is hard for her to think of letting Liza go. However, if Liza isn't prepared for a homosexual relationship then Annie doesn't want to force her into one. This kind of insight into the relationship that comes from two people that have been emotionally and physically involved cannot be fully explored in a novel where the characters are used as secondary characters.

Garden, "states that the body of gay literature can, 'help bring the gay community out of invisibility into the light...in turn [helping] our young people to grow up to be strong, healthy, members of society.'"[24] This kind of literature "could facilitate the acceptance and understanding of an important population invisible to the mainstream culture."[25] Consequently, *Annie on My Mind* made the ALA Best Book for Young Adults and was chosen A Booklist Reviewers Choice. Garden has also published another lesbian young adult novel called *Lark in the Morning*. Both novels are considered to be "milestones"[26] in the literature regarding homosexual young adults. Both have lesbian main characters; both "were published initially hardback and by a major press."[27]

However, these works are not universally acclaimed. In 1993 "a copy of the book was burned by religious fundamentalists in front of the Kansas City (MO) school district headquarters."[28] Several months later, the school district pulled the book from its shelves. The school district was sued by seven students and in 1995 it was ruled that "books cannot be removed simply because school officials disagree with certain ideas they contain."[29]

The Arizona Kid by Ron Koertge, published in 1988, is written from a slightly different perspective regarding the homosexual lifestyle. The main character is heterosexual, but he goes to stay with his uncle in Arizona and his uncle is homosexual. It is through this uncle-nephew relationship the reader learns about sexuality and gay issues. However, these "gay characteristics and gay issues are often depicted sympathetically,"[30] leading the reader to believe that they need to feel sorry for people that choose to live alternative lifestyles.

In the novel the main character, Billy, treats his uncle as if he is a child in many cases. When Billy's uncle explains that he is not coming home right away but going out to the bars, Billy questions him if he is going by himself. His uncle almost teasingly replies, "Why do I feel like a fifteen-year-old girl in her first miniskirt?"[31] Even with this approach, a young adult reader can learn about homosexuality by reading *The Arizona Kid*.

A more recent author, Francesca Lia Block, has become a controversial author for gay/lesbian teens: "Block continues to push at the limitations of 'appropriate' content in young adult books: she portrays transsexual, gay, and lesbian characters; she includes young people who drink alcohol and use/abuse drugs; and she describes sex explicitly and symbolically to convey both passion and emotional sterility."[32] Block's stories are vivid and leave nothing to the imagination. She is controversial because she broaches topics that many parents do not want their young adults to know or think about. Many of her books have been on censorship lists.

Weetzie Bat, an ALA Best Book for Young Adult award winner in 1990, was challenged in the Montgomery County Texas Library System in January of 2002. The group that wanted the book pulled did not approve of the fact that "Weetzie Bat follows the title character and her gay friend Dirk as they find true love."[33]

Girl Goddess # 9 contains nine separate stories that express "Feminism in a quiet way, female characters are at the center of each story, and, ultimately, each story celebrates the heroism with which these girls/women meet the challenges of their lives."[34] Block uses homosexuals as both secondary and main characters in her young adult novels to express her ideas and views on a variety of issues surrounding alternative lifestyles.

What makes this young adult novel so controversial is that the stories vary in appropriate reading and maturity level. There are a few stories in this novel that could be appropriate for a mature teenager. However, the majority of the stories reflected in this novel require the maturity level of an older audience. *The Horn Book Magazine* listed *Girl Goddess # 9* for older readers yet listed it as "Ages 12 through Young Adult."[35] Younger teens, for example, may understand what a transsexual is but not understand the implications of how one becomes a transsexual and why someone would choose to do so.

CONCLUSIONS

There will always be those who would prefer that librarians not serve the young adult population by using YA novels to inform them about issues such as homosexuality. "Adults have been eager to have the genre moralize, to perform a social service, while the adolescent has been eager for an understanding of society and his/her emerging, if continuing sexuality."[36] With these conflicting viewpoints it is not surprising that many librarians face difficult decisions when it comes to collection development in their young adult sections.

Nevertheless, the need for young adult novels that help with self-identification is great. "Some studies indicate that males may first be aware of being erotically attracted to other males as early as age twelve, and that same-sex erotic attraction by females can happen as early as age fourteen."[37] These young adults who are struggling with their sexual identity can learn from the literature that librarians place in their hands. "Particularly in the case of young adults, fiction can broaden their experiences and help them to understand different people and lifestyles."[38]

The role of the librarian should be to evaluate the books before selection of any young adult novel with a homosexual theme. "Does it give an accurate, sympathetic picture of gays for nongays, so that they can learn to appreciate and not fear differences in sexual and affectional preference; does it give young gays a clear view of the decisions facing them and show that these can be made successfully?"[39] The librarian's personal views about homosexuality are irrelevant; "we have an obligation to provide our gay students with the same resources as we do other minority students."[40]

It is important to remember that the young adult collection serves teens as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. The literature can help to inform, calm, reassure, and inspire them along the way. "Teenage library users deserve to be taken seriously and to have their requests treated equitably and their confidentially preserved."[41] Every library should strive to meet the needs of its users regardless of the issue involved. With authors using secondary and main characters to express homosexuality in their young adult novels, it is the librarian's responsibility to be conscious of the message that these different approaches convey. In order to best serve the different needs of teenage patrons, librarians must make reading recommendations and collection development deci-

sions with these differences very much in mind because "Library services can be pivotal to a teenager's well being."[42]

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WHY ARE REALISTIC YOUNG ADULT NOVELS SO BLEAK?: AN ANALYSIS OF BLEAK REALISM IN A STEP FROM HEAVEN

by Lisa Habegger

Contemporary realistic young adult novels are, now more than ever, pushing and expanding the boundaries of young adult literature. According to *Radical Reads: 101 YA Novels on the Edge*, by Joni Richards Bodart, "radical young adult fiction deals with incest, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, sexual and physical abuse, mental and physical illness, dysfunctional families, homosexuality, gangs, homelessness, manipulation, prejudice, suicide, peer pressure, violence, and murder" (xi). These contemporary realistic novels have been called dark, harsh, gritty and difficult to read. Many feel that they have gone beyond the range of reality that is appropriate for young adult readers. Yet many of these books have been highly regarded by critics and have won awards in the field of young adult literature. The authors of these young adult books feel that they are providing a valuable reading experience for their readers. Many young adults have applauded this genre of books as an improvement to the field. The debates and controversies surrounding this topic offer an interesting venue for surveying the field of young adult literature at large.

With this in mind, this paper will offer a look at the genre of "bleak" realism in young adult literature. After an introduction to the history of the YA novel, characteristics that are uniquely defined in "bleak" books, such as, characterization, setting, language, structure and theme, will be thoroughly examined by analyzing one typical example of a "bleak" novel, *A Step from Heaven*. Several issues that have been at the center of controversy regarding this genre, such as possible lack of morality, a sense of hope, happy endings and the concept of reality, will be addressed. In order to better understand the popularity of these books, it will be important to look at young adult reading preferences and impacting issues, such as the influence of contemporary culture and media. A conclusion can be made that "bleak" novels will continue to offer an avenue for exploring unsettling themes and controversial issues in unconventional ways.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE YA NOVEL

In order to gain a better understanding of the current status of realistic young adult literature, it is important to examine its origins and development. Literature written for young adults developed in the United States in the years following World War II. During this time, the change in the economy offered many teens an increase in economic resources and social autonomy. This set the stage for the growth of a young adult market in the book publishing industry (Trites 9).

The evolution of young adult novels can be based on the historical concept of the *Bildungsroman* (Trites 10). *Bildungsroman*, a term of German origin, defines a genre of novels in which an adolescent character matures to adulthood. *Entwicklungsroman*, a related term, refers to a broader category of novels involving an adolescent character that develops and grows. The *Bildungsroman* is, by nature, a romantic genre with its optimistic ending of adulthood for the main character (Trites 11). These coming of age novels form the foundation of young adult literature as we recognize it today.

Many historians and critics in the field, including Michael Cart and Margaret Edwards, believe that the field of writing for teenagers was established with the publication of Maureen Daly's book, *Seventeenth Summer*, in 1942 (Campbell). This book heralded the beginning of romance literature for teenage girls with its theme of first love as a rite-of-passage experience. Several other authors who followed this path included Betty Cavanna, Rosamund DuJardin, and Anne Emery (Cart, *Trends* 25). During the 1950's there was a variety of more boy-oriented books that were published including themes such as car stories, sports stories, career novels, science fiction and adventure stories (Cart, *Trends* 25). The "squeaky-clean" stories of the 1950's dealt mostly with a narrow range of adolescent feelings, values and experiences (Carter 9). One major work that was also published during this time period was J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, published in

1951. With loss of innocence as its theme, its publication has been cited as one of the turning points in young adult literature. Still, it was the liberating changes and social unrest of the 1960's that would bring about major developments in the field of young adult literature.

