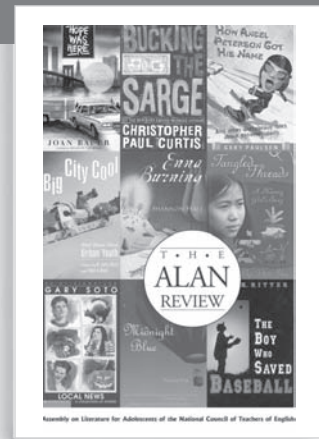


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 Number 3
 Summer 2005



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Instructions for Authors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REVIEW PROCESS. Each manuscript will receive a blind review by the editor and at least two members of the editorial review board, unless the length, style, or content makes it inappropriate for publication. Usually, authors should expect to hear the results within eight weeks. Manuscripts are judged for the contribution they make to the field of adolescent literature, clarity and cohesiveness, timeliness, and freshness of approach. Selection also depends on the manuscript's contribution to the overall balance of the journal.

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

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

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

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

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

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From the Editors

Summer shines brightly across the nation, and with it often comes an opportunity for a vacation—a respite from the daily routine. With your break—no matter how brief—from the everyday concerns, we hope you’ll take some time to venture with us along “A Road Less Traveled,” our theme for this issue of *The ALAN Review*, as we continue to explore the growing field of young adult literature.

Patty Campbell, ALAN president, begins our unique journey with a preview of the fall 2005 ALAN workshop set for Pittsburgh. With the theme of “Bearers of Light: The Caring Community of Young Adult Literature,” the workshop guarantees to provide numerous roads to navigate when using young adult literature. The workshop kicks off with Yann Martel, author of *The Life of Pi*, speaking at the annual ALAN breakfast. From there, it’s two full days of leading authors, publishers, and other experts in the field. Be sure to check out the tentative schedule to see when some of the top names in young adult literature will be sharing with conference-goers.

This issue also features Steven T. Bickmore’s teaching approaches for Joseph Buchac’s *Heart of a Chief*, as well as an interview with the Native American author. Pete Hautman provides a humorous narrative of how he won a national book award for *Godless*, while another award-winner—John Mason of Scholastic Inc., who received the 2004 Ted Hipple

Service Award, shares what it’s like in the world of publishing.

Author Shannon Hale continues our journey, explaining the art of telling archetypal stories, while Joseph O. Milner explores life on the fringe of society for many protagonists in Kay Smith’s High School Connection. Wendy Glenn then shares details of fiction shaped by history, based on two current authors, Julie Chibbaro and Jennifer Donnelly. First-time contributor Katherine E. Proukou discusses the nature of young adult literature through traditional lenses and examines whether the genre is a rite of passage or a rite of its own.

And, as a tribute to a woman who blazed many historic and vital trails in literacy and reader response, Duane Roen and Nicholas Karolides discuss the life and times of Louise Rosenblatt, who passed away earlier this year. ALAN award winner Jacqueline Woodson discusses her novels and how she attempts, through the written word, to help young people stand up for their beliefs.

Finally, in our regular columns, we provide the Clip and File section featuring reviews of 31 of the latest in young adult literature.

Be prepared for an issue filled with a variety of less traveled roads—all different and interesting options to reach our one primary destination, making the most of young adult literature. Enjoy this literary vacation; it’s a valuable journey.

Announcement from Catherine Balkin, ALAN Authors' Bureau Coordinator

Dear ALAN Member:

Since the purpose of ALAN is to promote the reading, teaching, and appreciation of literature for adolescents, the Board has created an ALAN Speakers Bureau to advance the reading and use of young adult literature in schools, libraries and other settings.

We are currently collecting speakers' names for a posting on the ALAN website. If you are interested in becoming a guest speaker at school, library, or university functions, or if you already do a lot of speaking, a mention on the ALAN website could generate a number of requests for you.

If you would like to be included, please provide us with your name, address, phone number, and email address, and tell us your honorarium range, how many presentations you are willing to do each day, your audience preference (YAs only, adults only, both), what kinds of subjects you are comfortable with and how far you're willing to travel. On the

ALAN website, we will publish only your name, school or university affiliation, city and state. All requests for speaking engagements will be filtered through the Speakers Bureau.

In return for this service, we ask that you pay ALAN a finder's fee of 15% of the honorarium you receive from each speaking engagement. The money that ALAN receives from this service will go back into the membership by way of grants, programs, etc., to advance our stated purpose. A satisfaction survey will be sent to each school or university after the speaker program, and upon request, we will be happy to share the results of the survey with you.

If you are interested in joining the ALAN Speakers Bureau, or if you have any questions, please contact Catherine Balkin at telephone 718-857-7605 or Catherine@BalkinBuddies.com. Also, if you were previously on the ALAN Speakers Bureau and wish to continue to be on it, please contact Catherine Balkin with the above mentioned details. We look forward to working with you on this enterprise.

Call for Manuscripts

2005 Fall theme: Finding My Way

This theme is intended to solicit articles about young adult literature and its use dealing with the search for self. This theme is meant to be open to interpretation and support a broad range of subtopics, but some possibilities include examination and discussion of the approach an author or group of authors take to leading protagonists down the path to self discovery, comparisons of how this is accomplished across subgenres of young adult literature, or how young adult literature compares to developmental or adolescent psychology. We welcome and encourage other creative interpretations of this theme.

2006 Winter

The theme for our 2006 winter issue will reflect the theme of the 2005 ALAN Workshop, *Bearers of Light: The Caring Community of Young Adult Literature*. October 15 submission deadline.



Bearers of Light: The Caring Community of Young Adult Literature:

A Welcome from ALAN President Patty Campbell

In a dark world, young adult literature is a beacon of light for teens—books that help them through risky times with wisdom, beauty, and laughter. The authors who write these books, the publishers who produce them, the teachers and librarians who bring them to teens, all care about young people and their reading, and about each other, in a community of mutual respect and encouragement. This year the ALAN Workshop invites you to celebrate being part of this world, to hear a wide variety of YA authors speak about their joy in writing for young readers and their dedication to excellence, to meet and talk with these writers, to discuss current literary trends and issues of concern, to learn about the newest and best books for teens, and to encounter field-tested ideas for introducing YA literature to young people.

Anthologist and longtime ALAN member Donald Gallo will deliver the keynote address, and forty YA authors will appear as speakers and panelists, including Walter Dean Myers, Harry Mazer, Caroline Cooney, Laurie Halse Anderson, Joan Bauer, Annette Curtis Klause, Alex Flinn, Graham Salisbury, Nancy Garden, Han Nolan, Tom Barron, Michael Cadnum, Chris Lynch, Paul Fleischman, Lynne Cox, and many others. Panels will discuss an array of concerns such as “Caring about Books on War,” “Caring about Teens’ Search for Spiritual Truth,” “Beyond Chick Lit,” “Caring about Kids Who Don’t Like to Read,” “Caring about Hispanic Culture in YA Literature,” “Caring about Knowing the Past,” and “The Many Varieties of Speculative Fiction.”

On both days you will also be faced with a difficult choice among a variety of exciting and practical breakout presentations, with many handouts, on vital topics such as booktalking (Joni Richards Bodart), poetry (Bob Falls of Poetry Alive), the best new books (Walter Mayes, *BER*), Native Americans in YA lit (Jim Blasingame of Arizona State University and Kenan Metzger of Haskell Indian Nations University), religious themes in YA historical fiction (Joanne Brown, Drake University), and much more. As you can see, these small-group sessions will be conducted by leading authorities in the field. There will be opportunities for book signings during the workshop, and every attendee will receive a large bag of free books. As the frosting on this already rich cake, a group of teens from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, under the direction of young adult librarian Robyn Hammer-Clarey, will perform an excerpt from a new play by Paul Fleischman.

The ALAN Workshop has been called “the best YA show in the world” and is an incomparable opportunity for professional growth. The audience planned is no more than 400, and in the past ALAN has had to turn away applicants beyond that number. Register early, don’t miss out!

(Early online registration is available at www.NCTE.org, at \$150 for members, \$160 for nonmembers, and \$75 for students.)

The ALAN (P)review Fall 2005 Workshop

The fall 2005 ALAN Workshop is scheduled for Nov. 21 and 22 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the star-studded lineup is filled with well-known authors, publishers, and experts in the field of young adult literature. The activities actually kick off with the annual breakfast featuring Yann Martel, celebrated author of *The Life of Pi*, on Saturday, November 19, and a reception on Sunday evening, sponsored by publishers, will give all us ordinary folk a chance to chat with our favorite authors. Here's a workshop preview showing what you can look forward to in Pittsburgh.—JB & LG

ALAN Workshop 2005

Bearers of Light: The Caring Community of Young Adult Literature

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

November 21-22, 2005

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21

8:00-8:10—WELCOME

Patty Campbell, ALAN President

8:10-8:40—KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Donald Gallo, Solon, Ohio

Courtesy of Candlewick

Chair: Sarah K. Herz, Westport, Connecticut

8:40-9:10—**Joan Bauer**

“Bearers of Light”

Courtesy of Penguin Putnam

Chair: Mary Arnold, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Cleveland, OH

9:10-10:00—**CARING ABOUT BOOKS ON WAR**

Moderator Marc Aronson, Candlewick

Paul Fleischman, Harry Mazer, Jim Murphy,
Walter Dean Myers

Courtesy Candlewick, Simon & Schuster, Clarion,
and HarperCollins

10:00-10:30—**Nancy Gardner**

Courtesy of Farrar Straus Giroux

Chair: James Cook, Dayton Metro Library, Dayton,
OH

10:30-10:50—Coffee break

10:50-11:20—**Alex Flinn**

“Caring about Kids with Troubles”

Courtesy HarperCollins

Chair: Wendy Glenn, University of Connecticut

11:20-12:00—**CARING ABOUT KNOWING THE PAST**

Moderator Joanne Brown, Drake University, Des
Moines, IA

Michael Cadnum, William Durbin, Jeanette

Ingold, Graham Salisbury, Diane Lee Wilson

Courtesy of Scholastic, Harcourt, Random House,
and Simon & Schuster

12:00-1:15—Lunch

1:15-1:55—**CARING ABOUT HISPANIC CULTURE IN
YA LITERATURE**

Moderator Lori Marie Carlson, Henry Holt

Judith Ortiz Cofer, Pam Munoz Ryan, Benjamin

Alire Saenz

Courtesy Henry Holt, Scholastic, Cinco Puntos

1:55-2:35—**THE MANY VARIETIES OF SPECULATIVE
FICTION**

Moderator Diane Tuccillo, City of Mesa Library,
Mesa, AZ

Tom Barron, Kathleen Jeffrie Johnson, Kenneth

Oppel, Tamora Pierce, Marcus Sedgwick

Courtesy Penguin Putnam, Roaring Brook,
HarperCollins, Random House

2:35-3:00—Soda break

3:00-3:55—**BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

“Booktalking the 2005 ALAN Workshop Authors”

Joni Richards Bodart, San Jose State University

“Poetry Performance in the Classroom”

Bob Falls, Poetry Alive

“Hearing the Silent Voices: YA Literature by, for, and about Native Americans”

James Blasingame, Arizona State University
Kenan Metzger, Haskell Indian Nations University
Marlinda Kaulaity, Arizona State University
Wendy Kelleher, Arizona State University
Katie Mason, Arizona State University
Nina Murikami, Arizona State University

“Joyous Enlightenment: Introducing Future Teachers to Young Adult Literature”

Angela Beumer Johnson, Wright State University, OH

“The ALAN Foundation: Support for Your Research”

Gary Salvner, Youngstown State University, OH
John Noell Moore, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA
Mary Warner, San Jose State University
Jean E. Brown, Rhode Island College

“Teaching a Love of Reading: How to Rehabilitate Reluctant Readers”

Daria Plumb, Dundee Alternative High School, Dundee, MI

4:00-4:30—Paul Fleischman
“About Zap”

Courtesy of Candlewick
Chair: Patrick Jones, Richfield, Minnesota

4:30-5:00—AN EXCERPT FROM ZAP

Performed by the young adults of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Robyn Hammer-Clairey, Young Adult Coordinator

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22

8:00-8:15—A WORD ABOUT ALAN MEMBERSHIP

Joan Kaywell, Membership Secretary, University of South Florida-Tampa

8:15-8:30—THE ALAN REVIEW

James Blasingame and Lori Atkins Goodson, Co-Editors

8:30-9:00—Laurie Halse Anderson

Courtesy of Penguin Putnam
Chair: Catherine Balkin, Balkin Buddies

9:00-10:00—CARING ABOUT TEENS’ SEARCH FOR SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Moderator Teri Lesesne, Sam Houston State University

Elsie Aidinoff, Pete Hautman, Han Nolan

Courtesy of HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster,

Harcourt

10:00-10:30—Chris Lynch

Courtesy of HarperCollins
Chair: Jeffrey Kaplan, University of Central Florida

10:30-10:50—Coffee break

10:50-11:30—BEYOND CHICK LIT: CARING ABOUT WHAT GIRLS READ

Moderator Michael Cart, UCLA
Caroline Cooney, Carolyn MacCullough, Sharon Flake, Mary Pearson, Fiona Rosenbloom