The 1960's brought about the rise of what has been called "new realism." Writers turned to more serious coming-of-age stories, liberating young adult literature. These books were classified as "new realism," "as opposed to the romanticized stories that had been considered appropriate for children" (Donelson and Nilsen 113). According to Michael Cart, the 1960's would be "the decade when literature for adolescents could be said to come into its own" (*Romance* 43). The novel that marked this change, written in 1967 by S. E. Hinton, was *The Outsiders*. Its great success could be attributed to its introduction of new "real" characters and the groundbreaking introduction of violence as a theme in the everyday lives of young adults (Cart, *Romance* 47). Two other books of great importance during this time period include Robert Lipsyte's *The Contender*, published in 1967, and Paul Zindel's first young adult novel, *The Pigman*, published in 1968. Authors writing during this time period continued to expand the range of subject matter addressed in young adult books, until a particularly strong stylistic emphasis began to develop in the 1970's.

As the range of subject matter grew to include just about every possible personal, social and political young adult problem, the novels began to take on a more didactic emphasis (Carter 9). Michael Cart stated, "the subject matter too often became the tail that wagged the dog of the novel – the result being the appearance and swift ascendancy of what has come to be called the 'problem novel'" (*Romance* 64). The "problem novel" has been recognized as a sub-genre of young adult realism (Brown 349). Shelia Egoff has described novels in this sub-genre as being "very strongly subject-oriented with the interest primarily residing in the topic rather than in the telling. The topics – all adult-oriented – sound like chapter titles from a textbook on social pathology: divorce, drugs, disappearing parents, desertion, and death" (quoted in Ross 175). Each "problem novel" centers on one particular problem and often offers the reader a model or method for coping, and even possibly a list of groups to contact for help (Aronson, *Coming of Age*). Marc Aronson made an interesting comparison when he stated, "They were very much like the booming adult industry of self-help and coping books, but generally in the form of a first-person novel" (*Coming of Age*). Even though "problem novels" have been widely criticized, they can be credited with at least one important attribute that has laid the foundation for other forms of realistic young adult novels. "Problem novels" have given young adult readers the voice to say, "Hey, I am not alone, other people have felt what I feel", which is "the heart of YA fiction" (Aronson, *Exploding the Myths* 8).

In the 1980's, the focus for young adult novels spread into broader dimensions and more in depth analysis of characters, plots and themes. This focus continued in the 1990's, with novels that featured young adult characters that are portrayed as escaping the shadowy world of stereotypes, being portrayed with some dimension, having their own problems, sometimes succeeding, sometimes not" (Carter 9).

The most recent trend in young adult literature is the focus on "bleak" novels. These books tend to focus on topics that can be unsettling and uncomfortable, such as rape, murder, sexual and physical abuse. Some of today's top young adult authors are writing these "sophisticated, edgy books about issues that reflect today's more complex society and culture" (Carter 9).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "BLEAK" YA NOVEL

A look at some of the characteristics of these "bleak" novels might help to explain why these books have been perceived as being "bleak" and why they have been at the center of controversy. Some of these characteristics are recognized as unique approaches to typical literary elements, such as, characterization, setting, language, structure and theme. In order to have a better understanding of how these various characteristics are utilized in a "bleak" book, it might be helpful to examine one book from this genre as an example. *A Step from Heaven*, written by An Na and published in 2001, is a good example of a "bleak" book due to its gritty themes of emotional and physical abuse, alcoholism and alienation. The author's approach to characterization, setting, language and structure also establish it as belonging to this "bleak" genre.

In 1985, Catherine Sheldrick Ross examined the "formula" of young adult realism, which she described in terms of "culture-specific situations, figures, and settings" (117). Much of what she wrote can be applied to describe today's "bleak" young adult novels, even though many of these books seek to break the mold in certain respects. She suggests that realistic young adult novels have a narrative point of view that is often in the first person, and these narrators are characters with whom readers can identify and find to be reliable. Pat Lowery Collins, in her June 2001 article presenting tips for writers of young adult literature, suggests that readers want:

> characters to touch and surprise them, to point out possibilities, to explore what they want to understand or to confirm what they know to be true. Characters need to be well drawn and show the conflicting sides of their personalities.

They must be sympathetic while remaining complex and strong in a way that allows for human weakness (Collins).

The main character from the novel, *A Step from Heaven,* exhibits conflicting sides of her personality that are brought together by her strength while facing adversity. Young Ju was four-years-old when her family immigrated to the United States from Korea. The novel follows the difficulties that she and her family, face as she grows from a child to an adult in her new country. Young Ju's character is very well developed, even though the language in this book is very sparse. The reader shares in her anger, fear and frustration as she lives through the abuse that occurs within her family. We sympathize with her as she finally takes a stand against her abusive father and then is ignored by her mother as punishment for breaking up the family. The other primary characters, members of this troubled family, are developed to a lesser degree.

The typical settings for "bleak" books are usually realistic and contemporary. Donelson and Nilsen suggest these settings are often in lower-class environments that are harsh and difficult places to live (113). After moving to California, Young Ju's family lived in a small, clean, but threadbare house in a lower-income neighborhood. This sparse, confined space serves as a backdrop that amplifies the horrible nature of the abuse, which takes place throughout the book. Harsh and difficult places can help make the often tragic themes of these "bleak" novels seem more realistic. The characters are, in a very real sense, trapped within their environments, so it is difficult for them to ignore dealing with their life circumstances. This sense of entrapment offers authors a suitable setting for the pursuit of unsettling themes, which are the driving force behind "bleak" novels. Young Ju unfortunately felt trapped within both her harsh physical environment and within her restricted social environment as someone who is from a foreign culture.

Colloquial language is another characteristic that is typical in "bleak" books. In *A Step from Heaven*, the language is especially inventive as the book begins with Young Ju's narration as a young child learning a new language and progresses through the novel with the development of her mature voice. The utilization of colloquial language can serve to reinforce a sense of realism for the reader. Early in the book, An Na describes how Young Ju's father, Apa, introduces Young Ju to her teacher during her first day in an American school. "Apa bows just when the lady puts out her hand and he hits it with his forehead. She laughs. Apa shakes his head...He pushes me forward and says, Greet your teacher, Young Ju...The witch teacher says, 'Ho ha do, Yung'" (Na 30-31). In Young Ju's situation, the development of her language as someone from a different culture offers the reader a first-hand way to better understand her feelings of alienation, one of the primary themes in the novel.

"Bleak" books often incorporate radical, or boundary-breaking, styles of format, perspective, layering, etc. Many utilize nonlinear organization, multiple perspectives, multiple layers of meaning, forbidden groups and unresolved endings. This novel's boundary-breaking structural emphasis is based on simplified, stylish language that is organized into short, lyrical chapters. An Na has the ability to effectively use sparse language in such a manner as to create visually and emotionally powerful, complete chapters. These short chapters function as structural building blocks that move the reader from one life experience to the next as they reveal Young Ju's life in a poetic manner. The beauty of the language and structure provide a striking contrast to the harsh, violent nature of the narrative.

One of the primary reasons that "bleak" books are considered to be so bleak is due to their themes or subject matter. These books are about teens that face serious problems, such as, violence, alcoholism, suicide and the "Big Ds: death, divorce, disease and drugs" (Hampton and Hunt 44). Themes such as these have been the cause of much debate. Julia Rosen, a tenth-grade student who wrote an article in defense of "bleak" books, stated, "The idea that reading disturbing books will make teenagers 'prematurely gray, shouldering burdens far beyond their years' is ridiculous" (Rosen 347). Kristen Downey Randle, in her essay published in Chris Crowe's *English Journal* column, had the following strong opposing viewpoint about these dark themes, "I heard and read about rape and abuse and cruelty and heartlessness, and the stuff I heard and read hit me in the face and the body like a beating" (126).

The theme of beating, of physical and mental abuse, and of conflict, also serves as one of the primary themes in *A Step from Heaven*. Young Ju, her brother and mother find ways to endure the abuse that they receive from Young Ju's father. Young Ju describes, "The rain of blows on my face, shoulders, and head forces my body to the ground...I pretend I am drowning, letting the sea take me under. I close my eyes and the world cannot touch me" (Na 139). In her mind, Young Ju often tries to escape her situation by creating a safe, alternative environment, an environment that is opposite of conflict. Young adult author Chris Lynch elaborates upon some other opposites that occur in *A Step from Heaven*, "from the foreign to familiar, from seaside idyll to cramped domestic nightmare, from innocence to unfortunate wisdom" (qtd. on Na book cover). This range of opposites, of conflicts, helps to draw the reader into the story of Young Ju's life.

ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY – MORALITY, HOPE, HAPPY ENDINGS AND REALITY

Perhaps the very heart of the controversies surrounding "bleak" novels relates to the characteristic that Donelson and Nilsen call change of "attitude" or "mode" (114). Early young adult realistic fiction was written in the comic and romantic mode with upbeat, happy endings. The development of the "problem novel" spurred a change in "mode" based on a different philosophy. This new philosophy embraced the idea that young adults are more likely "to be happy if they have realistic expectations and if they know both the bad and the good about the society in which they live" (Donelson and Nilsen 115). This philosophy moves young adult realistic literature into the postmodern era with this relationship, bad and good, between society and an individual (Trites 20).

The end result of this change opens the door for writers to expand into the realm of potential unhappy endings, lack of morality and loss of the sense of hope. Controversies have developed when critics have denigrated a "novel whose 'realism' is too stark; they may find a novel's story line too grim, its issues too shocking, its ending too bleak. Surely, they argue, the world is not that hopeless" (Brown 350). At least two critics have stated their thoughts that writers depict their "own meaningless world" when they "...delight in depravity, snicker at morality, and throw bits of pornography into the story line that appeal to baser values" (Hampton and Hunt 44). These two writers continue on by saying "All of us need hope; people can't live without it" (47). Roberta Seelinger Trites believes that romantic literature is the heart of adolescent literature "because so many of us — authors, critics, teachers, teenagers – need to believe in the possibility of adolescent growth" – the hope of the future (15).

How important is it for books to end "happily ever after"? Or should it be asked, Who would like young adult books to end with a positive message? The young adult readers? Or more likely, the parents of these young adult readers? Regarding the first question, Gladys Hunt and Barbara Hampton have remarked, "Good stories have hope, but it may not look like the happy endings of fairy stories" (46). Margaret Edwards noted that many adults who are concerned about young adult literature have preconceived notions that may not be in the best interest of young adults. She stated that adults become outraged when their beliefs about what teenagers should or should not read are violated (52). She further stated that adults do not want adolescents to "see the seamy side of life" and would like to "prolong the age of innocence indefinitely" (53). If this could occur, it would "rob our young people of the opportunity to build strength of character..." and the opportunity to "read of life as it is" (53). Marc Aronson pondered a similar question when he asked, "What message do they ['realistic' novels] have for our impressionable, at-risk, in-need-of-role-models, in-need-of-self-esteem teenagers?" (*Exploring the Myths* 83). After examining the issues of morality and realism, he offered the choice of "predigested morals and fake realities that readers will soon see through or books that take readers to discover new realities in themselves and derive their moral quality from their unpredictable depths" (*Exploring the Myths* 83). Most young adult readers will find this to be an easy choice.

There is another important issue deserving attention that is closely related to the concept of morality and the sense of hope (or lack of it) within the realm of young adult realistic fiction. This is the actual concept of "reality" or "realness." A "bleak" book will lose its impact if the reader does not perceive it as being "real". As noted before, Marc Aronson has already considered the issue of "fake realities." He made the following comment regarding his ideas about "realism," "The 'realism' of moral messages and happy endings is precisely what artists [authors] have told us is unreal, a saccharine coating meant to disguise these unsettling truths [of our subconscious realities and divided societies]" (*Exploring the Myths* 81). Hampton and Hunt believe that "A good story *should* represent what is real and true, but *real* means something a reader can build on....real stories don't hide what is wrong, but focus on greater truths" (45). "Real" stories appear to be real only if they are recognized as real by the reader. A book may be evaluated as "unrealistic" if the situations and character's behavior are outside the reader's experience (Brown 347). Joanne Brown also offered her own interesting definition of "realism;" fiction of the "possible" (346).

The question has often been raised, shouldn't young adult realistic novels feature characters that serve as models for proper behavior? "Bleak" books have been criticized for offering as a model society's problems and bad behaviors. Some supporters are quick to suggest comparisons with other classic works that can also be viewed as "bleak" models. Marc Aronson pointed out *Romeo and Juliet*, with its teenage suicide pact and the ballet *Giselle*, another tale of a girl jilted by a jerky prince, who kills herself (or dies of a broken heart)" (*Exploring the Myths* 83). It could be noted that many believe these classics, as well as today's "bleak" novels, will most likely not cause any negative effects. Margaret Edwards stated in her text, "Young people are not devastated by reading about unpleasantness" (53). Sophomore student Julia Rosen has written, "Books about disturbing subjects cannot single-handedly spoil our innocence" (347). Author Shelley Stoehr offered her personal opinion about this issue when she wrote "I didn't drink vodka through a straw from a watermelon until I was about twenty-three, but I enjoyed

reading about it when I was fourteen...I didn't have time to get into too much trouble, because, after all, I still had another eight books I wanted to read that week" (Stoehr).

A Step from Heaven does embrace these issues of morality, a sense of hope and reality. Though it deals with a very grim topic, its realistic portrayal of the issues gives it a strong impact. One review notes, "Although her circumstances are grim and even bleak at times, hope and courage frame Young's days. You'll feel both the family's despair and hope and wonder if God, to whom they sometimes pray, has indeed answered their prayers" (Hampton and Hunt 153). This book has been widely recognized for its literary excellence and was given the Michael L. Printz Award in 2002.

YOUNG ADULT READING OF BLEAK NOVELS

Many of the reasons that young adults prefer to read "bleak" novels can be directly associated with the special characteristics of this particular style of realistic fiction. One of the most easily recognized characteristics describes the literary element of theme, which is of major importance for this genre. The sometimes radical and even extreme subject matter addressed within these books might be appealing to young adults for several reasons. Reading a book about a particular topic, such as teenage pregnancy or homosexuality, offers an avenue through which the reader can dabble or experiment to learn more about the topic without personally experiencing it in real life. By trying out the topic, the reader is able to learn more about it in an informal manner rather than through other nonfiction sources or through direct interactions with others. It is a safe, convenient, and private way to experiment. Some teens read as a "means of escaping the pressures of their daily lives" and because it "provides real 'food for thought' in developing their own unique perspective on the world" (Vaillancourt 36-37).

To gain a better understanding of what types of themes or genre books some groups of teens are reading, it might be helpful to consult several teen reading preference surveys. Constance A. Mellon reported the results of a three-year survey that was conducted with students, grades seven through twelve, from 1987 to 1989. She reported that girls were most interested in reading romance, adventure and more personal stories. The boys expressed the most interest in reading about cars, sports, violence, science fiction and war (226). A survey inquiring about the reading preferences of 755 eighth graders was conducted in the Midwest in 1993. Its results revealed that in first place 79% of the books read were in the Teen Issues category. In second place, 72% of the books read were in the Romance category (qtd. in Jones 102-103). One additional survey was conducted in 1993, gathering the opinions of 538 students from a suburban public library in Medina County, Ohio. The results of this survey were broken down into two categories by grade levels, and by genre. The top winner in grades six through nine was the Realistic genre category. The top scorer in the tenth and eleventh grades was the Mystery genre category. Not surprisingly, 44% of the girls voted for the Realistic category, while boys voted highest for Mystery and Nonfiction (qtd. in Jones 104).

One last survey of interest was conducted online during Teen Read Week in October of 1999. Conducted by SmartGirl.com in conjunction with YALSA, over three thousand teens, from ages eleven to nineteen, were surveyed. The number one type of book that was chosen to read for fun was Mystery at 61%. It should be noted that there were no categories listed for Realistic or Teen Issues books (Chance). It can be concluded that, with the exception of the SmartGirl.com survey, the young adults who were surveyed were most interested in Realistic Teen Issues books.

There are, of course, young adults who do not like to read "bleak" books. One such person, a sixteen-year-old girl whose comments were printed in an article written by her mother, stated, " 'Those bleak books,' my sixteen-year-old daughter sneers. 'Just a bunch of adults who think they know how we feel—like all we do is sit around indulging in angst. How lame'" (Crowe 127).

Characterization is an equally important aspect in every "bleak" book. Whether there is one or there are several main characters, the reader needs to become engaged with these characters and drawn into the story. Complex characters that explore multiple layers of their personalities and show a range of emotions will most likely grab the attention of teen readers. They will also be best suited to explore the complex subject matter of a "bleak" book. Teen readers should feel that they could put themselves in the main character's shoes and ask, "What would I do if this happened to me?" Participants in the SmartGirl.com survey voted upon which characters or types of people that they preferred to read about. They voted the most for characters most like themselves and sixth most for characters their age wrestling with tough issues (Chance). "Bleak books can offer "an uncompromising depiction of how human nature confronts the challenges and tragedies of life—and survives. Young adults read them not only for their truthfulness, but for their inspiration" (Macrae).

There are other reasons that could be noted to explain why young adults read "bleak" books. They are often written in a language and speech patterns that young adults can understand. They let "youth speak for themselves...giving voice to those who were previously unheard " (Bodart). Also in an effort to be heard, young adults might actually read one of these controversial books just because it is so controversial. Just the fact

that some adults might object to the book might inspire some young adult readers to pick up the book, in opposition. This controversy might also have the effect of exciting friends about the book, which might entice some readers to pick up the book. "Bleak" books might also serve as great starting points for inspiring conversations between teenagers and young adults (Stoehr 5). Difficult issues that are explored in books can be approached in a non-threatening manner.

One other important aspect as to why young adults like to read "bleak" novels is the fact that they are true to life, they are a reflection of young adult culture. Adolescents are caught in "inbetweenness," a liminal state in which they are changing from children to adults (Gauthier 75). In this state of limbo, they can become a threat to themselves and to the group (Gauthier 75). Indeed, as early as 1989, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the Twenty-first Century*, the groundbreaking report released by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, warned that "*half* of all America's adolescents are at some risk for serious problems like substance abuse; early, unprotected sexual intercourse; dangerous accident-prone lifestyles; delinquent behavior, and dropping out of school" (Hersch 12). Adolescents are also at great risk for all other problems that face society at large. For example, "in 2000, Child Protective Services (CPS) responded to three million reports of child abuse, involving five million children and teens" (Pledge 10). It is not surprising that young adult realistic literature has become more cutting edge in the form of "bleak" books in response to culture and society.

In 1997, author Shelley Stoehr proposed the idea that issues for today's young adults are very much the same as issues that faced young adults in the past. The main concerns are still "sex, drugs, and rock and roll," and what has changed has been the media (3). In light of newer statistics and information that is now being published, this theory could be a cause for debate. At any rate, it opens the door for consideration of young adults and media. Marc Aronson stated:

> Between the spate of school shootings that culminated in Littleton, the panic over how to raise girls (and then boys), and the success of adolescent-oriented movies and TV shows, teenagers have erupted into the national consciousness...young people are almost a different species, bred to flourish in a multimedia environment (*Exploding the Myths* 123).