Courtesy of Random House, Roaring Brook, Hyperion, and Henry Holt

11:30-12:00—Lynne Cox—Swimming to Antarctica

Courtesy of Harcourt
Chair: Chris Crowe, Brigham Young University

12:00-1:15—Lunch

1:15-1:45—Annette Curtis Klause

Courtesy of Simon & Schuster
Chair: Linda Pavonetti, Oakland University, Rochester, MI

1:45-2:30—CARING ABOUT KIDS WHO DON’T LIKE TO READ

Moderator Ed Sullivan, Library Media Specialist, Knoxville, TN

Eloise Flood (Razorbill), Marilyn Reynolds, Alan Lawrence Sitomer, Andrew Wooldridge (Soundings)

Courtesy of Penguin Putnam, Hyperion, Orca

2:30-2:50—Soda break

2:50-3:10—BREAKOUT SESSIONS

“Walter’s Lively and Opinionated Look at the Best of 2005”

Walter Mayes, The Girls’ Middle School, Mountain View, CA

“Bearing Light, Exploring Darkness: Religious Themes in YA Historical Fiction”

Joanne Brown, Drake University, Des Moines, IA

“Creating Classroom Connections Between University and Secondary Students Through Young Adult Literature”

Lisa A. Hazlett, University of South Dakota
Judith Hayn, Loyola University, Chicago
Melissa Vatter-Miller, Reitz High School, IA

“New Kids on the Block: Shining a Light on First-time Writers for Young Adults”

Teri Lesesne, Sam Houston State University
Mary Arnold, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Cleveland, OH

Bonnie Kunzel, New Jersey State Library
“Hot-Burning Torches: Teaching YA Books that Sizzle with Controversy”

Toby Emert, University of Kentucky
Aaron Levy, Kennesaw State University
Kristi Piper, Danbury High School, Texas
Laraine Wallowitz, Adelphi University
Lana Taylor Warren, Obion County Central High School, Tennessee

“Reaching Diverse Communities with Young Adult Literature”

Steven Bickmore, University of Georgia
Melanie Hundley, University of Georgia

3:15-3:55—**SPOTLIGHT ON NEW AUTHORS**

Andrew Auseon, Alfred Martino, Stephanie Hemphill, and Linda Oatman High

Courtesy of Harcourt, Hyperion, and Bloomsbury
Chair: Carolyn Lott, University of Montana

3:55-4:00—**A PREVIEW OF ALAN 2006 AND FAREWELL**

Diane Tuccillo, ALAN President-Elect

Plan to attend the 2006 ALAN Workshop in Nashville, Tennessee

Contact 2005 ALAN President Diane Tuccillo
(diane.tuccillo@cityofmesa.org)

“A Voice, a Power, a Space in the World”:

2004 ALAN Award Winner Jacqueline Woodson Talks about Her Works

I had the delightful fortune of dining with Jacqueline Woodson at a Penguin-sponsored dinner while at NCTE 2004 in Indianapolis, shortly after Ms. Woodson received the 2004 ALAN Award. Through conversation and listening to her read from a work in progress, I experienced a voice drenched in a poignancy I have come to expect from her written words. Like many readers, I became a fan from my first Woodson novel. And as a middle school teacher, I confidently place her books into the hands of my students because Woodson writes of them and for them. Her characters are not stick figures to move a plot but representative of adolescents, regardless of race or gender.

Woodson has been honored twice as a National Book Award Finalist, three times with a Coretta Scott King Honor, and once with the Coretta Scott King Award. Her books consistently rank high on the ALA Best Books for Young Adults, and she has received numerous state awards for her exceptional and honest portrayal of young people.

To the question asked on her website about if she would ever stop writing, Woodson responds: “Probably not even when I die. I love writing that much.” For her legion of readers, I can only hope her words continue to instill a genuine voice in quality young adult literature.

RC: In *Locomotion* (2003 and your third Coretta Scott



King Honor) you used verse to tell a young man’s story. What challenges did that present to you, the writer, and what impact do you think poetry has with young people (or all people) versus prose?

JW: I think the biggest challenge was trying to get inside a young man’s head—via poetry. I mean, how *does* an eleven-year-old come to a poem, what is his thought process, how does the poem appear on the

page, how does he feel about it once it’s there . . . I, as always, doubted my ability to tell Lonnie’s story. But once I let myself go to that place and feel what it felt like for ME to be in fifth grade discovering MY voice for the first time, the writing just came and kept on coming. I think poetry has the ability to make people think. It’s short and provocative and when it’s not written in some arrogant code—when it’s truly poetry for the people—then it has the ability to make people feel like they have a voice, a power, a space in the world.

RC: Life can be cruel in the real world and literature alike. The events that leave Ty’ree, Charlie, and Lafayette orphaned in *Miracle’s Boys* (2000, a Coretta Scott King Award winner) are relentlessly tragic, but young people love this book. In *I Hadn’t Meant to Tell You This* (1994 and your first Coretta Scott King Honor) Lena has a horrible secret that

never is told to people who could help, but again, young people love this book. What do you think it is about the tragedies of life that appeal to young readers in a well-written story?

JW: I think for young people, adolescence is the greatest tragedy, so seeing some of themselves reflected in the lives of others gives their own lives

We're living in a dangerous time . . . when the act of making art can be dangerous, when people find ways of justifying hatred, intolerance, ignorance—as the population grows and the middle class shrinks. I am trying to write, always, against fear—my own and those who come to my books. I have a daughter now—and many other young people in my life. I want their world to be a safe place for them. . . .

some sort of value and truth. There is this 'me against them' sense about being young, and struggling with others is a way of making that feeling more collective somehow.

RC: People in your books (*From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*, 1995 and your second Coretta Scott King Honor, *The Dear One*, 1991, for examples) often have to deal with each other, whether they like it or not, and find a way to make life work. How does this, if at all, reflect a philosophy of yours about life?

JW: I think, as I wrote in *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*—we all have a right to be in this world. We're living in a dangerous time—when Christianity can be

about intolerance—which, growing up a Christian I know is the complete opposite of what it's about, when our own society is xenophobic, when your family life is in peril simply because you're poor or of color or gay—or all of the above, when the act of making art can be dangerous, when people find ways of justifying hatred, intolerance, ignorance—as the population grows and the middle class shrinks. I am trying to write, always, against fear—

my own and those who come to my books. I have a daughter now—and many other young people in my life. I want their world to be a safe place for them—I want them to love their bodies and have control over those bodies. I want them to do the work they love and not worry about starving to death doing it. I want them to always think of the greater good in each act. Writing helps me envision this, articulate it, create it.

RC: You have written sequels (*Lena*, 1999; *Behind You*, 2004) and even a trilogy (*Last Summer with Maizon*, 1990; *Maizon at Blue Hill*, 1992; *Between Madison and Palmetto*, 1993). How is it different in the writing process to continue an established story line?

JW: When I'm writing a sequel, it's like going back into an old familiar house and revisiting the people there. They are just as I left them in the last book, and it feels kind of amazing to find them that way, to remember them as they were. The territory is familiar yet open to new ideas. When I'm starting to write a new story—that is not part of a sequel, it's a bit scarier. I never know where a story is going, so I never know if I'll get through it.

RC: How much of your experience working as a therapist with troubled youth shows up in your writing?

JW: I don't know. I think what I brought to working with young people in crisis had always been in me, so it's just natural that it remains with me. I have to keep saying "Be open, girl," no matter what the situation. That has always been true.

RC: Who have been some of the influential people in your life?

JW: Virginia Hamilton, James Baldwin, Nikki Giovanni, James Taylor, Carson McCullers, Joanie Mitchell, my grandmother, my daughter, my dog, some teachers, some students, some characters I met in other books . . . the list goes on.

RC: Do you find sanctuary for writing in places like Whidbey Island and/or writing workshops? What

kind of environment best facilitates your work?

JW: Sometimes I have to go away from where all of my living happens to be able to access the worlds in my head. It's lonely to do that—to leave my friends and family, to choose fiction over my real life. But it's also rewarding—coming back home and having TWO worlds instead of one. I don't get to go away as much as I once did, but I do find solace in long stretches of quiet. Sometimes, I just go to the Writer's Room in Manhattan where I can sit in silence among strangers. It's hard because there is still so much New York City energy around me but sometimes easier than being at home—where I have access to the Internet and a stack of bills and various creaks reminding me what needs to be done at home. Sometimes I sit in my backyard with my Ipod on and listen to the same album over and over while I write. That's my spring plan. I haven't gotten much writing done all year.

RC: In addition to writing over thirteen novels for young adults, you have composed six picture books, beginning with *Martin Luther King, Jr. and His Birthday* (1990). Is there a different need for you as a writer to pen picture books? What age groups might learn from picture books?

JW: Seven picture books—counting *SHOW WAY* which is coming out in September! Picture books allow me to write poetry—they're short and lyrical and visual. I love being able to take that break. Doing so helps me to remember that I should do the same with older books—think about the language and the rhythm of them. Picture books allow me to challenge myself in ways that I like to—how to get

my ideas across with limited space, how to stay true to my voice—things like that.

RC: You mentioned *The Other Side* (2001) was written as a current story; however, the illustrator E. B. Lewis envisioned your text as taking place in the 1950's. Since differences still exist today, do you believe your message was altered by the illustrations?

JW: I think the altering of the message allowed the book an entry it may not have otherwise had—People are more comfortable talking about segregation as a thing of the past as opposed to talking about all the work we still have to do. The book is extremely popular in a way I don't think it would have been. I was bummed when I first saw the illustrations—even though I thought they were stunning. But as years passed, I realized the need for it to be done that way.

RC: What advice would you offer to young adult readers about writing?

JW: Don't be afraid. Fear keeps people from moving forward, from saying and writing what they mean, from DOING. Write because you love writing. Don't listen to people who say you can't or shouldn't. We all have a story. Tell yours.

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Language At the Heart of the Matter:

Symbolic Language and Ideology in *The Heart of a Chief*

"I just finished showing Dances With Wolves to my American literature class. I love that movie," Jessie announced as she walked into the faculty room.

Stan's ears perked up as he listened closely.

"Every time I show it," Jessie continued, "my students remark on the film's beauty. Some even talk about how the sound track echoes the film's emotions. I know it's long, but it seems to introduce our multicultural unit so well. It really generates genuine empathy for others."

"I know it is considered a classic." Stan interjects, "Nevertheless, I often use segments of Dances with Wolves to show how the film still advances stereotypes about the West and Native Americans."

"Oh, really?" Jessie asks. She pauses. "I always thought that it gives such a positive view of the Lakota people. Besides, Costner goes out of his way to include the native language and authentic clothing."

"Yes, he does," Stan continues "but imagine how you might feel about the portrayal of the Pawnee throughout the movie if you were a modern-day Pawnee." Jessie looks on thoughtfully. "The film still advances the stereotype of the good Indian against the bad Indian and places the white man in the position of savior."

"I agree," adds Debbie, another English teacher. "The genocide of

the Native American people takes a back seat to Dunbar's experience."

Mark, another history teacher, chimes in:

"Yes, it focuses so constantly on the white guy. When will Hollywood create a film where a Lakota, for example, is allowed to tell the tribe's story?"

"I guess I should have considered that," responds Jessie. "Especially when I try so hard to include literature in my classroom about marginalized groups written by members of those communities. I like movies so much I often forget to use that critical eye I so often use when analyzing literature and apply it to movies."

"Yeah, me too," Stan agrees. "I used segments of the film in my history class for several years and watched it a couple of times myself before I realized that the film's message side-stepped some important ideological issues for Native American activists."

"I think you have helped me frame a follow-up discussion for tomorrow," concludes Jessie. "As a class we should consider how the power of art could help us see some issues as well as not see others."

This brief, and admittedly idealistic, faculty room conversation about *Dances With Wolves* demonstrates how a piece of art might be finely crafted and praised by many; yet,

Many students in our classrooms have not developed the critical skills to examine closely both the craft and the ideology of any work of art. As language arts teachers, part of our job is to help them examine art more completely, especially with literature.

upon closer examination, the same piece of art can still present ideological problems. This is not only true of the films we choose to include in our classrooms; but it is equally true with the literature we select. Many students in our classrooms have not developed the critical skills to examine closely both the craft and the ideology of any work of art. As language arts teachers, part of our job is to help them examine art more completely, especially with literature.

It is important to remember that adolescents read the books that we, as teachers and critics of young adult literature, discuss and enjoy. Adolescents are the primary audience for this literature and hopefully, if a young adult book is successful, more young people than adults will read it. Recommending a book because it is beautifully written and well crafted is often not enough, especially if the book advances stereotypes and cultural misrepresentations. The opposite is also true; it is not enough for a book to be culturally accurate and receive praise if it lacks craft and artisanship. Those of us who both admire and analyze young adult literature, whether we consider ourselves teacher educators or literary critics, can provide teachers with the critical tools needed to engage students in discussions about books that include conversations of both craft and ideology. Keeping in mind this dual consideration, one side of this approach suggests that critics and teacher educators prepare novice teachers with the ability to recognize literary elements, metaphors, symbols, and figurative language. The other side of the approach



advocates considering how ideology is presented and asks teachers to read carefully and to contemplate the embedded messages of the texts that they will, in turn, share with their students.

New teachers should learn to carefully examine the literary techniques and the ideologies of the books they choose to teach and share with their students. Through a careful analysis of the books that are published and available for teachers and librarians to choose from, critics of adolescent literature, teacher educators, and teachers themselves should employ the tools of literary analysis to mediate the variety of ideologies that any given text either presents or neglects. [Lyle \(1997\)](#) reports that “ideology naturalizes, it historicizes, and it eternalizes” (1). If this is the case, then an examination of how carefully the ideology is embedded in the craft of the novel should aid in an overall evaluation of the text. [Hollindale \(1992\)](#) suggests “developments in literary theory have made us newly aware of the omnipresence of ideology in all literature” (23). We are all subject to the influence of ideology, which can briefly be defined as the positions, theories, and aims that form a sociopolitical view. The ability to evaluate the merit of any idea is a valuable skill to help students develop.

With practice, students can learn to identify and critique ideologies in the books they read. It is with this goal, that I embrace Hollindale’s agenda, “Our priority in the world of children’s books should not be to promote ideology but to understand it, and find ways of helping others understand it, including the children themselves” (27). We can’t dismiss out of hand every book that does not align with our own ideological leanings nor can we avoid books of poor literary quality. Unfortunately, this often *feels* like the only course available, even though, in reality, many

The critique of a story is one measure of a book, the enjoyment and satisfaction that a story brings to young readers is quite another. To evaluate the skill and craft with which a story is rendered is a much different task than critiquing a novel’s ideological stance.

books of both commendable literary quality and a variety of ideological stances exist in schools and libraries.

The critique of a story is one measure of a book, the enjoyment and satisfaction that a story brings to young readers is quite another. To evaluate the skill and craft with which a story is rendered is a much different task than critiquing a novel's ideological stance. While the two approaches are different, both are important considerations when providing teachers with the tools they need to select novels for their students. I would argue that, as teacher educators in literacy programs, we could, indeed, do both. We would just find a larger range of conclusions about the novels we consider. Regardless of whether we are a critic who favors craft or one who privileges ideology, we place books along a continuum of approval. By considering both criteria carefully, the complexity of the continuum in which we evaluate the quality of a book expands. We might find that we admire both the craftsmanship and the ideology of a novel or we might admire one and trouble the other or, as often is the case, we can find both lacking and consider the novel weak and unsatisfactory. Of course, the ideal for a teacher or critic of adolescent literature would be to find examples of books that fit into the first category, where the novel rates high in both categories and use those books with the students we teach at any level.

The notion that we could quickly build such a list of books, with its accompanying ranking, and then use only those books, is a highly romantic notion and would ignore the numerous books that are already in libraries and classrooms. It is important to note that the process of selecting books is not as simple as it might sound. We may admire most of the literary qualities and disapprove of only a few in the course of the novel. On one hand, a novel may have an ending that is too quickly resolved, a character's symbolic use might be too transparent, or the use of authorial

Throughout the novel Chris bridges the gulf between two languages as he walks in and out of two linguistic worlds. His ability to use two languages helps him travel in distinct environments, leaving important "discourse gifts" at the doors of both the "white" world of Rangerville and the "Indian" world of Penacook reservation.

intrusion may feel overused. On the other hand, we might admire the ideological stance of a novel, but feel that its presentation is didactic, rather than subtly woven through the fabric of the narrative. It is in this spirit of a combined evaluation that I, through the lenses of critic, teacher educator, and classroom teacher, trouble my own satisfaction with *The Heart of a Chief* by analyzing the symbolic use of names and use of public discourse by Chris, the novel's main character (Bruchac, 1998).

Explicating the Language of the Novel

In Joseph Bruchac's *The Heart of a Chief*, symbolic language and its uses are central issues. Language exhibits its force throughout the novel in a variety of forms including: (1) the use of names with multiple symbolic meanings and (2) moments of public discourse that

represent a powerful tool for understanding both within and between cultural groups in the novel. Bruchac's expert use of these literary tools draws the reader into the narrative of an engaging and compelling text. Because a Native American writes the novel, it avoids the issue of representation that often haunts even well crafted novels, but that are written by authors outside the ethnic community the novel attempts to portray (Yolen, 1992; Woodson, 2003). This paper presents evidence that *The Heart of a Chief* is tightly crafted, especially in terms of the symbolic use of language, it will also consider if the ending is equally satisfying with its quick and tidy resolution. Does the novel adequately consider a resolution that addresses the racial conflict that exists in the larger community of the story? Does it address the potential decay within the tribal community as represented by the advent of a casino on the edge of the reservation property? Can the Penacooks be led into the future by a chief with the inability to communicate effectively in the traditional language?

Examining the Names

In *The Heart of a Chief* the symbolic possibilities of the main character's name are complex (Bruchac, 1998). When Chris Nicola explains his names, the reader is on a journey of discovery. In English, he is named for two saints, and in his native Penacook language his name means "bridge." He is named after a traveler and a giver of sacred gifts in English. In Penacook, the name is "only supposed to be spoken when you're on the water, or in sight of it" (3-4). However, the word "bridge" is a short translation for "Log Resting Firm on Both Shores and Wide Enough to Walk Upon" (4). Throughout the novel Chris bridges the gulf between two languages as he walks in and out of two linguistic worlds. His ability to use two languages helps him travel in distinct environments, leaving important "discourse gifts" at the doors of both the "white" world of Rangerville and the "Indian" world of the Penacook reservation. It is in the symbolic meanings of these names that the author's ideology manifests itself most clearly.

St. Christopher, the demoted saint

St. Christopher, the patron saint of travelers, has been "demoted" by the Catholic Church "because they think he never really lived" (Bruchac, 3). What does it mean to be given the name of a myth, of the person who never was? Chris' father, Mito, is separated and lost from the tribe. He continually looks for ways to return. Chris replaces the demoted patron Saint Christopher, suggesting that the one who guides the lost native traveler must come from within the tribe. While his English name suggests his significance to the traveler, it is in the connecting power of the native name, as a bridge, that provides the traveler a way back. Chris' actions are an attempt to communicate in and between both worlds of the novel. His success or failure at this task takes on significant ideological importance in the novel's ultimate message.

The name, Christopher, also carries religious significance other

than that of the lost saint mentioned by Chris' father. Christopher also has Christ at the root and means literally "bearing Christ" (Campbell, 1996-2002).¹ While the traditional language and customs still carry power on the reservation, the native peoples attend the Christian church. Can this religion provide answers to the Penacook tribe if the symbol of movement, Saint Christopher, is stripped of its power? This is a group of people who face serious challenges as they travel into the future. The traditional uses of their land shrink and the influences of the outer world continue to encroach. The resources of this "new" religion have been found wanting. The author's ironic use of the name troubles the value of the white religion for these people and their future. By countering this white name with the native name the author points to the power of tradition and suggests a method of return. The literary trope of naming and the ideology work hand in hand.

Pontiac's legacy

Chris's identity as a traveler is supported by the symbolic use of another proper name. His grandfather's old Pontiac is now only a symbol of travel mounted on blocks. The car's model invites a comparison to Chief Pontiac, who led the Ottawa Indians in the 1750s and was the head of an intertribal group

consisting of the Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwa people (Encarta®, 2003). The car once served his grandfather as he traveled around the area maintaining his connection with other native tribes (Bruchac, 101). The efforts to preserve alliances between tribes, sustaining their culture in the face of the advancing white culture, become more difficult; "it has been ten years since there was a battery. But even if there was one, the old Pontiac doesn't have any tires and it sits up on blocks" (100-101). This tool, co-opted from the white man, is no longer meeting the needs of the tribe. Can any tool, then, taken from the white man successfully meet the needs of this tribe?

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Chris sits in the car and imagines the journey that he must make. When his grandfather comes to talk with him in the car, Chris tells him, “Can’t take my hands of the wheel when I’m driving” (Bruchac, 107). His grandfather understands the difficulty and responds, “not when we still got such a long way to go” (107). It is even a longer way to go when the symbolic vehicle of travel in this book is inoperable. Nevertheless, together Chris and his grandfather build a bridge between each other that covers the generational gap that Mito, Chris’s father, has left in the family. Mito is the lost traveler in the story, the one who has wandered and looks to return. While Chris looks for ways to help the lost traveler return, Mito’s own father, Dado, with his experience as a provider for the tribe and the family, supports Chris in his efforts. His attempts to help his father’s return foreshadow his efforts to help the tribe. As Chris and his grandfather support each other to bridge the gap left in the family, they work together to close the gap that is left in the tribe. Again, the ideology of the text is intertwined in the craftsmanship of the novel.

Deconstructing Columbus

The name, Christopher, also carries the added burden of being the first name of Columbus. The irony that an Indian boy carries that name and also serves as the hero of a story about conflict among native peoples is hard to ignore. Many books, published just before the quincentenary of Columbus’s arrival in this continent in 1492, ignore the destructive influence of Columbus’s arrival. One children’s book, *Encounter*, gives a very different representation of the event in both the text and the illustrations (Yolen and Shannon, 1992). The novel breaks new ground in its presentation of Christopher Columbus with its portrayal of the destruction of an entire tribe of people. Bruchac, a Native American of the Abenaki people, a novelist, and an educator, is certainly aware of the controversy surrounding Christopher Columbus. The name, Christopher, with its multiple meanings results in a problematic choice for the protagonist of *The Heart of a Chief* (Bruchac,

1998). Selecting Columbus’ name, with the baggage it carries in the Native American community, troubles the action of the character that bears the name and the solutions that he participates in are ambiguous. Certainly, Bruchac wants the readers to consider the burden this name places on the character, just as a variety of influences from the white culture place burdens on native peoples as they try them on. Native peoples often negotiate new names, but also new clothes, new homes, new religions, and new ways of making a living. This use of a name that suggests so much ambiguity, troubles the tone of the novel. Can a character with this name reclaim its positive power and supply the community with appropriate and useful gifts? The symbolism of the name “Christian” and its close association with Columbus suggests an

ideology that troubles the tidy conclusion of the novel. To present such a conflicting message and leave it untreated weakens the overall ideological stance of the novel.

The Gifts of St. Nicholas

Chris’s family name, Nicola, is a shortened version of Nicholas, “back when the Europeans gave us names, we still said and spelled them our own way” (Bruchac, 3). St. Nicholas is most commonly known as Santa Claus, and as such, is the giver of gifts. In a pure sense, the person should be a giver of gifts that reminds Christians of

the gift of Christ’s life. He is also the patron saint of children. Its original etymology stems from the Greek name *Nikolaos* that means “victory of the people” from Greek *nike* “victory” and *laos* “people.” The name suggests a powerful victory for this young boy who travels back and forth between two worlds. As a giver of gifts, Chris seeks the gift that will be of value for his people. It is his ancestral duty and their gift to the tribe. In his letter Mito reminds the tribe, “[o]ur family has always defended the heart of our land. We will not stop doing that. . . . If we have to sacrifice a part of the land, it should not be the heart” (151-152). With this in mind, the family’s next gift is a gift of land, land that is on the edge of the reservation

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instead of at its heart on the island (152). While the land will be lost to a casino, it is land that has known greater loss; an accidental fire has killed several members of the Nicola family (70-71). If the land can now save the heart of the land, perhaps the dead can now rest (152). The family seeks to provide for the tribe and bring closure to their own sense of loss.

Being the Bridge

Chris's Penacook name presents an important interpretive activity for the readers of the novel. For readers, it is the unknown name. While all the names given to Chris are connected with spirituality, this tribal name is the most powerful. The reader is never allowed to read the *name* only its translation, it is under erasure and we can only imagine its power (Derrida, 1978). It is not given a clear sign or *logos*, the reader must provide the foundation on which to build this "almost" bridge. Chris serves as the connector between several groups and individuals in the novel. For example, he and his grandfather physically connect to bridge the emotional gap that Mito's absence has left in the family.

He keeps his hands on my shoulder. It rested there lightly, but it is like a jumper cable attached to a dead battery. It is all that keeps me going right now, all that keeps me from giving up. He knows what has just been taken away and he knows what he is giving me. I look over at Doda and I see the sadness in his eyes. He has had something taken away from him too. Part of my responsibility now, I see, is to give back to him (Bruchac, 107).

Together they build the bridge that covers the gap of Mito's absence. The power of Chris's native name trumps the English name's diminished power. The problematic meanings of his English names in the modern world are given direction by the power of his Penacook name. At the end of the novel, Chris and Doda stand together in the tribal meeting and speak for Mito. By delivering his father's message, Chris begins to bridge the gap of leadership that Mito has left in the tribe and to serve as his surrogate. It is with

this unspoken name that Bruchac has most powerfully blended the use of the literary trope of naming and ideology. Leaving the name unknown to the reader gives it added strength. The text continually suggests that the English names are inadequate. If they work at all, it is in conjunction with the Penacook name. It is difficult to misread the political stance of the author with this theme.

Analyzing the Opportunities for Public Discourse

Bruchac uses other language patterns to support the ideology woven throughout the novel. He carefully develops his main character as a boy bound to language and intrigued by its power and potential. Through a variety of opportunities for public discourse Chris' influence and growth is expressed in both his native community and in the white community.