Young adults do need to find a way to deal with all the media exposure. Susie, a fifteen-year-old, proposed "The media does not portray teens in the proper light. It is one extreme or the other. We are either viewed as drug-abusing, alcoholic, suicidal rebels or as hormone-driven airheads who don't know the difference between reality and fiction" (qtd in Weill 1). Possibility this increase in media exposure has had an influence on the creation and publication of "bleak" books.

THE PROGRESSIVE GROWTH OF "BLEAK" YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

The first realistic books published in the 40's and 50's have been have been molded and evolved by many of the elements discussed above to become what has been recognized today as cutting edge "bleak" books. Writer Chris Crowe, while thinking about the bleak turn in young adult books, has offered another theory explaining this phenomenon. He states, "one explanation may be the desire of publishers and writers to emulate the classics, the Teflon-coated traditional works of literature that, with few exceptions, epitomize the 'dark is deep' philosophy" (125). All signs point to the continuation of this dark, controversial style of young adult literature. The power of these books to create controversy can also be emblematic of their power to create change and to have an impact on adolescent lives. Looking to the future Michael Cart, envisions a young adult literature that, "risks taking the gloves off to tackle dangerous subjects and to deal with them unflinchingly and honestly" (*Romance* 270). Marc Aronson expands this vision with his description of a young adult fiction that "uses the forms and challenges of life in the multichanneled, disjunctive, digital world as its base" (*Exploding the Myths* 82). He explains further, "For teenagers self, text, and voice have all gone multimedia wild...The best new YA novels are finding how to bring the explosion of media narratives within the borders of bound books, giving young readers a space to recognize their imperiled and empowered selves" (*Exploding the Myths* 124).

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BRINGING THIRD CULTURE KIDS TOGETHER: BUILDING A TCK NETWORK IN YOUR LIBRARY

by Rebecca Lee Perkins

'I am
A confusion of cultures.
Uniquely me.
I think this is good
Because I can
Understand the traveler, sojourner, foreigner,
The homesickness
That comes.
I think this is also bad
Because I cannot be understood
By the person who has sown and grown in one place.
They know not the real meaning of homesickness
That hits me
Now and then.
Sometimes I despair of understanding them.
I am
An island
And
A United Nations.
Who can recognize either in me
But God?'
"Uniquely Me" by Alex Graham James
(qtd. in Pollock and Van Reken, 37)

INTRODUCTION

Several months ago, I had the privilege of reading *Born Confused* authored by Tanuja Desai Hidier as a requirement for a seminar on issues and trends in young adult literature. In this novel, an Asian teenager struggles with self-identity while living with her Indian parents in the United States. Feeling the impact of both an eastern and western culture, she expresses:

> ...not quite Indian, and not quite American. Usually I felt more along the lines of Alien (however legal, as my Jersey birth certificate attests to). The only times I retreated to one or the other description were when my peers didn't understand me (then I figured it was because I was too Indian) or when my family didn't get it (clearly because I was too American)...Sometimes I was too Indian in America, yes, but in India, I was definitely not Indian enough (13)

This statement compelled me to continue on a most fascinating and reflective reading experience. As I paralleled my own life experiences against the experiences of the girl in the story, I was reminded of the overwhelming sense of loneliness that accompanied my final return from Africa to the United States at the age of seventeen. After spending thirteen years in Kenya, intermingled with a few years of furlough, I found that it took increased amount of energy to adjust to the fast-paced, materialistic lifestyle of the United States, and I, like the heroine in Hidier's story, became frustrated over the lack of knowing how to fit into the culture, understand myself, and relate to my peers.

As I have matured, I have become more aware that my life experiences are not uncommon. In my research, I have found there are many who, like me, are members of an increasing population known as "third culture kids" ("TCKs") – individuals deeply impacted by multiple cultures. As people from all parts of the globe become more mobile, it is inevitable that TCKs will continue to increase in number. And these TCKs, undoubtedly, are making use of libraries all over the world every day.

With this in mind, I will share how and where the term "third culture kid" originated, provide information that will help librarians to know how to identify and better serve their TCK population, and in conclusion, offer practical ideas in regard to programming and collection development specific to meeting the needs of the TCK.

WHERE DID THE TERM "TCK" ORIGINATE?

In the 1950's, two social scientists from the University of Michigan, Drs. John and Ruth Hill Useem, went overseas for the purpose of studying Americans in different occupational roles who were stationed with their families in India. In the course of researching the lifestyles of these Americans, the Useems were also introduced to expatriates of other nationalities. The doctors were surprised to discover that all the expatriates representing multiple subcultures shared a lifestyle that was unique – neither Indian, nor one that mirrored any of their respective home cultures. In defining their

discovery, the Useems described the various birth cultures of the expatriates as their "first culture." They identified the Indian culture as the "host culture" or the expatriates' "second culture." And finally, the shared lifestyle of the expatriate community within the host culture became the "third culture." In describing this third culture, the Useems used phrases such as "culture between cultures" or "interstitual culture." The children who lived within this third culture were defined as third culture kids (Pollock and Van Reken, 20).

The definition of the term third culture kid has seemingly gone through an evolutionary process. Barbara Schaetti, Principal of Transition Dynamics, suggests that the Useems regarded TCKs as those who live between two cultures, but more specifically, those who live between "western" and "non-western" cultures. Then in 1984, Norma McCaig, President of Global Nomad Resources, used the term "global nomad" interchangeably with TCK. She gave more depth to the definition of TCK by claiming a TCK is "a person of any age or nationality who has lived a significant part of his or her developmental years in one or more countries outside his or her passport country because of a parent's occupation" (1). Dr. David Pollock, founding member of Global Nomads International, and co-author Ruth Van Reken, of Cultural Connexions out of Indianapolis, Indiana, agree that, "A common misconception about third culture kids is that they have been raised in what is often called the 'Third World.' While this might be true for some TCKs, the Third World has no specific relationship to the concept of third culture" (21). The same authors state, "A third culture kid is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background" (21). This definition seems to fall more in line with what the Useems proposed.

Pollock and Van Reken note that the world has changed dramatically since the Useems did their initial research on TCKs. No longer do expatriates necessarily live in a communal system like a military base, missionary compound, or a business enclave. Thus, the validity of the term "third culture" or "third culture kid" has been questioned. Recently in an interview, Dr. Ruth Hill Useem claimed, "Because I am a sociologist/anthropologist I think no concept is ever locked up permanently... concepts change as we get to know more; other times concepts change because what happens in the world is changing" (qtd. in Pollock and Van Reken, 19). Even more recently, Dr. Useem broadens and defines "third culture" as "a term to discuss the lifestyle created, shared and learned by those who are from one culture and are in the process of relating to another one. TCKs, then, are children who accompany their parents into another society" (qtd. in Pollock and Van Reken, 21). Pollock and Van Reken agree with this generalization of the third culture concept because they have witnessed TCKs, in spite of their individualistic third culture experience and mix of nationalities, sharing and connecting below the surface on a deeper level of life experience (21).

Thus, by definition, a TCK is not someone who has grown up in a "third world" country. Rather, a TCK is one whose way of thinking and lifestyle has been greatly affected as he or she lives and is enmeshed in two or more world cultures. All TCKs, instead of being defined by a point of origin, are defined by an idiosyncratic set of experiences. TCKs are not always easy to spot because many are in the process of trying to blend into a culture; however, TCKs do have some identifying characteristics. Librarians have a better understanding of how to reach this growing population of adolescents if they are aware of the very things that make them unique.

CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE A TCK

Robin Pascoe – diplomat's wife, author, and journalist – refers to Pollock and Van Reken's research, and writes about the positive and negative elements that pull TCKs from all cultural backgrounds together.

A unique characteristic about TCKs is that they are accustomed to change. Moving from country to country every two to three years is normal whether they like it or not. In addition, many travel back and forth to boarding school every few months. The unfamiliar becomes predictable because change is a part of their identity. With frequent changes, TCKs develop a migratory instinct that creates a pattern often carried over into their adulthood. For example, TCKs may go to more than one college, or they might change jobs frequently. On a negative note, sometimes TCKs may feel there is no need to work through problems because, according to their experience, one can leave troubles behind. Settling in one place is not easy because they deal with the urge to get up and move again.

Operating from a large knowledge base, TCKs are often highly motivated and strong academic achievers. TCKs have a broader picture of the world around them because they have been exposed to more countries than most individuals; they also have perspective on international issues. Articulate and well read, TCKS are usually self-sufficient, disciplined, independent, and may know several languages.

A TCK will have numerous relationships established across the world yet be without a stable peer group. TCKs friendships are brief and more intense as they

realize they will not be staying in one place for a very long time. It is interesting to note that TCKs are rather diplomatic. Well behaved as they are, TCKs spend more time with adults over their counterparts back home. They also get along with their siblings who take the place of friends in the early days of adjustment to a different country.