Defending the island

Throughout the novel, Chris is trying to appropriate the power of using both the English and the Penacook languages, deciding which messages are clearest in each language and to which audience. Chris' action, after burning the surveyor's stakes, brings the conversation concerning the tribe's future into the open. In his excitement, he speaks in both Penacook and English. This symbolic combination of languages represents the tribe's two divisions and highlights

the ideological tension of the novel. Tribal members who hold close to the old language represent those who resist the casino and the dangers that it may bring. The new language, English, is representative of the new chief "who has forgotten a lot of [their] language" and must have conversations translated for him (Bruchac, 150). Chris's speech is powerful and captures the attention of his young friends and the adults who arrive to investigate the fire.

"Their eyes are wide and they are staring at me. Gartersnake's mouth is open. I am talking in both Penacook and English now. . . The island has to stay the way it is because it is our heart. It beats like a drum. I say it in Penacook. I don't say much in

Bruchac uses other language patterns to support the ideology woven throughout the novel. He carefully develops his main character as a boy bound to language and intrigued by its power and potential.

Penacook, but every time I do, all of the adults look at me and then look at each other (45-46).”

Chris makes a stance as the defender of the island and for its position as the heart of the tribe’s land. In reality, it is a much larger issue. What should the tribe do to flourish economically and still protect and nurture their lands and traditions?

While Chris may have the heart of a chief, he is still a novice in the tribe’s political conversations. It is not until after church the following day that Chris begins to realize what he has started. He is invited home with Belly Button’s family and shunned by others, “a couple of grown-ups patted me on my back, while others turned their backs on me” (50). His friend’s father indicates that the arrival of a casino will divide the tribe (50). He “realizes for the first time how some people feel that a casino is against our traditional way of life” (50). Chris’s position as a bridge within his family is clear. The question remains: Can he find the words to act as a bridge between the conflicts within the tribe?

Although his position in the tribe is still in limbo, he has spoken with power in both languages. This conflicting language use mirrors the conflicting ideological impulses of the novel. Can the Penacook tribe maintain its identity while allowing the encroachment of white society in the form of a casino? His influence is strong as Auntie reports in a phone conversation with Mito, “[l]ike a sagamon,’ she says. ‘That’s how he talked, they say. Everyone had to listen. It touched their hearts’” (63). He becomes the instrument that bridges two opposing forces in the debate. At this point in the narrative, the majority of the tribe’s members favor the casino and the jobs it promises. His speeches have been impromptu and unpracticed to this point. He needs an apprentice, an opportunity to think about the power of speech and its presentation in public. The author makes it clear that communal discourse with the opportunity for give and take among its members is the appropriate method of

The kind of Indian you don’t see in Hollywood movies. No noble savages. No horses or headdresses. No tipis and no buffalo. No Tonto (which means “idiot” in Spanish) to the Lone Ranger. We are a different kind. The kind of Indian who gets ignored at best and treated like dirt at worst (23-24).

decision making in the native community (95). It is this method of collaborative activity that Chris experiments with in the larger community outside of the reservation.

What’s in a name? or What does it mean when you call me that?

The next example of language as public discourses begins to position Chris as voice for his people within the white world, which surrounds and encroaches on the reservation. Chris begins to master the language of the conqueror. He is unanimously selected as the leader of his class group. Using native people’s traditions, his group decides to investigate the use of the Indian names for sports teams. Chris is nominated to be the leader of his group by Katie. Her

father is Mohawk and her mother is white; in this position it is appropriate that she ushers Chris into this position of power. With a foot in each world, she also serves as a bridge that provides Chris with the opportunity to represent his people in the predominantly white world.

The native children are not immune to the racist impulses in English. When Chris finds out that Katie is an Indian, he begins to think about her in terms of a “Cherokee Princess” (23). Chris and his friends claim to know what kind of Indians they are,

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This awareness does not, however, prevent them from referring to Katie as a “Cherokee Princess” and evoking the stereotypes that all female Indians must be princesses and all males must be chiefs (23). Chris has much to learn as he progresses. As he negotiates the stereotypes that the white world has placed on the Indians, he must and does acknowledge that he is caught up in the perpetuation of the same racism. This

self-conscious examination by the character is what is missing from the ideology of the novel's tidy resolution. Bruchac creates a situation where the character's contemplation of the ramifications of the tribe's actions would be a logical extension of the narrative; unfortunately, it remains unconsidered and unexplored.

When Chris accepts the position as group leader, he suggests they use his tribal rules for discussion and decision-making. First, when some one is talking no one can interrupt and second, everyone has to agree with the final decision (95). They agree and not only work together on the project but also have a conversation about Native American perceptions of Thanksgiving. In this normal group setting, developed through the natural flow of the plot, Bruchac has provided an opportunity for his main character to calmly explain a Native American perception of the event. He has seamlessly included ideology in the novel using the literary techniques of plot and character development. This group of children work together gathering information, learning more about each other and become friends. It is in the comfort of this group that Chris realizes that he can speak the things he really feels, "I pause for breath. I've gotten into what can only be called a rant, but everyone at our table has been listening to me" (110). He gains power from this recognition that he is listened to and supported by Katie and his white classmates. It has been the proving ground for his voice that will represent the feeling of native peoples to a wider, more public audience.

By the following day, a significant number of adults representing the various communities are in the classroom. It is no longer a simple class report. It is an opportunity for the group to display their ideas with Chris as their concluding presenter. They make their points by including skits, jokes, and a serious presentation of ideas gathered from the research of all the members of the group. As is the case with Chris's speech at the island, we as readers are not given all the words, just the effects of their power. In both cases, they are masked, hidden from the reader. Like his unspoken name we are left to image them. The power is evident, a school board member suggests. "I would hate to be up against you in a debate. You have a career in politics" (130). Indeed he does, as we are reminded in his conversation with the principal. The

principal asks if a chief some years earlier was his relative. Both Chris and the readers are reminded that this is a character with a legacy. The principal further wonders why no one has raised the mascot issue before, and Chris, now recognized as a Native American who can speak with authority to a white audience, responds, "Maybe they didn't think anyone would listen" (132). Chris has positioned himself as an individual who can speak and be listened to in both communities, which prepares him for his final public pronouncement in the novel.

The surrogate speaks

The final speech of the novel is shared at the tribal council. Chris shares it physically with his grandfather, who introduces him to the council. In addition, by handing him the letter, Dado publicly acknowledges Chris authority and right to speak to the tribe. His grandfather has led the tribe in the past and is connected to the traditions. This trait is lacking in the current chief as symbolized by his inability to speak his own native tongue fluently.

Occasionally, in older times, the hunter of the tribe would face hardships—and not return. Chris's father is one such hunter, who is lost in a modern day challenge and is not there to lead the people. Chris shares the speech with his father spiritually as he reads the speech his father has prepared. His father writes the letter giving the tribe an alternate piece of land for the casino, and his grandfather announces the intention of the letter in the native tongue. Yet, it is Chris who reads the letter publicly. The gift of the land on the perimeter of the reservation protects the heart of the land. It preserves "a place to come back to" (80). He stands as the surrogate as his family offers up their land for the benefit of the tribe. His family maintains their position as tribal providers and caretakers. He reads his fathers words, "[o]ur family has always defended the heart of our land. We will not stop doing that" (151). The Nicola family, the family of givers, extends an offering of their land, on the fringe of the reservation, for the tribe's use and as a result preserves the island.

Remembering the symbolic possibilities of his names intensifies all three public pronouncements, the impromptu speech on the island, the prepared speech in the classroom, and this final reading of his father's letter at the tribal council. Chris is most powerful as

the bridge between various groups. He speaks about the divide in the tribe over the casino; he brings a racially diverse group of children together in the white school; he and his grandfather bridge the gap left by his absent father; and Chris begins to speak across communities as represented by his conversations after the class report with the school board member and the principal. He is a giver of gifts; even if it is only the gift of friendship and understanding that he offers. He also functions symbolically as the patron saint of travelers. As the communities and the individuals that comprise them travel into the future, Chris points the way. His speeches in both languages provide a vision that must be considered by members of both the white and native people's communities. In the first and the last instances, he speaks to the issues that confront his tribe internally. In the second instance, he speaks as a representative of his tribe in the larger world. A narrative that places Chris as a spokesman in both

It takes a powerful voice, in a language that both sides understand, to abolish racist stereotypes; yet, a language in and of itself is not enough.

worlds suggests that this tribe will need a sagamon capable of making pronouncements in both arenas. This is an ideological vision of the future that has a character, such as Chris, serving as a bridge providing assistance to travelers who are journeying into the future. A future that speaks to the needs of the people who

remain on the reservation and to those people who wander outside its perimeter.

Discussing the Smooth Ending and the Ideology

When the principal, Dr. Moody, points out that there have been eighty years of Chiefs at Rangerville schools "and not one Penacook voice has been raised in complaint until now" (131). Chris answers, "Maybe they didn't think anyone would listen" (132). It takes a powerful voice, in a language that both sides understand, to abolish racist stereotypes; yet, a language in and of itself is not enough. The language and the message must come in a context that all the participants understand and treat as a borderland of

negotiation. This paper has argued that the highest praise for a work of adolescent literature is when the literary craft and the ideology are tightly woven into a united presentation. Bruchac displayed a clever and evocative use of language to heighten the novel's literary qualities while still advancing his ideology. The use of names, public discourse, and ultimately the use of symbolic cycles evidence a finely crafted piece of fiction. The ideology of the novel is tied closely to the use of the languages tropes. It is, however, the language that is left unspoken and the narratives left unfinished that reveal the weakness in the novel's ideological presentation.

Ideological Presence

Much of the ideology of *The Heart of a Chief* is straightforward. The need for leaders, such as Chris, to emerge among native peoples is evident. The book calls for the active participation of the tribe's newest generation. These young people will be successful if they learn the language and the skills of the white power structure, while still remaining tied to the traditional values of the tribe and the land. It is a difficult task as represented by the failure of Chris's father, Mito. In addition, the older generation of his grandfather can no longer carry the burden. If the author's goal is to provide an optimistic view for the future participation of young native peoples, that goal is achieved. Most young readers of this book will enjoy the book and be satisfied with its seemingly optimistic ending. Nevertheless, the problematic ideological issues, preserving tribal lands, negotiating jobs, and economic security for the future, are left unanswered and weaken the ideological force of the novel. Perhaps a more optimistic interpretation of the ending is to believe that Bruchac has created a character that can bring resolution to these issues in the future.

The Smooth Ending

While the ending of the novel initially appears to be tidy and might appeal to adolescents and others who long for a nice conclusion, it leaves several ideological issues unsettled. Can the youth of the native peoples in America find a voice among their own people and outside of the tribe as well? If they find the voice, will it be heard? It is difficult to determine if Bruchac thinks finding a voice to speak

within the boundary of the tribe is more important than speaking in the white world with authority. This is one of the problems of the novel that is left unresolved. While the novel privileges language and its uses in communication, the novel's ending fails to communicate a satisfying conclusion to match the issues it has presented. In which world is Chris really successful? The novel's ending never adequately considers a resolution that addresses the racial conflict that will certainly exist, as the debate over a change in the mascot continues. Chris certainly has allies, Coach Takahashi, his friends, the members of his class group, and perhaps, the star football player. Will their efforts, combined with Chris's actions, be enough to negotiate a change in the eighty-year-old mascot without further conflict? The ending simply leaves the complicated questions of this situation hopeful, but unresolved. It is unrealistic to assume that an ideological issue that is so political charged would be resolved by one classroom debate.

Cultural Decay

The novel's ending never adequately addresses the decay within the reservation that might accompany the construction of a casino on the perimeter of the tribal land. It will bring jobs, but are the Penacook people guaranteed those jobs? A chief who lacks the ability to communicate in the traditional language currently leads them. Furthermore, he has already attempted to make several decisions without the full support of the tribal council, which the novel delineates as a non-native practice. With their gift of land, the Nicola family forces the issue of the casino and its placement on the reservation. A unanimous vote by the council places the Nicola property as the first choice for a casino site. After this vote is taken, the novel abruptly ends. Careful readers realize that no long-term decision has been made, nor have the dangers been outlined and discussed. Whether or not Chris's efforts will support a bridge that is wide enough and firm enough to walk upon in the future is, ultimately, left unanswered by the narrative. Chris's success or failure, combined with the work of the

tribal council, has significant ideological importance in the novel's open and questionable ending. Just as the issues surrounding the debate over the mascot are left unresolved, so is the issue of the casino and its influence. What should the tribe do to flourish economically and still protect and nurture their lands and traditions? Perhaps, saving the island from the casino is only the first step in dismissing the casino as an alternative altogether. In reality, the ideological concerns that run throughout the novel are largely left unanswered.

Conclusion

The Heart of a Chief is an excellent example of a book that exhibits fine examples of literary craftsmanship. The examples of the use of language tropes alone support this claim. This engaging novel has additional merits that further demonstrate its literary qualities.

Examples of the development of minor characters, the interweaving of several plots, and juxtaposition of themes and settings could all be discussed to further demonstrate the novels achievements. The ideological arguments of the novel are also clear and represent the issues of reservation life through the emic view of an author who is also Native American. While I enjoyed the novel as a reader, I continue to trouble the novel's ultimate conclusion. I expected the author to demonstrate the resulting difficulties that would flow from the issues. Instead, the ending is too tight, too Disney. This "See, how we can all get along" view one would expect from a

The ending simply leaves the complicated questions of this situation hopeful, but unresolved. It is unrealistic to assume that an ideological issue that is so political charged would be resolved by one classroom debate.

writer outside the Native American community with limited, but perhaps well intentioned perspectives. I expected a few more suggestions from a Native American author about how to not only identify these issues, but some plot turn that might suggest how to react to the potential problems. Can I expect every novel to face the reality of every one of its ideological stances? Of course not, the goal as a critic is, as Hollindale suggests, not to advocate for the ideology of any given novel, but to provide the tools for careful

reading so that all readers can critique those ideologies. *The Heart of a Chief* is a fine example of a novel that receives high marks in the categories of masterful craftsmanship and of clear ideological statements. It will engage most readers and still leave room for critique and further discussion.

¹ All further references and definitions of names are from this website unless otherwise indicated.

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Joseph Bruchac is a professional teller of the traditional tales of the Adirondacks and of the native peoples of the Northeastern Woodlands. Much of his writing draws on that land and his Abenaki ancestry. He is well known for weaving proverbs and traditional storytelling into the western form of the novel. Steven T. Bickmore spoke with Joseph Bruchac on April 29, 2005, at the Georgia Center, University of Georgia. The following is an excerpt from that interview.

A quote from the interview that might be highlighted is: "The body of work that you have written is like a rough stone from which you carve the final sculpture."

Bickmore: What is the preferred terminology for referring to Native Americans?

Bruchac: The term "American Indian" is used by most American Indians. American Indian is found

in the constitution of the United States. Even though it is a misnomer it has been used for over 400 years and because of that most native people in what is now the United States refer to themselves as Indians. We have the National Museum of the American Indian. The two most popular national Indian newspapers are *News From Indian Country* and *Indian Country News*. That should be a clue.

The primary point to remember is to refer to people by their own specific tribal nation first, and then if you are talking about native people in general the word Indian or American Indian is perfectly all right.

Bickmore: How people choose to be named seems to become an important issue.

Bruchac: I always say, "Just ask people how do they call themselves." That is the most important

thing. Unfortunately, most of the people who are studying or writing about American Indians or native people have no contact at all with living native people. They are getting it all out of books, usually secondary books. These books are not what are written by native people, but what is written about Indians by non participant observers.

Bickmore: When writing *The Heart of a Chief*, how much contemplation did you go through before deciding to use a name like Chris for an Indian boy? It seems highly ironic.

Bruchac: Yes, highly ironic, because you have Christopher Columbus, of course and also you have St. Christopher. You have many names after saints. This is a Catholic Indian community so Saints' names are commonly used. I know native kids named Chris. It is hard to have a discussion in the context of native culture with other native people without having humor and irony.

Bickmore: You often mention the importance of ancestors and passing things on to the next generation. Was there an important connection and influence between you and your immediate ancestors that started you off as a storyteller?

Bruchac: My decision to become a storyteller was forced upon me by my children. Before that I was mostly publishing poetry. Then I had to sort of tell stories for my kids. Because they needed stories and I told traditional stories. That led me to the first book I published for kids which was a collection of some of the stories I told my own children. It is called *Turkey Brother*, which is a bunch of Iroquois stories.

Bickmore: You write books for both children and young adults. When you are writing up a story when do begin to decide who the audience will be?

Bruchac: Certain things speak their own names to me. A traditional story is a traditional story and it

may tell itself in a form, which becomes a children's book or a story that relates to those things that need to be taught to very young people becomes a picture book. The same information might also want itself to be told at greater length. So I have done a picture book called *Jim Thorpe's Bright Path*. . . . I wanted to go forward on that so, I am now working on a young adult novel called *Jim Thorpe at Carlyle*.

Bickmore: Do you feel that stories have a life of their own and that they find you?

Bruchac: Oh, very definitely. Stories find you. For example, *Skeleton Man* came to me. It demanded to be told.

Bickmore: What advice do you have for young, aspiring writers?

Bruchac: Don't talk about it. Do it. If you want to be a writer you have to write. The more you write, the better you will get at it. The more you write, the more you will have written. The body of work that you have written is like a rough stone from which you carve the final sculpture. My first drafts are never satisfactory.

Bickmore: Do you see your books as political tools?

Bruchac: Every person dealing with native traditions will say there are at least two purposes to everything you write. One is to entertain. The other is to instruct. Perhaps writing can make it clearer who native people are and what their needs are concerning specific things about particular places and particular times. Parts of history that are maybe misunderstood. These can all be found in many of things that I have written. But I don't set out to write with a political agenda.

Bickmore: Thanks, Joseph.

Bruchac: You are very welcome.



How to Win a National Book Award:

A Primer

On the morning of October 12, 2004, the telephone rang. I hadn't been awake for long, but I answered it anyway.

"Hello, this is Harold Awblahblah of the National Book Foundation. Am I speaking to Pete Hautman, the author of *Godless*?"

"I'm afraid so," I said, preparing to hang up the phone. Only mild curiosity as to whether the caller was going to ask for money, free books, or volunteer hours kept me on the line. National Book Foundation? Sounded like something some con man in a boiler room had invented.

"I'm calling to let you know that *Godless* has been selected as a finalist for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature."

"Oh. That's nice." National Book Award for Young People's Literature? Right. Was there such a thing? And I suppose I've won a free iPod, too.

As the caller babbled on—something about ten thousand dollars, and my publisher having agreed to fly me to New York, and a black tie ceremony, and a bunch of other stuff I can't remember—I waited for the sales pitch.

"Oh, and I'll need to get your social security number," he said. That was when I knew it was a scam.

Any novelist who tells you he or she is not a gambler by nature is either lying or deluded. Writing a

novel is one of the biggest, craziest, most mathematically unsound bets one can make.

Let me break it down for you: Spend the best part of one to ten years sweating blood in front of a computer (or a notebook with lilac-colored, unlined pages—it doesn't really matter) until you have produced several tens of thousands of words about events that never occurred. That's your stake.

Now you have to find yourself a bookie, aka "publisher," that is willing to take your bet. Maybe you get lucky and find yourself among the roughly one percent¹ of novelists who find a willing publisher. Congratulations.

So you get a little money (probably about 75¢ for every hour you spent writing your novel) and, in time,² your book is published. Thousands of copies are distributed to bookstores all across the country.

Your friends and relatives all buy copies, and they are very impressed by your accomplishment—as are you. So far, so good. You gambled and you won.

But something is missing. What could it be? Money? No, you didn't get into this for the gelt. The rave review on the cover of the New York Times Book

"Oh. That's nice." National Book Award for Young People's Literature? Right. Was there such a thing? And I suppose I've won a free iPod, too.

¹ I invented that number, but I'll bet it's close.

² For those of you who are about to sell your first novel, know that the 12-18 months it will take for your novel to become a book will be the longest 12-18 months of your life.

Review? A call from Stephen Spielberg? An invitation to appear on Oprah? (Have you thought about what you will wear? Of course you have!)

Your book sells a few thousand copies, and so your publisher (assuming they have managed to stay in business) buys another. This time you earn something like 97¢ per hour. Much better. But where is the Big Movie Deal, the Japanese sale, the MacArthur Fellowship? Where is the Nobel Prize? The Edgar Award? The Newbery, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Caldecott, the Printz, or—while we’re dreaming here—how about a freaking National Book Award!?

I suppose you could wager one or more of your children on a horse named Lotsa Luck. But aside from that, writing a novel and putting it out there hoping for the big recognition/money/validation payoff is about the biggest and worst bet you can make. Novelists are not just gamblers; they are wild-eyed, foaming-at-the-mouth, utterly irrational gamblers. Waiting for the mail, or an email, or a phone call, is the writer’s version of taking a daily spin of the roulette wheel. The bad news is that nothing ever seems to happen. The good news is that sometimes it does.

Godless is the story of a teen who invents his own religion, and who then must deal with the monster he has created. It’s an old story. I mean a *really* old story. Think *Frankenstein*. Think *Pygmalion*. Think *Genesis*. *Godless* is not about God anymore than *Frankenstein* is about the soul, or than *Pygmalion* is about class. *Godless* is about hubris, ambition, responsibility, and consequences. As is *Frankenstein*. As is *Genesis*.

But *Godless* is funnier.

Is that blasphemous? I never know. When I was a kid I had a problem with giggling during mass. It didn’t take much. Something about those big themes—you know: LIFE, DEATH, TRUTH—makes me need to laugh. So I’m never sure when I’m being blasphemous, but blasphemy aside, I believed that *Godless*, by whining and pawing at the parapets of organized religion, had pretty much disqualified itself from consideration as a literary award recipient. After all, as our ruling party keeps reminding us, we are a “Christian nation.” And while we may as a people tolerate dissension, we try not to encourage it.

The National Book Award nomination was therefore surprising on multiple levels. *Godless* had

somehow wound its way through the obstacle course of literary taste, religious convictions, current politics, and luck, and had landed on the shortlist.

Harold Augenbraun, whose name I have now learned to spell without looking it up, quickly convinced me that he was, in fact, the Executive Director of the National Book Foundation, a real organization. The National Book Award for Young People’s Literature is real, too. And so far, they haven’t asked me for any money, nor have they used my Social Security number in an identity theft scam.

After Harold’s call it took me a good 24 hours to absorb the fact that the roulette wheel had paid off.

It doesn’t get any better than this, I thought as I read through a spate of congratulatory emails. Checking my Amazon.com sales ranking, I found it had dropped to 20,000. Remarkable! I had never seen a ranking so good. Only 19,999 other titles were selling better than *Godless*! Much better than my pre-NBA-finalist-ranking of somewhat over 150,000.

The phone rang constantly. Even my non-literary friends (who are, sadly, in the majority) called:

“Pete, this is Bill! Congratulations!”

“Thank you.”

“This is so great. I mean, I don’t know what the hell the American Book Prize is, but I guess it’s some kind of a big deal. I’m proud of ya, man. You rock.”

Okay, I was on top of the world. “I don’t even care if I win,” I said to myself and anyone else who would listen. “Just being a finalist is enough!”

Over the next three weeks I found myself repeat-

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ing that mantra often. But about one week before I was to leave for the awards ceremony in New York, something happened.

I realized that I wanted, desperately, to win the thing. Even worse, I was terrified that I would *not* win.

To paraphrase Garrison Keillor, I used to think that literary awards were a bunch of hooey. Then I was nominated for one.

I had never before paid much attention to the big national and international literary awards. I assumed that they were only for writers who lived in New York or London and who specialized in odd sentence constructions, obscure words, and secret etymological handshakes. The big literary awards, I came to believe, had much to do with politics, snobbery, and taste, and were no guarantee of quality.

Needless to say, opinion on this matter changed rather abruptly with that call from Harold Augenbraum.

As I was telling people what an honor it was to be a finalist, and how lucky I felt, and that winning would be “just icing on the cake,” there was this other thing going on inside me. Every now and then I would catch a glimpse of it. A pointy-tailed, grinning imp would poke his head up and say, “Lucky, schmucky. You deserve it!”

“Down boy,” I would say.

“Up yours, dude. This false modesty don’t cut it with me.”

“Fine! Just keep it down, would you?”

“What do you think are your odds of winning?” asks my brother Jim, an avid poker player.

“There are four other finalists,” I say. “I make it twenty percent.”

“Do you know what you’re up against?”

“Yes and no.” I had looked at the other books named as finalists. They were all quite good, and as different from each other as mine was from theirs.

“How do you mean?”

“I mean, the books are all good, but I don’t know what the judges are thinking.”

“Is there anything you can do?” Jim asks, by which he means, is there anything I can do to influence the judges.

“I could pray,” I say.

“Didn’t you just write a book called *Godless*? “Good point.”

As D-Day approached I became a zombie, all distant stares and unresponsive grunts. I was working hard to keep my imp at bay, with little success.

“You have to win, dude. If you don’t win it’ll be all over for you.”

“No, it won’t. I’ll always be a finalist. It’s a great honor to be a finalist.”

“Honor? Don’t make me laugh. What are you gonna do if you lose?”

“I don’t know.”

“Exactly! You’ll probably make a scene. You’ll start sobbing or something.”

“No, I won’t. I’ll smile and congratulate the winner. It’ll be fine.”

“It’ll be barbaric, dude.”

I flew to New York with my partner, Mary Logue. The ever-shifting elation/terror ratio made me uneasy company, but Mary is a writer, too. She seemed to understand what I was going through. Or at least found it tolerable. In either case, it was very nice to have someone beside me to whom I could turn and ask, “Am I acting okay?”

We arrived in Manhattan two days before the ceremony for some readings and other promotional

appearances. I met the other four finalists in the Young People’s Literature category: Deb Caletti, Laban Hill, Shelia P. Moses, and Julie Peters. Alas, they were all charming, bright, talented, and deserving. I liked them all. I performed a mental exercise: I imagined myself shaking hands with each of them, congratulating them on winning the NBA.

It felt something like rehearsing a visit to the dentist.