TCKs often have delayed adolescence and a period of rebellion. Job opportunities for teenagers who are overseas are very few. In addition, a lower number of relationships established with other TCKs make it more difficult for them to break family ties. Experts say that many TCKs work through adolescent rebellion at age twenty and beyond. TCKs are definitely different, but not necessarily special. TCKs are told they are special by some, however, upon re-entering their homeland, reality would show they are just different. For them, believing they are special could cause problems (Pascoe, *Culture Shock!*, 171-174).

Moving beyond these more specific characterizations to looking once more at the bigger picture, Pollock and Van Reken would attest that two key realities mold the life of a third culture kid. The first of these realities is that they live within more than one culture, and their physical surroundings usually fluctuate with every move they make. The second shaping factor is that they are raised in a highly mobile world. More than likely, their life will consist of coming and going along side those with whom they identify (22). These two atypical distinctions could give cause for some instability and delayed self-actualization. With this background information, discussion will now be offered on how to network and provide for TCKs within library communities.

MAKING THE TCK FEEL AT HOME IN YOUR LIBRARY

There are many ways libraries can serve the TCK population. In making collection development decisions for the TCK group in your community, the most helpful resource is the TCK group itself. Generally speaking, TCKs interests are wide spread, however, having a variety of sources that cover international issues, cultural studies, world history, geography, and travel will be of value to this population. Self-help resources that focus on socio-psychological issues that relate to their personal experience will be of benefit to them as well.

TCKs love to share their life experiences and have a wealth of resources that can add cultural enhancement to the library environment. Often, TCKs will have traditional costuming from the countries they have lived in, as well as foreign decorative pieces that enhance library multicultural displays. TCKs may be willing to talk to children about their life in another country, share a song in a different language, or talk about a curio that has particular relevance to a story that has just been read. In serving the library, the TCK is benefited by sharing from his or her life story.

Providing opportunities that will allow networking between those who share similar TCK experiences is the key to successful TCK programming, and getting TCKs to return to the library. TCKs, though citizens, most likely do not feel at home in the country where they find themselves. Regardless of whether or not they are dealing with identity issues, TCKs still need a place to belong – a place that feels like home! Perhaps a reemphasis of Pollock and Van Reken's quote would be helpful: "Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background" (21). In other words, when a TCK is able to share their experience with another TCK, a connection is made that only TCKs can understand. In making that connection, a deeper relational need is met that is satisfying and dynamic! It would seem, then, that by offering library programming that allows TCKs to connect with each other, the potential for building a network of these individuals is great.

While focusing on the initial stages of building a network of TCKs, attention should be given to programming ideas that have a multicultural and ethnic appeal. Providing an informal event of this nature is paramount because, in getting TCKs to share with one another of their life experiences, friendships that prove meaningful will likely be formed. Those that connect with each other will probably want to somehow meet again, and this is yet another opportunity for the library to increase its service to this community.

Thinking of programming from a practical standpoint, here is a list of ideas that may promote more brainstorming:

- Ethnic Dinners (feature a country per dinner suited to the TCKs)
- International Movie Night (complete with popcorn and drink)
- Book Discussions (let the TCKs in the group pick the book)
- Scrapbooking cultural history (building the TCK's life by pictures)
- Karaoke (singing songs from around the world)
- A Night on Cultural Folk Lore
- Program to integrate foreign exchange students into your TCK group
- Travel Logs of trips taken (projecting picture presentations on a screen and displaying curios collected)

In determining the programming that will be most effective, it is important to remember that the program itself will not be as valuable to the TCK as the opportunity to be with another who has similar life experiences. TCKs are likely to have many interests because of where they have been in their lifetime, and due to their wide base of interests, it is probable they would come to many of the library programs regardless of whether the programs were specifically for TCKs. However, connecting TCKs to TCKs at the library is the answer to bringing them back to the library to participate in other programs and events offered!

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GLORIA STEINEM AND THE POWER OF BOOKS

by Alberta Davis Comer

The highlight of my work as a reporter for *Cognotes*, the American Library Association's daily newspaper published and distributed during both its Midwinter and annual meetings, was a one-on-one interview with Gloria Steinem during the 2003 ALA convention in Toronto. Because of this interview, I found myself involved in a fascinating conversation with one of the most well-known and influential feminists and activists of our time. Of course, I knew Steinem was one of the founders of *Ms.* magazine, but by talking with her and reading about her life later I learned much more about her, including the role of libraries during her childhood and her convictions about them now.

STEINEM'S BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Born in Toledo, Ohio on March 25, 1934, her childhood was spent traveling in her parents' motor home until they divorced in 1946. As a child Steinem never attended school for more than a few months at a time (Heilbrun, 1995, p. 18). Her mother gave up a career in journalism and later suffered from depression and neurotic illness (Conway, 1992, p. 657).

In her book entitled *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* Steinem described life with her mother. For many years, she and her mother lived upstairs in the house in which her mother had grown up. Of these years, Steinem writes:

> In that house, I remember:
> ...hanging paper drapes I had bought in the dime store; stacking books and papers in the shape of two armchairs and covering them with blankets; evolving my own dishwashing system (I waited until all the dishes were dirty, then put them in the bathtub)...
> ...on a hot summer night, being bitten by one of the rats that shared our house and its back alley...
> ...coming home from a local library with the three books a week into which I regularly escaped... (Steinem, 1983, p. 134).

Steinem graduated in 1956 from Smith College in Massachusetts with a major in government, then spent two years studying in India. Upon her return to New York City, she worked as a free-lance writer. She covered political events and became more involved with women's causes. With the goal of increasing the inclusion of women in the political process, she helped form the National Women's Political Caucus in 1971. In 1972, she helped launch Ms. (Gloria Steinem, *Encyclopedia Americana*, 2001, p. 676). With the goal of increasing the inclusion of women in the political process, she, along with Betty Friedan, formed the National Women's Political Caucus in 1971 (Loveday).

THE ALA INTERVIEW

During the interview, Ms. Steinem discussed the importance for librarians to have pay equity and a pay scale based on comparable worth. About comparable worth, she elaborated:

> ... comparable worth is important to librarians because workers in male professions with similar qualifications are paid twice as much. Pay equity should be considered between professions, not just pay equality between people in the same profession. Librarians symbolize the reason why the women's movement went from the notion of equal pay for equal work to comparable pay in most female professions such as librarians. (Comer, 2003, p. 1.)

Ms. Steinem was very articulate, and her passion for her many interests, including libraries, was apparent. During the interview she elaborated on the positive impact libraries have on people's lives:

> Steinem believes that librarians help change lives. They work in the role of advisor, as people enter libraries and ask for help in their life. Steinem asserts, "Libraries are the last community centers and are not limited by economic status, geography, religion." Librarians are also guardians of the institution where one can freely roam without any monetary

> charge while finding specific information about other worlds one might enter. (Comer, 2003, p. 4.)

From her statement, it was apparent that Ms. Steinem held libraries and librarians in high regard, perhaps because books played such a significant role in her childhood.

In a recent interview for *New York Amsterdam News*, a magazine by and for young girls, Steinem, when asked how she developed into the person she is now, described how as a young person she escaped into books and found friends in books (Morgan and Victoria, 1997). During the interview with *Cognotes*, Steinem again affirmed the power of books and discussed how books had influenced her life.

> Steinem attests to the power of books and "entering other worlds." As a young girl, she did not see a living female hero, except for Eleanor Roosevelt who Steinem says did not speak to her except perhaps to say, "Marry a president." Instead, her "heroine" was Louisa May Alcott. She read all of her children's books and her lesser-known adult novels. Since Steinem did not attend school until she was almost 12 years old, she lived in books. She imagined that Alcott, who she considered a friend, came to life. (Comer, 2003, p. 4)

CONCLUSION

In Steinem's talk to ALA members, it was apparent that not only does she hold librarians in high esteem, librarians also hold her in high esteem. From her youth forward, libraries and the written word have remained important to her. She received a standing ovation from the attendees and comments about her talk were very favorable. By the end of our interview, I too wanted to give a standing ovation to this truly inspiring woman who has influenced so many people with her passionate message for equality.

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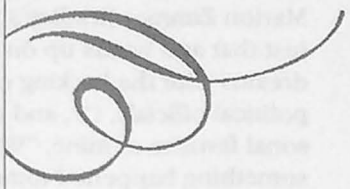
TAKING OUT THE TRASH: OR, A DISCOURSE ON LESS EXALTED READING MATERIAL



by Dakota Derryberry

When my father finds me immersed in inferior reading material, he likes to tell me that I read too much candy, and that I ought to satisfy my craving instead with something more worthwhile and filling. What he means is that I read too much trash — space opera, genre fantasy, romance, even the occasional murder mystery — and not enough real literature, books with substance and meaning. While I acknowledge that my father might well have a point about the quality of the mass market paperbacks I devour at a positively alarming rate, I don't see any problem. Literature is well and good, and when I'm bored and have an hour, I like to curl up in my mother's pink rocking chair and read Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Vladamir Nabokov, and others besides. There are other times, though, when I'm tired, stressed, or generally unhappy, and then trash fills its own less exalted but no less necessary niche in my life.

Before fourth grade, while I liked books well enough and took no small amount of pride in reading everything that was required of me, I never felt the desire to grab a book for pleasure. That changed one afternoon in the school library when I chanced to pick up Robin McKinley's *The Blue Sword* and read it all the way through in a single sitting. It was everything I'd dreamed about: a heroine out of nowhere, good defeating evil, magic around every corner, and true love at the end. From thence forth, I couldn't get enough of it. Over and over again, heros and heroines raced against time and fought against impossible enemies to defeat evil against all odds and expectations. In over a thousand books on over a hundred worlds, the important things remained constant: no matter how ragged in the beginning, the hero was worthy; everyone came by his just deserts; most importantly, everything was all right by the end. This fantastic world order was, and still is, for me, the essence of the appeal of 'trash': the stuff dreams are made of.