I fear that I am making myself look small. And shallow and petty and fearful and neurotic. These are qualities no one wants to see in a writer. But if you can show me one novelist who does not possess these qualities in generous doses, I will . . . well, I will refuse to believe it. Inside every writer—I make no

“Is there anything you can do?” Jim asks, by which he means, is there anything I can do to influence the judges.

“I could pray,” I say.

“Didn’t you just write a book called *Godless*?”

“Good point.”

exceptions—is a three-year-old kid shouting, “Look at me!”

The winners of the National Book Awards are not decided upon until the afternoon of November 17th, the day of the awards ceremony. The five judges in each of the four categories are sequestered in the back room of different Manhattan restaurants and asked to choose one winner from among the finalists. Legend has it that the choosing can be a brutal and emotional affair, like that dramatized in the movie *Twelve Angry Men*. I don’t know; I wasn’t there.

The National Book Awards Ceremony and Dinner at the Marriott Marquis was a swanky, black-tie, red-carpet affair attended by several hundred writers, editors, publishers, agents, and reporters. (I had bought a tuxedo with all the trimmings, which cost considerably more than the \$1000 I would receive from the NBF if *Godless* did not win.) Rather to my surprise, I was not at all nervous about finding myself in such exalted company. By the evening of the ceremony, I was buried so deep inside my own head, you could have introduced me to Moses and I would not have blinked. No, this was all about Pete. Poker players have a saying: the player you need to worry about most is the one sitting in your chair. I was doing plenty of worrying. Mostly, I was rehearsing my loss.

I was also more than a little worried about winning. If *Godless* was announced as a winner, I would have to walk about a mile to the stage, without tripping, and deliver a short acceptance speech. This prospect was only slightly less terrifying than was losing.

After a short press conference, I was seated at a table with Mary Logue, Jennifer Flannery (my literary agent), David Gale (my editor), and several other illustrious folks from Simon & Schuster. Seated next to the redoubtable Alice Mayhew, I was well supplied with stimulating conversation, mostly concerning the sorry state of Minnesota politics. The first courses were served with astonishing speed and efficiency. The food was not at all bad, although you could probably do better in New York at \$ 1,000 a plate. I got through the meal without drinking too much or insulting anyone or sticking a fork in my eye (you never know what these writers from the prairie will do), and I may even have fooled Alice Mayhew into thinking that I had some insight into the soul of a state that in the past ten years had elected Jesse Ventura, Paul Wellstone, and Norm Coleman to public

office. I challenge you to name three politicians with less in common.

Flash forward: Garrison Keillor is talking. Damn, but he’s good! You meet him in person (I skipped that part) and he comes off like a doofus, but shine a light on him and give him a *real* audience, and the man is pure gold.

We listen to Keillor and Harold Augenbraum and Judy Blume, the guest of honor. A very courageous young girl gets up on stage and reads a passage from *Are You There, God? It’s Me, Margaret*. It is all very nice, but I am feeling as though my blood has turned to polenta. The air is thick, too. I am caught in a universe of sludge—time has interrupted its usual workmanlike march to illustrate Zeno’s paradox.

Finally the winners are announced, each by the chair of the judging panel in each category, beginning with the nonfiction finalists. The winner is *Arc of Justice* by Kevin Boyle, who gets up and talks *forever*. He can’t help himself. I don’t mind, because I’ve written a three-minute bit that I was afraid will be too long by half. Boyle has paved the way. When I get up there . . .

I give myself a mental pinch. There is no *when*, I tell myself. It’s *if*.

Kevin Boyle is still talking. The next category will be Young People’s Literature. I am both numb and in pain. I think my heart and liver switched places midway through Boyle’s peroration, and someone has hammered a steel spike into the top of my skull and down through my spine. That’s okay, as long as I remain conscious. After about seven or eight eternal minutes, Boyle leaves the stage and Lois Ruby, the chair of the Young People’s Literature category judging panel, is introduced.

The way it works is that the panel chair goes on at some length about what they were looking for, and what they found in their search for the best books of the category, and what qualities were exemplified by the as-yet-unnamed winning book. Of course, everyone in the audience is listening for clues as to which book is about to be named, and Lois Ruby, in keeping with the amped-up dramatic structure of the Awards Ceremony, packs her talk with vague hints, red herrings, and generalities. Her words enter and exit my head like ghost bullets. I try to imagine myself congratulating Deb Caletti, Laban Hill, Shelia P. Moses, and Julie Peters. I can’t do it. If *Godless* doesn’t

win, I know I am going to die.

Suddenly I remember an episode of “Frasier.” Frasier is attending an awards ceremony. He has been nominated for Best Talk Show Host. He expects to win. His expectations are so profound that when one of his rivals is named the winner, Frasier stands up and walks to the podium and launches into his thank-you speech. Humiliation? Utter.

Lois Ruby stops talking.

There is a moment of disconnect.

And then everyone at our table is standing and looking at me, and David is shaking my hand, and then I am walking through the maze of tables toward the stage.

“How did you feel?” I am later asked.

I felt as if someone had lifted a great weight from my shoulders. The air was clear and bright, and I could breathe for the first time in weeks. Above all I

Lois Ruby stops talking.

There is a moment of disconnect.

And then everyone at our table is standing and looking at me, and David is shaking my hand, and then I am walking through the maze of tables toward the stage.

felt, as I climbed without tripping onto the stage at the Marriott Marquis, a divine sense of relief.

When I tell this part of the story—and I have told it many times over the past few months—I can always tell whether the person I’m talking to is a gambler. Non-gamblers will usually express some surprise.

“But . . . weren’t you excited? Weren’t you nervous? Weren’t you scared? Weren’t you exhilarated?”

They think that the moment of victory should manifest itself as some sort of emotional overload. The hardcore gamblers, however, understand. When the roulette ball falls into its proper slot, when the

long shot draw to a straight flush comes in, when the horse Lotsa Luck wins by a nose . . . the gambler understands that the universe has surmounted the curse of chaos, and he finds himself at peace.



From Tomie dePaola to Paulo Freire:

2004 Ted Hipple Service Award Winner John Mason

On the occasion of his well-deserved awarding of the Ted Hipple Service Award, John Mason was kind enough to give us a quick autobiography and answer a few questions:

I was born and raised in England and entered the publishing field there. My first job was as an “educational fieldworker” at Penguin Books in the early 1970’s. I traveled the country visiting schools and colleges, setting up exhibits, and writing reports and feedback to our editors and marketing people. After that I became Schools Marketing Manager, responsible for marketing paperbacks to schools. This was when the legendary Kaye Webb was running the “Puffin Club,” which had a huge influence on readership of children’s books.

In the mid ’70s I left my job, traveled to India, then moved to the USA where I lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for two years, and worked for an educational magazine publisher as an advertising sales manager.

I returned to England for three years and worked as Publicity and Marketing Manager at Methuen Children’s Books, the original British publisher of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *The Wind in the Willows*,

and *Babar the Elephant*. The office next to mine had a closet filled with the original artwork by Ernest Shepard and Laurent de Brunhoff. We also published books by Monty Python which, as you can imagine, was a lot of fun.

In the early 1980’s I immigrated permanently to the USA. I worked for over five years as Children’s Books Marketing Manager at Putnam. During that time Putnam hugely expanded its market share in children’s books. We acquired the books of Anno and Eric Carle—notably *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*—and we acquired Grosset & Dunlap (*Nancy Drew*, *Hardy Boys*, etc.)—and after our company was bought by MCI/Universal Studios, we published movie tie-ins, notably *The “E.T.” Storybook* which sold a million copies. Meanwhile, we nurtured the careers of many fine writers like Tomie dePaola and Jean Fritz, and I managed all of our participation in conventions such as TLA, IRA, ALA, and NCTE.

With the knowledge gained at Putnam, I moved to Scholastic in 1986 and have worked in marketing there since then. Here, also, I witnessed an amazing expansion of the company’s publishing of its own list of trade children’s and YA books. We published bestselling

I returned to England for three years, and worked as Publicity and Marketing Manager at Methuen Children’s Books, the original British publisher of Winnie-the-Pooh, The Wind in the Willows, and Babar the Elephant. . . . We also published books by Monty Python which, as you can imagine, was a lot of fun.

series such as *The Babysitters Club*, *The Magic School Bus*, and *Goosebumps*. Meanwhile we steadily built up our literary hardcover publishing, and we are now one of the biggest in this field. With its many distribution channels (trade, clubs, fairs, etc) both domestically and internationally, Scholastic is the world's largest publisher and distributor of English-language children's/YA books. In the last few years we have gained fame as the US publisher of *Harry Potter*.

I now live in Connecticut with my wife who is a psychologist, and commute to Scholastic's offices in New York City, where my official title is Director of Library & Educational Marketing, Trade Books Group, Scholastic. My wife and I have three daughters aged 26, 23, and 20. I am now an American citizen—but I retained my British citizenship so I am actually a dual citizen.

TAR: How did you first get into publishing and what were some of your earliest experiences working with authors and books for young adults? Do you have any especially fond memories of those times that you might share?

John: My first real job was at a bookstore in London called The Economists' Bookshop that served the London School of Economics. One of the female staff there had a boyfriend who used to drop into the store occasionally to visit her. We became friendly, and it turned out he worked at Penguin Books, and one day he told me there was a job vacancy there. I applied for the job, which was basically a truck-driver transporting exhibit booth materials. After interviewing me they told me I was "overqualified" to be a truck driver and offered me a job as an "educational fieldworker" and gave me a Ford Escort.

The early 1970s was a time of exciting innovation in education in England, especially in primary (elementary) schools—hordes of Americans used to come over to see the British "open classroom" system where students supposedly engaged in "self-directed learning" in small groups rather than sitting in traditional rows of desks being instructed. It was also a time when audio-visual materials—filmstrips, audiotapes, etc—were being hailed as agents of educational revolution. Penguin had an educational division which published

materials for this market, but it turned out to be before its time, the materials were too innovative for the average teacher. The division also published radical books on education by John Holt, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, R.D. Laing, Paulo Freire, and others. So it was an exciting time when many new experimental ideas were being tried out.

Later I worked on two other ideas—one was for selling paperbacks to schools in thematic sets—something which Scholastic's school division now does very well – and the other was the idea of teacher- and student-run bookstores in schools. Penguin built a prototype bookstore in a large comprehensive school in northeast London and we invited educators and press to its opening, then published a guide on how to set up and run a school bookstore, and partnered with a manufacturer to sell shelving fixtures. We started a quarterly newsletter and this eventually led to the establishment of an independent organization called The School Bookshop Association, and the newsletter evolved into the highly respected British educational review journal, *Books for Keeps*, which is still going strong.

TAR: What are some of the milestone books, authors, events or trends that you have seen which have marked the growth of YA lit as a genre?

John: Having worked in children's/YA books from the 1970's 'til today, I've seen the same trends and milestones as everyone else—the tremendous impact of Judy Blume—the growth of "realistic" fiction, the "problem novel," authors tackling almost every conceivable issue that faces young adults. I tip my hat to Virginia Hamilton, Walter Dean Myers (whose *Fallen Angels* is still one of the most riveting YA books ever written), Jacqueline Woodson, Christopher Paul Curtis, and other great writers of color who have opened up the field to diversity. More recently, the enormous popularity of *Harry Potter* has spear-headed a notable growth in sales of children's/YA fiction in hardcover, especially fantasy. Right now we are seeing a "let's lighten up" trend with "chick lit." People always ask, "what is the next trend coming up?"—if we knew that, we'd all be millionaires. Right now I think we are in a golden age of YA lit with more

variety of books being published than ever before.

TAR: How have you managed to find such great authors and books over the years? Do you have any specific qualities that you look for?

John: I am a marketing director, not an editor, and I don't actually acquire the books that we publish, so I will let others answer this.

TAR: How do you believe young readers benefit from reading Walter Dean Myers or Cornelia Funke or Kevin Brooks or any of the popular writers of YA literature?

John: Wow, well, you have mentioned three very different writers there. Think about it—very, very different. I like to market and promote the individual voice of each author. Each writer is a unique and different contributor to the imagination. Each has something new and unique to say, and their own way of saying it. If you want me to generalize about how young readers benefit from reading these authors, I'd talk about how each writer opens up new worlds for young readers—introduces them to memorable characters, situations, and ideas that they might not otherwise encounter. The rich variety of books means that there is always more for young readers to discover and widen their experience of our human condition. Many teens today lead very busy lives with after-school activities, sports, social activities, and many forms of entertainment including TV, movies and DVDs, music, computer games, "IM"-ing, and surfing the web, but nothing engages the imagination with such impact, intimacy, and mind-expanding possibilities as books. Books are still special and will never be supplanted, but our job as publishers, booksellers, parents and teachers is to keep making books an attractive option for kids so they will be drawn to reading.

TAR: What did you read as a boy and young man? Did your own reading influence your life in any way?

John: As a young child, I was steeped in English children's literature by E. Nesbit, A.A. Milne, Arthur Ransome, J.M. Barrie, etc., and *The Wind in*

the Willows by Kenneth Grahame was one of my all-time favorites for its mixture of adventure, humor, and poignancy. In my English "prep" school, the school library had the traditional English classics by writers like Buchan, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, etc. In my teen years I discovered the Brontes, Dickens, etc, and at college I devoured Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, Somerset Maugham, John Steinbeck and many others. Probably the only YA book at that time was *The Catcher in the Rye*, which I loved. It wasn't until I worked in publishing that I started to get to know YA literature, and since then I've read many memorable, mind-blowing YA novels including *Tiger Eyes* by Judy Blume, *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers, *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun* by Jacqueline Woodson, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, *The Thief Lord* and *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke, *Lucas* by Kevin Brooks, and so many others. Did my own reading influence my life in any way?—what a question! Reading—or rather, specific books—has influenced, and continues to influence, my life all the time. A person whose life is not influenced by books is missing out on a whole dimension of human experience.

TAR: What is a typical day like for you?

John: I dread that question because there is no "typical" day! Every day is different with the many varied aspects of my job that I'm responsible for. I work on lots of different things—mailings of galleys and review copies, advertising plans, author tours and appearances, catalogs, conventions and entertainments, review coverage and publicity, marketing plans, budgets, our web site, and on and on. The variety is almost endless. I also manage those who report to me and sometimes recruit new employees. Scholastic is a very diverse, complex organization, and I do a lot of liaising with other divisions, especially our Library Publishing group, and also the clubs and fairs, and our Internet people. We work collaboratively on initiatives such as a corporate approach to marketing books for "summer reading." I also work with many organi-

zations such as the Children's Book Council, the ALA, and folks in IRA and NCTE. And there's always something new happening, such as our launch into graphic novels. And I get involved in things that I never expected, like searching for a way we might collaborate with other publishers (working with our International division and the Children's Book Council) to contribute books to school libraries in India and Sri Lanka that were destroyed by the tsunami.

TAR: What are your favorite aspects of your job?

John: Although I am good at organization and paperwork, the thing I really love about my job is the people. I love working with my marketing and editorial colleagues, with the authors, and with librarians, educators, booksellers, and reviewers—all of whom are people who really believe in literacy, spreading the word about great children's/YA books. I like being the person who takes the book that the author has written and the editor has published, and gets that book out to its audience in every way possible by communicating my excitement about it. I like connecting the right book with the right reader, or the right author with the right program. What I also love about my job is the endless variety. Each book is a whole new world to explore. Although books are a "product" like toothpaste or corn flakes in that we can't stay in business if we don't sell a certain number of "units" and ship physical books out of our warehouse and get paid, what you are really selling is ideas.

TAR: If you could accomplish one or two things in your life in regard to literature for young people, its authors and readers, what would they be?

John: That's a challenging question. Although our school book clubs and bookfairs do a fabulous job of getting millions of books into the hands of young readers, I've always had this vision of how great it would be if every school operated its own permanent bookstore, run by the teachers, parents, and students. I would still like to see more diversity in the selection of YA books offered in the typical suburban chain bookstore—but that will only change as our culture changes. Another thing I would love to accomplish would be to get the media in general to pay more attention to YA books as a serious genre of literature. My father-in-law who grew up during the Depression read and loved *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse when he was in his eighties—he didn't care that it was a children's or "YA" book. Many YA books are great books for adult readers and deserve to break out of their YA ghetto and "cross over" to the adult market. And there are still some English teachers who don't think YA is "serious" literature and don't use it in their teaching. Thank God for ALAN, and keep spreading the word.

TAR: Are there any thoughts or feelings you would like to share about winning this award?

John: I am just so honored to be recognized by such an inspiring community of colleagues as ALAN.

<p><i>Absolutely, Positively Not . . . Gay</i> by David Larochele Scholastic, 2005, 224 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Steven is a normal sixteen-year-old dealing with ordinary things that any teenager would have to deal with, such as passing his driving test. One thing that has been on his mind lately is girls, but unlike many boys his age that dream of the female species, he is curious whether or not he is attracted to them at all. He has hidden magazines under his bed for the past couple of years. These magazines aren't <i>Playboys</i>, but instead the pages are filled with male underwear models. After twenty-three dates with twenty-one different girls, Steven has finally come to the conclusion that he has known all along: he's gay.</p> <p>This novel deals with a serious subject in a clever and humorous manner. Any young man struggling with these issues should find relief in this book.</p> <p>Julie Davenport Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Boy Proof</i> by Cecil Castellucci Candlewick Press, 2005, 203 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>High school can be tough. Between battles with friends, agonizing over what lies beyond graduation and crazy parents, any teenager may find himself not knowing where to turn.</p> <p>In <i>Boy Proof</i>, readers are whisked away on a journey of self-realization. Victoria Jurgen is a 16-year-old girl struggling to find herself amongst the sea of teenagers in a Beverly Hills high school. As a founding member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, Jurgen loses herself in films whenever she has the chance. Obsessed with the film <i>Terminal Earth</i>, Jurgen changes her name to "Egg" after her favorite character. Egg hides her insecurities beneath her shaved head and white cloak—the same cloak worn in <i>Terminal Earth</i>.</p> <p>Egg is confident in her spot as valedictorian until Max Carter arrives at school. Carter's arrival changes everything for Egg—who begins to realize there is more to life than being invisible. This book is the ideal novel for any teenager who has ever felt as though he/she does not fit in.</p> <p>Katie Copeland Manhattan, KS</p>
<p><i>Candy</i> by Kevin Brooks Scholastic, 2005, 364 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Joe Beck's parents are divorced, and he and his older sister, Gina, live with their father, a medical doctor, in an upscale area outside London. Joe, a gifted and lonely musician, meets Candy, buys her coffee and falls hopelessly in love. As Candy's secret life of prostitution and heroin addiction unveils, Joe is pulled into her violent and fearful world. Despite threats from Iggy, Candy's pimp, Joe takes Candy to his family's cottage, where she goes cold-turkey off heroin. Iggy kidnaps Gina, and Joe must decide between Candy and his sister. Which will he choose? Or will he have to? Can Mike, Gina's boyfriend, help them?</p> <p>A riveting and suspenseful love story set in a vicious underworld of drugs, poverty, and prostitution. The plot is well-paced; characters are well-defined. An unnerving account of heroin addiction and withdrawal. For 16 and up.</p> <p>Pam B. Cole Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>Dealing with Mom: How to Understand Your Changing Relationship</i> Relationships by Laurence Gillot and Veronique Sibiril Amulet Books, 2005, 112 pp., \$9.95</p> <p>Relationships are always hard. The older we get, the harder they get. You are going through so many changes in life as it is (your body, your friends, your relationships) and now you have to worry about your mom going crazy on you. What is with her anyway?</p> <p>In <i>Dealing with Mom</i> teens and preteens alike can find the answers to many questions that they have about their relationship with their mother. The book goes step by step through four different phases of relationships. Phase one: Mothers: Can't live with them, can't send them back; Phase two: If it's not one thing, it's your mother; Phase three: My mother....myself; and Phase four: How are you feeling? Stories you might be able to relate to. While Gillot and Sibiril hit on many important issues of dealing with relationships between mothers and teens, it seems to be more targeted to the younger generation of teens: the pre-teens.</p> <p>Marcia Woodward Wamego, KS</p>

<p><i>Deliver Us from Normal</i> by Kate Klise Scholastic, 2005, 226 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Coming of Age/Depression ISBN: 0-439-52322-2</p> <p>Junior high does not begin well for Charles Harrison. Quiet and thoughtful, Charles is haunted by his family's lack of social standing and their oddness. His wish is to be normal, like the other families in their hometown—Normal, Illinois.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Charles' outsider status deepens, in part the result of his embarrassingly emotional response to <i>The Yearling</i> during the previous term. When his older sister's campaign for class president is disrupted by malicious popular students, Charles' parents flee Normal, bound for a new life on a rickety boat in the Gulf of Mexico.</p> <p>More allegorical than realistic, <i>Deliver Us from Normal</i>, offers a glimpse inside the head of a thoughtful young adolescent and his journey toward acceptance of himself and his family and his rejection of shallow definitions of what it is to be normal. Literary references to various mystery novels, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, and <i>The Yearling</i> are skillfully woven into the text. This one is for the quiet, thoughtful adolescent wishing to explore what it means to be normal.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>Do You Know the Monkey Man?</i> by Dori Hillestad Butler Peachtree, 2005, 193 pp., \$14.95</p> <p>Identity/Family/Intrapersonal Relationships ISBN: 1-56145-340-4</p> <p><i>Do You Know the Monkey Man?</i> successfully transforms ordinary dilemmas of teenage life into an adventure. At age thirteen, Samantha Wright's once predictable world in Clearwater, Iowa is being forever altered. Her mother is remarrying, the family is moving, and she wonders if she will fit into her new family. A fear of what the future holds awakens her to a need to rediscover her past. With the help of a psychic, her friend Angela, and an Internet detective, Samantha seeks the truth to unanswered questions about the mysterious drowning of her sister and the father she barely remembers. The result is a fairly predictable, yet still adventurous plot interwoven with themes of identity, intrapersonal relationships, and a redefinition of family. Although parts of the novel and some characters resemble an after-school special, younger readers will appreciate the protagonist's struggles with her parents, friends, divorce, and the blending of families. An appealing aroma of teenage rebellion permeates much of the book such as when, despite her mother's wishes, Samantha sneaks away to Minnesota to seek the answers to her questions about the past.</p> <p>Curtis Chandler Wamego, KS</p>
<p><i>Don't Tell the Girls</i> by Patricia Reilly Giff Holiday House, Inc., 2005, 130 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Family Memoir ISBN: 0-8234-1813-8</p> <p>In <i>Don't Tell the Girls</i>, Patricia Reilly Giff is on a quest to find her family's history. The story is told through the eyes of Giff and the memories she has of her grandmother, Nana. Giff has a close bond with Nana, which sparks her curiosity about her other grandmother, Jennie.</p> <p>Grandmother Jennie passed away before Patricia was born, so Patricia never had the opportunity to know her. Giff searches for records of her Grandmother Jennie and hopes to understand her life. Giff researches in libraries and even takes a trip to her grandmother's native land, Ireland, to find the answers for the past. Giff is able to find the truth about her grandmother's life, even though it is far from what she believed.</p> <p><i>Don't Tell the Girls</i> is a story about a family's connection between generations and the history behind the family. The story would be best suited for middle school readers.</p> <p>Kristine E. Tardiff Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>47</i> by Walter Mosley Little Brown & Company, 2005, 240 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Slavery/African Americans/Magic ISBN: 0316110353</p> <p>Slave number 47 knows no mother or father, only Mama Flore and her kindness. Shortly after being sent to the fields to work, 47 meets Tall John, whose favorite thought is that there are neither slaves nor masters in this world. Tall John is a runaway, but his story is more complicated than that: really Tall John is from another planet, and he has come to lead 47 to saving this planet from the evil Calash.</p> <p>Digesting this story takes time, with its complicated plot and its fast-moving development. What starts as a powerful slave narrative becomes an even more powerful fantasy read. This book had interplanetary travel and slave rights on the same pages, such that the battle for good and evil took on an even higher meaning in this novel. This story would fit in the hands of fantasy readers, even adult ones, and each reader would come away from the story with a slightly different idea of the book. One caution: As part of the story comes the use of racial slurs, appropriate to the historical aspect of the book, but the importance of slave rights, including the use of such language, is discussed.</p> <p>Jennifer Judy Oxford, OH</p>