The ideal experienced by the reading of genre fiction comes in three indispensable parts. The first is the story, the purpose of which is to occupy the surface of the mind and to provide an interface for the next two parts. The basic plot is generally provided by the genre; the familiarity allows the reader to pick out characters early on, and figure out which ones to watch and a general outline of what's to come. Still, changing setting and detail provides enough variation between books that the reader who isn't paying close attention (and I've found that when I'm in the mood for trash, I'm not in the mood for close attention) doesn't quite know what's coming. The story, the twisted developments and the bizarre circumstances, keep me reading and keep me entertained. The true addiction, however, comes from other sources.

The second part is the promise, a solemn pact between reader and writer that covers a few key points and allows the reader to relax and love the characters introduced in the novel. First, no one important will die. Best friends, family, and martyrs can and will be lost. Main characters, beloved characters, will live. I recently read David Weber's *Wind Rider's Oath* and nearly put down the book when convinced that Brandark had died. Only the knowledge that main characters don't die kept me reading, and it's fortunate that it did, because a page later I found that he'd only been knocked out. Second, everyone comes by his (or her) just deserts. In the final scene of Georgette Heyer's *These Old Shades*, simply by summing up the events of the book for a rapt audience, the hero induces the villain to commit suicide, frees said villain's put-upon wife (and allows her a hand in the inducement), reaffirms the heroine's role in society, and is acknowledged for his masterful work by all. Finally, there will be a happy ending. Even before the book was written, everyone knew that Vanyel of Mercedes *Lackey's Magic's Price* was doomed; still, after Vanyel died with his greatest friend in a successful last ditch effort to save the world, leaving a grieving lover and no further protection for his country behind, ten pages later the book managed a happy ending.

The third and last is the fulfillment of secret childhood fantasies. It's all those secrets never told from sheer embarrassment. In Lackey's Magic's Pawn, a half dead and seriously bereaved Vanyel watches his aunt and his sister ream out his father on the most horrible

parenting job ever. Or, moving from child to teenager, who ever wished "I could just do it anyway. Then he'll see. I was right all along. I'm not a child, dangit!" In Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Star of Danger*, Larry does just that and winds up on the diplomatic mission of his dreams with the backing of the ranking concerned political officials. Or, and this has always been a personal favorite of mine, "What if I have a destiny? What if something happened tomorrow and everything changed? Wouldn't it be great to save the world?" That one is epitomized in McKinley's *The Blue Sword* (probably why I loved and still love it so dearly); Harry is uprooted with her parent's death, kidnapped by a savage king — all because her world's magic is pulling her to a destiny that's truly the stuff of legends.

In the end, it's not that I don't like literature. It's just that I like trash. Literature has intellectual appeal, aesthetic appeal, and real life appeal, in addition to the normal elements of character, plot, etc. To really get into it, I have to be in the proper frame of mind for enjoyment. When I'm not, curling up with the next installment of my favorite space opera relaxes me and cheers me up, and for this I'll never give it up, no matter what my father says or how he teases me.

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FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTENT IN ONLINE FICTION CREATION & CONSUMPTION

by Caitlin Watt

"Fanfiction," the use of others' characters to write original stories, is not an especially new phenomenon, nor has it typically been the exclusive domain of the young. Movie and television show "tie-in" novels appeared alongside movies and television as early as the 1920s; the numerous retellings of the tales of King Arthur, Robin Hood, and Cinderella operate on the same premise. In recent years, however, fanfiction has increasingly appealed to young readers and writers. According to "Pop Fiction," an article by Maryanne Murray Buechner (2002) in *Time Magazine*, a third of *www.fanfiction.net's* 115,000 members were under the age of eighteen. Two years later, *www.fanfiction.net* has approximately 215,000 members; if the percentage of teen users has remained constant, there are over 70,000 readers and writers of fan fiction on one Internet site alone. Fanfiction has found its niche in the relatively ungoverned Internet among teen readers because it offers them familiar characters and situations, a means of romantic fantasy or sexual stimulation, and an escape from the stresses of everyday life.

Stephen Silver, in his article "Media Tie-ins and Mainstream SF," offers an explanation for why readers buy tie-in novels for movies and television shows: "They pick them up for the same reason they pick up any other series. The characters and situations are familiar." A similar motive could serve to explain why so many teenagers read fanfiction. They watch a movie, become emotionally attached to the characters, and want to read more about them. Often they want an explanation of what happened off-screen or after the story ended, or, if a favorite character died, they want some scenario in which the character would have lived. A whole subgenre of fanfiction, the "fix-it," has sprung up to undo tragic events in the original medium. For those seeking a happy ending, fanfiction will provide reassurance that their favorite characters survived and rode off into the sunset with their true love, living happily ever after. Other types of fanfiction provide character introspection, filling in gaps in characters' backgrounds and their emotional states at key points in the book or movie. Through this, the characters are fleshed out and become almost like friends to the teenagers who read their stories.

This love of the characters often extends to the romantic and even the sexual. One popular genre of fanfiction is the "self-insert," in which the writer has inserted him or herself into the story. Another, the "Mary Sue," contains a character, original or borrowed, that is completely perfect. The two can overlap. Neither genre is inherently sexual in nature, but both frequently feature an original character being rescued (or, more assertively, rescuing) the object of his or her affection, amazing the desired character with positive qualities or simply by being so different (a result of being transported from out universe to the medium's universe), and creating a romantic relationship with said character. Some of these stories are romantic, some overtly sexual; both offer a way for teenagers who are not yet sexually active or romantically attached—or who are, unhappily— to experience what will undoubtedly be a perfect, albeit melodramatic relationship. More explicit stories of these types can provide a means of vicariously experiencing sexual acts with a character that they find attractive. Such stories, whether romantic or downright pornographic in nature, operate under the same basic principles as romance novels: the main original character is so devoid of realistic flaws or psychological idiosyncrasies that she or he can be easily replaced by the reader (Pflieger, 1999).

Other stories place two characters from the ur-text in a relationship. Reading stories like this can fulfill the dual purposes of giving the reader material about her favorite characters and providing some measure of sexual gratification. There are sites devoted specifically to "ships" such as Buffy and Angel's relationship from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the more nebulous relationship between Aragorn and Legolas in The *Lord of the Rings*. Teenagers who would not seek out pornographic material from sites devoted to such things might occasionally read sexually explicit fanfiction, perhaps because it uses familiar characters and is thus easier to visualize and less unnerving. It is an introduction to sexual behaviors that, unlike the "self-insert," takes the reader entirely out of the picture and can therefore be more comfortable.

One reason that teenagers seek out fanfiction, perhaps less alarming to parents, is that it provides an

escape from the stresses of high school, socializing, and parental pressure. Like watching television or reading a favorite novel, fanfiction allows teens to inhabit another world, one where the characters are old friends and the settings and rules are familiar. Depressing stories are often labeled as such in their summaries and can be avoided—or sought out, as the case may be; similarly, teens can find happy and uncomplicated stories under the "fluff" label. Fanfiction is easy to access online, and it is usually free of charge. One can choose to participate, or not, in the fanfiction community by reviewing, hosting websites, or writing one's own stories; few teachers or parents will push a child into a higher level of involvement with such online entertainment. Reading fanfiction can be a stress-free way to entertain oneself.

While the quality or even legality of fanfiction online can be debated, its quantity cannot. Fanfiction.net has more than twenty thousand stories in its *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* category alone, and it is merely one of hundreds of sites where fanfiction is posted. Teenage participation in the world of fanfiction has increased hugely with the widespread use of the Internet, and the trend shows no signs of ceasing. Teenagers are drawn to fanfiction because it gives them more adventures with characters and worlds they love, because it offers them a means of problem-free romantic daydreams and occasionally sexual gratification, and because it can be a way for them to relax.

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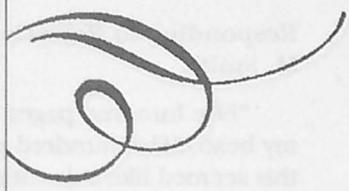
INFORMAL READING
REFLECTIONS ON YA NOVELS



by Rachael McClellan, Raenell Smith & Tom Smith

Reflecting on *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging* (Rennison) by Rachael McClellan

In case adults have forgotten what it's like to: kiss a boy ("snog") for the first time, menstruate for the first time ("have the painters in"), or live in the agony that is adolescence, Louise Rennison's *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging* would serve as a vivid reminder. At times, this work makes the reader laugh out loud; at others, it makes the reader reminisce in agony as s/he reads about Georgia Nicholson's very real relationships with boys, her family members, and her friends.

In Georgia, Rennison has captured the many facets of the voice of a teenage girl. It is at times sarcastic and witty, "I sense something . . . what is it? Oh, yes, it's my first poor conduct mark coming along" (56); at others morose, "I have no friends. Not one single friend. . . . I may as well be dead" (15).

Rennison also does an excellent job in depicting the feelings most teenage girls have toward their parents, or "The Olds," as Georgia refers to them. Georgia seems to take perverse pleasure in being as cruel as possible in letting the family know that with them is the last place she wants to be; "We are four people who, through great misfortune, happen to be stuck in the same house. Why make it worse by going for a walk together?" (29). Most of Georgia's anger seems to be directed at her father, whom Georgia describes as having "the mentality of a Teletubby only not so developed" (13).

Equally cutting are the remarks that Georgia makes about school, "I'd forgotten how utterly crap school is," (54) and especially her teachers. *Angus* should be required reading for junior high teachers everywhere, lest we forget what we really thought of our own teachers in school or the real reason why we were there as Georgia relates in conversation with "Slim," the headmistress, "the main difficulty is that she imagines we are at school to learn stuff and we know we are at school to fill in the idle hours before we go home and hang around with our mates doing important things . . . makeup and playing records and trapping boys" (89-90).

A Memory Response: *The Beet Fields* (Paulsen) Intersecting with My Life by Tom Smith

What this book evokes for me is memories of my own 16th summer when I hitchhiked 5,000 miles around the United States with a friend. What struck me about "the boy" in *The Beet Fields* is how his innocence both protects him and makes him vulnerable. Reflecting back on my 16th summer, this was at least partly true for me. I took risks (sleeping in city parks, hitchhiking in the middle of Milwaukee, getting into cars with weirdos, etc.) that constantly put my life in danger and yet I came through it all unscathed. "The boy" moves through the landscape of the story with an intense vulnerability, but mostly he comes out okay. He can even say to himself after losing his money to the deputy and getting out of the car with the dead Hungarian in it, "His luck wasn't that bad: he'd gotten away from the law and wasn't hurt in the wreck and he was moving" (93). Even today I can remember from that summer the sense that it was oddly reassuring to be moving. As if staying in any one place too long was the dangerous thing.

In the book "the boy" is also innocent in the ways of women. He gets his first introduction with the old man who teaches him that women "all have the moon on their shoulder" (34). Later he decides to work for Bill because of his daughter, Lynnette, whom he never even speaks to. And then, of course, there's Ruby—his precious gem, who is little more than a prostitute. But his decisions turn on the women. Lacking anything else to drive him forward, his passion both sexual and poetic dictate his direction.

At the very beginning of our trip out West, my friend and I met a girl in a campground. We were both taken by her. We traveled 4,000 miles and managed on the return trip to stop back in that campground (her parents owned it) and surprise her. We spent a couple of days there. It still amazes me to think that I would go to all that trouble to see a girl that I had only met once. But this is where Paulsen is so good I suppose. These incidents could just be sexual in a pornographic sense, but instead he creates something with this "boy" that is universal. He gives us the beauty of innocence and the

power of naïveté as well as the poetry of passion. He goes beyond gonads and captures something lyrical and true.

Responding to *Born Confused* (Hidier) by Raenell M. Smith

"Five hundred pages." I could hear my students in my head, "Five hundred pages." For pleasure reading, this seemed like a daunting task. Not only was this novel five hundred pages, it was reading that requires some work. There are many new words. There is an unfamiliar culture. There are many things happening at the same time. This book requires effort to read; this book is a challenge.

I am glad I stuck with this. This is exactly what I thought when I made it to the conclusion of this novel. This was thick reading. It was like swimming through molasses. The further I went into the novel, the less convinced I was that I wanted to continue. There was not a lot of action. There seemed to be so much going on and some of it I did not even understand.

As I put the book down for a while, I started thinking about what it is I say to my students when they are about to give up on a book I know is good. And this book is supposed to be good, at least according to the experts. So after some mulling and coaxing, I started where I left off. I found when I let go of the frustration that the novel wasn't doing what I thought it should do, the reading became much easier. Nearing the end, I started to laugh and cry and connect.

After finishing the book and thinking all of this over, I was concerned that the very things that made me, a more mature reader, not want to finish would be the things that would keep a teen from not finishing or not even starting this novel. Cultural barriers, seemingly one-dimensional supporting characters, and narration that is more psychologically expressive than action-oriented caused this novel to start off slowly. The narrator seemingly gives away the title in the beginning. The amount of time it seemed to take to discover things. Many characters seemed very stereotypical. All of these things made the reading difficult, even though in the end they seemed to pay off. I am not sure when encouraging a teen reader if I have the answers to convince them they should stick with the book. I am not sure I would want to encourage them to stick to a book they were not enjoying.

Then I began wondering if maybe my age was a disadvantage in this reading. I have certainly read "thick" books in my time. I have enjoyed books many thought were difficult or even awful (*The Scarlet Letter*), but again I am not sure if that is encouragement to a young adult. I keep coming back to the fact that this novel could have been just as effective if it tried the "less is more" concept. As for resolving my issues with teen readers, I will just try it in the fall. I will put the book in my classroom collection. I will recommend it to readers for SURF (silent uninterrupted reading for fun), and I will see what kind of feedback I get.

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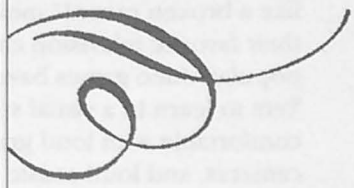
MANAGEMENT BASICS:

MANAGING GENERATION X



by Carolyn Wiethoff

Today's workforce is dominated by two generations: "Baby Boomers" ("Boomers"), born between 1946 and 1964, and "Generation X" ("Gen Xers" or "Baby Busters"), born roughly between 1965 and 1979. A third generation is beginning to enter the workforce: Generation Y ("Nexters" or "The Internet Generation" or "The Echo Boomers"), the eldest of whom just turned 24 (Rodriguez, Green & Ree, 2003). As is somewhat typical of intergenerational groups, there have been substantive misunderstandings between Boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers. Gen Xers have been called everything from slackers to disloyal, from dumb to just plain bad (O'Bannon, 2001). Gen Yers, often called the "MTV Generation," are portrayed with tattoos and multiple body piercings in most media outlets (Paul, 2001). On the other hand, Gen Xers categorize Boomers as managers that ignore ideas from employees, provide inconsistent or no feedback or recognition when it is due, and adopt "do it because I said so" management (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000). The failure to recognize and acknowledge differences between Boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers can result in miscommunication, misunderstandings, and harsh feelings, creating dysfunctional supervisor-employee relationships. The purpose of this article is to provide insight into Generation X and Generation Y in order to help Boomers understand their younger colleagues.

I should note that sweeping generalizations of any generation tend to be incorrect. But so too is the notion that there is nothing different or noteworthy about today's young adults. For purposes of clarity I will speak in generalizations, citing general findings in the literature about Generations X and Y. However, as we all well know, there are exceptions to every rule – not everyone from the Boomer, Xer, or Nexter generations is fully represented by these generalities.

The Boomer generation began at the end of World War II. Boomers were raised in prosperous, optimistic times and, for the most part, were doted on as children. They were typically raised in a nuclear family where the "father knows best" lifestyle was enacted...or if family life differed from this ideal, it was not made public. Adolescent Boomers were idealistic rebels, questioning the status quo. As they began their professional careers, Boomers were driven and dedicated. Boomers equate work with self-worth, contribution to society, and personal fulfillment. Their competitive nature drove them to aspire for higher monetary compensation and titles (Cordeniz, 2002).

Generation X's childhood was dramatically different. Between 1965 and 1977, the divorce rate in America doubled. Over 40% of Xers come from broken families, and 12% of elementary school children and 30% of middle school children grew up as "latchkey kids," responsible for their own welfare after school until their parents returned from work (Zill & Robinson, 1995). Gen Xers are accustomed to great diversity in family situations, relationships, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender roles, religion, and political affiliation. Their school activities are focused less on individual performance and more on team-based learning.

Gen Xers grew up in the information age, and they are quite comfortable with technology. Politically, they grew up as America's global power was declining. In the business world, Generation X saw a record number of corporate bankruptcies, Wall Street scandals, and massive corporate downsizing. As they watched their parents struggle with these realities, they began to lose faith in organizations and institutions.

As a result of this upbringing, Generation X brings a new set of values to the workplace. Numerous studies reveal that monetary rewards are not as influential for Xers as they were/are for Boomers (Mayfield & Keating, 2003). Gen Xers want to – and like to – work, but not at the expense of their families. As a group, Xers tend not to follow traditional professional rules, possibly overlooking many organizational or social boundaries. They may, for example, speak to and seek out people in top management positions, sidestepping established hierarchies. Additionally, Xers want to participate in non-traditional, diverse, multi-tasking and fun work teams where individuals act as equals – regardless of their age, experience, race, or gender (Zemke et al., 2000).

Similarly, Gen Yers have had a significantly different upbringing than members of the Baby Boom generation. They do not remember the Cold War. "You sound like a broken record" means nothing to them. MTV is their favorite television channel, and this plus ever-popular video games have created a propensity for Gen Yers to learn in a visual style. This generation is fully comfortable with loud graphics, rapid editing, moving cameras, and loud music (Paul, 2001).

Because of widely publicized violent events at school, such as the Columbine shootings in 1999, Gen Yers are simultaneously watchful of their personal safety, but also wary of the news media. Whereas for Boomers and Gen Xers, threats came from beyond the shores of the United States in terms of Communism or nuclear annihilation, today fears are more local. Consequently, Gen Yers tend to be highly risk-averse (Stapinski, 1999).

Although their years of work experience are still relatively small, members of Generation Y similarly report being motivated by non-monetary rewards. Instead, they gravitate toward positions that provide training, a positive culture, and the ability to "be themselves" while at work. Generation Y workers also have a healthy respect for family, and report that time with family is a priority in their lives (Gardyn, 2000). Consequently, they value flexibility in work hours (or even the ability to do some work from home), as this helps them maintain a solid work/life balance. Interestingly, although Gen Yers are exceptionally comfortable with and tolerant of personal diversity on all levels, many of them report being somewhat more conservative in their interpersonal relationships – their dating, mating, and child-rearing habits look more like their grandparents' than those seen on Melrose Place (Stapinski, 1999).

To effectively manage Xers and Yers, managers need to tap into their creativity by fostering a climate that welcomes them and values their contributions. Xers' and Nexters' familiarity and comfort with information technology can add value to any library setting, and giving them autonomy to complete technology-related projects can engender trust and good will. Perhaps the most important thing to do for Xers, however, is provide feedback. Consider the FAST feedback model, in which managers provide employees with feedback that is Frequent, Accurate, Specific, and Timely. Both of these generations value direct feedback, and providing them with this input can ease their discomfort in the work environment. Also, recognize that family and outside interests will likely be more important than work to many Xers and Yers. It has been said that, while Boomers are a group that lives to work. Xers and Yers work to live (Tulgan, 2000). Rather than monetary incentives, managers may find that time off and/or flexible work hours are highly motivating to these younger workers.

Despite their bad reputation, Gen Xers do bring a variety of positive attributes to their employers. They are:

- Open and comfortable with change
- Comfortable with technology
- Responsible
- Financially fit, understanding the value of money
- Not intimidated by authority
- Innovative
- Able to overcome adversity
- Team-oriented
- Diversity seekers
- Balanced in personal and professional priorities
- Able to overcome unnecessary politics (Augustine, 2001)

Perhaps the best possible advice to managers is to appreciate these qualities, and find ways to allow Xers to "work to their strengths" for the overall benefit of the organization.

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THE WELL-READ LIBRARIAN: REFERENCE SERVICES FOR YOUTH PATRONS

by Kathryn Franklin

The topic of reference services for children and young adults is one that naturally follows along with the last 18 or so years of my life, the time I have spent living with three children. Focusing on young adult materials in college prepared me slightly for the onslaught of the homework needs of my boys. I sold World Book products to earn my free set, bought a *World Book Dictionary* as well as a *Merriam Webster's Collegiate*, hung a huge map of the United States up in the kitchen, and crossed my fingers.

The last five years as the media aide in the local junior high gave me a huge education in the researching quirks of 12 – 15 year olds. Assignments on the Civil War, health concerns, song lyrics, how to build a bird house, pharaohs and Greek mythology are some of the topics they asked me about. Luckily, I had a good line of communication with the teachers and knew in advance what tools the kids could use to complete their assignments. In addition to working with teachers and other professionals, reading the library literature is another way to gain perspective on the needs of younger patrons.

Nearly every article I read mentioned that there has traditionally been little research or writing done in the field of reference for children and young adults and that that absence of published work reflects the neglect this type of reference service has traditionally been given by libraries. Of utmost concern is that the child or young adult patron should be given the same attention normally reserved for adults. The much written about reference interview has to be altered to work effectively with the younger patron and that alteration should be accomplished by training and experience. The reference interview needs to be tailored to the individual, whether he or she is six or 16. Selected literature addressing these needs and concerns follows.

Bunge, C.A. (1994). Responsive reference service. School Library Journal 40: 142 – 145.

Professor Charles A. Bunge of the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison found that although children and YAs generally need reference services the most, they face many obstacles to getting the information they need. As budgets shrink and priorities change, more "barriers to information" will be erected. He wrote that a basic value of reference service is the "equity in access to information," that it exists "to help the less adroit," and that reference librarians trained to deal with children and YAs are a necessity if that equity is to be maintained, since children and YAs are usually among those less skilled at finding information.

Bunge suggested that YA librarians become members of policy revision committees to protect their patrons from any inadvertent policy discrimination and get involved with their adult services counterparts on programs, pathfinder development, even library displays. Staff of all community libraries, public and school, should work across facility lines to exchange ideas, expertise and resources. It is essential to establish and keep open communication and to keep reminding the powers that be that the YA users who are ignored are the adult patrons who don't return.

Winston, M. and Paone K.L. (2001). Reference and information services for young adults: A research study of public libraries in New Jersey. Reference & User Services Quarterly 41: 45 – 50.

This article presents the results of a New Jersey survey carried out in 2000 regarding young adult reference and information services. The issues included job titles, population served, responsibilities, reference/information services offered, service policies and philosophies, patron research methods and number of YA staff. Questionnaires were sent to 454 public libraries; 256 completed questionnaires were returned for a rate of 56.3 percent.

The results support previous research regarding YA services which concluded basically that these services are being ignored. The authors state that although YAs make up a large part — 25 percent — of New Jersey's population, there is a lack of formal YA services and staff dedicated to them in public libraries, (which is reflected in the limited literature on YA reference or other services.) He notes that more than half of the

surveyed libraries do not have a specific YA librarian. If a library were to formalize YA services and award the job title "Young Adult Librarian" to a staff person, services would improve due to "recognized responsibility."

Byczek, J.R., and Vaillancourt, R.J. (1998, Aug.) Homework on the range: Public librarians can't afford to be lone rangers." Voice of Youth Advocates 21:183 – 186.

Byczek and Vaillancourt (both experienced YA librarians) give advice as to how to deal with teens and their after-school information requests and suggest seven common-sense ways to make any librarian-teen interaction a successful one.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Don't make any judgments on the YA question. It's important to them, so it's important to the YA librarian to find the information regardless of the topic. **What's Your Mission?** Be familiar with the written mission statement and reference policy of the library. While homework is the student's responsibility, it is the librarian's responsibility to find the information he needs to do it. **Break Down Barriers.** Leave the comfort zone of the desk and search out the confused students wandering the stacks. **Get to the Real Question.** Ask many questions to narrow the search. This will help both the librarian and YA understand just what it is he's looking for. **Go Back to School.** Open lines of communication with the staff of the local schools and know what assignments are coming up. **Be Prepared.** Develop a homework desk that is savvy to what the teens are going to want and develop pathfinders. **Never Let Them Leave Empty-Handed.** Make sure the student either has what he needs or give him other avenues to pursue.

Burton, M.K. (1998). "Reference Interview: Strategies for Children." North Carolina Libraries 56: 110-113.

Burton, a Children's Information Specialist, gives a rundown of the many past studies and writings concerning the adult reference interview and the skills that will improve that interview and thus reference service itself. He states that until recently, not much has been written about the difficulties involved in reference interviews with children.

Burton says that because of the limitations in vocabulary and articulation a child has, special care has to be taken in order to give a child the same level of service as any other patron. In an interview with a child, a librarian should focus on the child and what he or she has to say instead of on the parent, and basic vocabulary should be used. Above all, the librarian must have patience, imagination, and a good sense of humor. The homework quandary was discussed, with experts recommending the child not be asked if the question was for an assignment, thus giving the child equal-patron status. The child should feel he or she will be given access to the desired information and that he is as important a patron as the next adult who asks a question. If the child has a good experience, he or she will continue to use the library: "Children are not just the patrons of tomorrow: they are the patrons of today."

Bishop, K., and Salveggi, A. (2001). Responding to developmental stages in reference service to children. Public Libraries 40: 354 – 358.

Bishop and Salveggi conducted a study of staff and activity in a children's room in a public library in Florida which serves a racially diverse population of approximately 350,000 people. They wrote that the success of a reference interview with a child stems from the librarian's understanding of the "intellectual and emotional growth of children." Child psychology studies show that children can be separated into preoperational (ages two through seven) and concrete-operational (ages seven through twelve) stages. Preoperational children are more "ego-centered" without the ability to use logic. Communication with them is taxing, which makes the librarian's job of finding out what the four-year-old really wants difficult. Concrete-operational children can apply logical thought and have a developed vocabulary, making for an easier interview. Understanding these developmental stages can make serving a child patron easier.

The authors agree with the idea that a librarian should not ask a child if his or her question is homework related, thus validating the child with "equal status," and the child should always be the important cog in a three-party transaction, with the librarian listening to the parent, but responding mainly to the child. The socioeconomic status of each child should also be noticed. Knowing the psychological reasons for certain child behavior makes it all the more important to gain the necessary skills in order to be a successful children's reference librarian.

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See Also:

1. *The Librarian's Guide to Writing for Publication* (Scarecrow Press: 2004)
2. APA Style Home at www.apastyle.org

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Starting with the first issues of 2006, *Indiana Libraries* will be in need of a new editor. Ordinarily the term of office for the Editor is three years. A description of the Editor's responsibilities follows this notice, and applicants should address their remarks to their abilities to fulfill those functions. Those interested in being considered for the editorship should submit a cover letter, resume, and supporting materials which demonstrate the author's authoring and editing skills to

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For consideration, application materials should be postmarked by *30 April 2005.* Questions regarding the editorship can be addressed to the Editor at jenpierc@iupui.edu.

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   c. Developing thematic foci for issues or other strategies as needed to generate content
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The following issues are in the works; contact information for editors working on each issue are provided for potential contributors.

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