<p>Hear My Sorrow, The Diary of Angela Denoto, a Shirtwaist Worker by Deborah Hopkinson Scholastic, 2004, 182 pp., \$10.95</p> <p>Historical Fiction/Dear America Series ISBN: 0-439-22161-7</p> <p>Attending school is a joy for Angela Denoto but a luxury that her family can no longer afford. Now that she is fourteen years old, she must begin work in a shirtwaist factory. Her disappointment in leaving school is tempered, however, by the pride that she feels in being able to help her family pay the rent and put food on the table.</p> <p>Angela quickly finds that the harsh conditions she and her peers must experience at work are nearly inhumane. Aching muscles, needle-pierced fingers, and conflicted feelings toward authority convince Angela that she must accept this new organization, called a union, and join the fight for fair treatment of workers. Things finally come to a climax when Angela helplessly watches as 146 young women and girls, including her beloved sister, needlessly lose their lives in the Triangle Waist Company fire of 1911.</p> <p>Through her journal entries, we are led through the turbulent years of 1909-1911 in New York City's Lower East Side where young Jewish and Italian immigrant girls worked in the garment industry. It is a wonderful glimpse of the time period and of those adolescent struggles of hope and fear, joy and sorrow, and dreams of the future that transcend time.</p> <p>Ingrid Seitz Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow by Susan Campbell Bartoletti Scholastic, 2005, 176 pp., \$19.95</p> <p>Nonfiction/World War II ISBN: 0-439-35379-3</p> <p><i>Hitler Youth</i> provides a readable and compelling examination of the manipulation of adolescents in the Third Reich. The stories of 11 young people are traced through the rise and fall of National Socialism in Germany. We follow teens smitten by Nazi ideology, teens who went along reluctantly, teens who became part of the resistance movement in Germany, and Jewish teens victimized by the Nazi regime. Along the way, we arrive at a deeper understanding of the complex forces targeting young people during this period.</p> <p>The book is oversized and filled with black and white photographs that capture the conflict of the time—both the conflict between nations and the conflict within individuals. <i>Hitler Youth</i> would certainly be a valuable addition to units of study devoted to the Holocaust and/or World War II, providing a view of the effects of the war on Germany's adolescents as well as the effect German adolescents had on the war.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>
<p>Key to Atern by Lynn Sinclair Brown Barn Books, 2005, 192 pp., \$8.95</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 0974648175</p> <p><i>Key to Atern</i>, Lynn Sinclair's first book of a proposed trilogy, is a fantasy romance told by lead character Jodi Greer. Like the characters in K.A. Applegate's <i>Everworld</i> series, Jodi's friend Neil find himself in a different world after Neil falls asleep. Jodi joins him by touching his sleeping body. Is the world all part of Neil's dream, or is it a real world with real consequences? Sinclair offers this as a potential question dealing with how we differentiate between dreams and reality. Sadly, this question is quickly abandoned as Jodi and Neil find themselves in trouble with giant spiders, and later caught in the middle of tribal conflicts.</p> <p><i>Key to Atern</i> offers fascinating characters, especially with the enchanting yet dangerous Aladar, who has the power to control plants. Unfortunately, Jodi's first-person perspective limits the development of the other, often more interesting characters. The book has very little humor and instead thrives on melodramatic romance and entirely predictable plot twists. The ending of the novel, however, sets up intriguing possibilities that make the second book in the series worthy of a glance.</p> <p>John Ritchie Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>The Keys of the Kingdom, Book Three: Drowned Wednesday by Garth Nix Scholastic, 2005, 400 pp., \$15.95</p> <p>Fantasy ISBN: 0439700868</p> <p>In this third book of his series, Nix's unlikely hero Arthur Penhaligon continues his adventures in the House. This time he must meet with Drowned Wednesday who is suffering from a strange eating disorder—her fierce hunger has forced her to grow to gargantuan dimensions. Unfortunately for Arthur, she eats most of her guests. Arthur survives the meeting, but discovers he must confront the powerful pirate Feverfew to gain the third part of the Will and claim the Third Key from Drowned Wednesday.</p> <p>Readers will enjoy Nix's complex, imaginative universe (the House and the Border Seas) and his cast of intriguing characters, including clerks trying to be sailors and talking rats trying to pilot a submarine. Arthur's common sense, good nature, and loyalty make him a suitable protagonist for this charming story.</p> <p>Virginia Beesley Quinter, KS</p>

<p><i>Ladies First: Women Athletes Who Made a Difference</i> by Ken Rappoport Peachtree Publishers, 2005, 146 pp., \$14.95 ISBN: 1-56145-338-2</p> <p>In <i>Ladies First: Women Athletes Who Made a Difference</i>, Ken Rappoport tells the story of more than a dozen famous female athletes. Among those is Manon Rheume, the first woman to play professional hockey. As goalie for the Tampa Bay Lightning, she had the toughest position on the team. Rheume achieved her dream with hard work, perseverance, and talent.</p> <p>Twelve more chapters include women who broke barriers: Julie Krone in horse racing, Shirley Muldowney in auto racing, and more traditional sports, Wilma Rudolph in track and Nadia Comaneci in gymnastics.</p> <p>Readers will find inspiring stories of women athletes who made their dreams come true.</p> <p>Ruth Prescott Manhattan, KS</p>	<p><i>The Land of Elyon Book 1</i> by Patrick Carman Orchard, 2005, 251 pp., \$11.95 ISBN: 0-439-70093-0</p> <p>This book began as a series of bedtime stories for the author's children and was originally self-published in Seattle, Washington, where, apparently, it did well enough to be picked up by Orchard Books for national distribution. Projected as the first book in a trilogy, the fantasy tale recounts the adventures of 12-year-old Alexa, who lives within a complex of walled cities unable, along with her compatriots, to experience the world outside. Alexa, in the spirit of fantasy protagonists everywhere, is too curious and bold to be held back from exploration of the forbidden by rules, guards, culture, and custom. Indeed, she finds her way beyond the walls to discover talking animals and a plot to destroy the kingdom. She is, of course, with the aid of her animal allies, ultimately able to save the day by bringing down the walls. However, her adventures are apparently <i>to be continued</i> . . . Young fantasy readers will enjoy this story of a small female heroine although the adventures are far from as engaging as those in Narnia or Hogwarts. The underlying message that sneaking around leads to great deeds may be disturbing for some adults, yet it taps into the covert desire of all children to have a hand in saving the world.</p> <p>Myrna Dee Marler Lafayette, HI</p>
<p><i>The Last Universe</i> by William Sleator Amulet Books, 2005, 214 pp., \$16.95 ISBN: 0-8109-5858-9</p> <p>William Sleator's new novel for young adults is a riveting tale of psychological suspense. This suspense is heightened by the first-person narrator, also the main character. Susan is so unwilling to enter all the dangerous situations in the garden behind her house that she makes you as the reader want to go there even more. Sleator paints a convincing picture of what it is like to be a 14-year-old girl in a world of confusing twists and turns. The mysterious maze in the middle of the garden is a metaphor for the labyrinthine mind games Sleator plays with his readers. There is just enough science in this book to interest the intellectually inclined. This is a truly engaging science fiction thriller where all the action takes place in a seemingly innocent garden behind an old house. There are no light sabers or wookies, but this story will take you on a psychological journey as you wonder if the universe really makes any sense at all. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in alternate realities.</p> <p>Kenan Metzger Shawnee, KS</p>	<p><i>Looking for Alaska</i> by John Green Dutton Books, 2005, 256 pp., \$15.99 ISBN: 0525475060</p> <p>Relationships/Loyalty/Death</p> <p>Based on the last words of Francois Rabelais, narrator Miles Halter leaves Florida to attend his last two years of high school at Culver Creek boarding school in Alabama because "I go to seek a Great Perhaps." He finds this potential both in his new group of friends and in the discussions of his World Religions class, taught by Dr. Hyde.</p> <p>Green's book is a thrilling novel that lacks chapters, but is divided by headings that are counting down to a life-changing event in Miles's life, and later by headings that count days after the event. It is a tribute to Green's capabilities as a writer that the event is open to multiple possibilities that make it unpredictable until it happens. Throughout the novel, Green challenges the reader's perceptions of friendship, loyalty, relationships, sex, life, suffering, and death. The book is filled with scenes that are both laugh-out-loud funny and bury-one's-head-and-cry tragic.</p> <p>A warning to readers: Green's novel contains a lot of explicit language, some drug use, and explicit sexual situations. However, each of these situations is handled with depth and maturity and is vital to the development of plot and character.</p> <p>John Ritchie Manhattan, KS</p>

<p>Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment by James Patterson Little, Brown, 2005, 432 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Max, the winged teenager from Patterson's <i>The Lake House</i> and <i>When the Wind Blows</i>, is back in a book of her own. Guess who else is back? The bad guys from the school where Max's first memories come from, and the Erasers, a band of mutant wolf-like assassins, out to get Max and her flock of winged kids. Max's journey takes her back to the school to rescue her friend.</p> <p>This novel was typical Patterson, with the heart pumping action and close calls, mixed with a new feeling of teenage anxiety. The point of view switches from flock member to flock member, making this not as much Max's book as her flock's book. This change is disorienting instead of being insightful, but I found the action and captivating characters made Max's ride inviting.</p> <p>I recommend this novel to action-adventure fans, especially those thirsting for the thriller novel from the mostly female point of view. Patterson's adult readers will not be disappointed, and he will definitely gain a teen audience with this exciting novel.</p> <p>Jennifer Judy Oxford, OH</p>	<p>Merlin and the Making of the King Retold by Margaret Hodges, Ill. by Trina Schart Hyman Holiday House, 2004, 39 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>ISBN: 0-8234-1647-X</p> <p>Exactly why the world needs another retelling of Arthurian legend is unclear. However, this version seems aimed more at children than young adults, recounting three tales featuring Merlin as kingmaker and the hand that guided the hand of King Arthur as he fought relentless enemies, set up the round table, lost and regained his sword, and established truth and justice. The three stories are "The Sword in the Stone" (already recounted by Disney), "Excalibur," and "The Lady of the Lake." It lightly covers King Arthur's troubles with Guinevere and Lancelot and the eventual demise of the great dream. The prose is clear and engaging, telling the stories well. Its best feature, however, are the lush illustrations and the simulation of illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages. This is an excellent book for young fantasy readers to cut their teeth on. The prose and paintings suggest a host of unseen magical forces in the world waiting to be unleashed against evil and even hints at the possibility of Arthur's eventual return. Thus, it becomes a book themed around hope and the triumph of good over wicked men's vengefulness.</p> <p>Myrna Dee Marler Laie, HI</p>
<p>Out of Boneville by Jeff Smith Scholastic, 2005, 138 pp., \$18.95</p> <p>Tapping the popularity of book-length comics, Scholastic has launched its new graphic novel imprint, Graphix, by releasing a hard-cover edition of volume one from Jeff Smith's Boneville series. <i>Out of Boneville</i> was first published in 1991, the first in a series now at nine volumes. The new Scholastic edition maintains the original content but introduces color illustrations.</p> <p>The book traces the adventures of the Bone cousins—Phoney Bone, Smiley Bone, and Fone Bone. The characters are endearing, and the plot is a blend of comedy and adventure. Social satire is just beneath the surface, but the messages are subtle.</p> <p>Fans of Boneville will want to examine the color artwork. Those new to graphic novels will find in <i>Out of Boneville</i> a nice introduction to the genre, and teachers interested in exploring the possibilities of graphic novels will find the Boneville series safe for classroom consumption.</p> <p>F. Todd Goodson Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>Paradise City (The Big Empty, Book 2) by J. B. Stephens Penguin RazorBill, 2004, 268 pp., \$6.99</p> <p>ISBN: 1-59514-007-7</p> <p>Six teens have survived <i>Desolation Angels (The Big Empty, Book 1)</i> and have arrived in Novo Mundum after the Midwest has been abandoned following a viral outbreak called Strain 7. This attempt to recreate a Garden of Eden exists at an isolated small liberal arts college in the Eastern United States where a commune is controlled by two brothers, one a former research scientist at the college and the other an ex-Marine. The hero is Michael, who with two pals, journeys across the deserted prairie to uninhabited St. Louis and brings back security system devices to the ideal community where survival of the youthful and brilliant seems to be the focus. As with any so-called paradise, things are never quite as idyllic as they seem. Michael must decide who is friend or enemy to save the surviving "angels" he trusts.</p> <p>Judith Hayn Skokie, IL</p>

<p><i>Rhymes with Witches</i> by Lauren Myracle Amulet Books, 2005, 224 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Popularity ISBN: 0810958597</p> <p>A freshman in high school, Jane has two friends, Alicia and Phil. Unfortunately, she doesn't always get along with Alicia, and Phil has a crush on her. When we first meet Jane, she is in the cafeteria wishing she were sitting with the Bitches, a group of three girls considered the coolest girls in school. Jane is wearing a new dress in hopes the bitches will notice her, which they eventually do. After a series of imitations, Jane is inducted into their group.</p> <p>Written in response to "Flowers for Algernon," author Lauren Myracle designs a similar story line addressing the price paid for turning into someone new and putting a price on popularity. Elements of magic infiltrate the book, giving it an impossible reality. However, despite the unrealistic ideas supporting the main theme that popularity can be obtained through theft, Jane is a believable character. Issues of popularity will resonate with a teenage crowd, as will other topics such as underage drinking, sex, and the need to fit in.</p> <p>Elle Wolterbeek Tempe, AZ</p>	<p><i>The Royal Ballet School Diaries: Ellie's Chance to Dance</i> by Alexandra Moss Grosset & Dunlap, 2005, 141 pp., \$4.99</p> <p>Friendship/Interpersonal Relations ISBN: 0-448-43535-7</p> <p>Ellie never thought she would be leaving her friends in Chicago and moving to London. But things got a little easier when she found out she would be auditioning for The Royal Ballet School's Junior Associate Program. Who would have thought that she would ever have the chance to dance at the best ballet school in England! Ellie quickly made new friends at school and in dance class. There was only one person who was a pain in the neck, Rachel. But Rachel finally comes around when she is forced to be Ellie's partner for a school project and finds that Ellie doesn't have the perfect life of a "prima ballerina" after all.</p> <p>This is a good book for middle school adolescents to read. They can really connect with the troubles Ellie has with uprooting from the only home she knows, moving to a new city, and not getting along with everyone there.</p> <p>Marcia Woodyard Wamego, KS</p>
<p><i>The Search for Bell Prater</i> by Ruth White Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005, 170 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Appalachian Culture ISBN: 0-374-30853-5</p> <p>Fans of <i>Belle Prater's Boy</i> will welcome this long awaited sequel. A year after the disappearance of Woodrow's mother (Belle Prater), Woodrow has been living with his grandparents and has become close friends with his adventurous cousin, Gypsy. The two make a friend in Cassie Caulborne, a new girl in school, who has a "sixth sense"—Cassie can look into the past and Woodrow hopes her talent can aid him in finding his mother. A mysterious phone call on New Year's sends Woodrow, Gypsy, and Cassie on a quest to Bluefield, a neighboring town, in search of Belle. On the bus ride there, the three meet Joseph, a thirteen-year-old black boy searching for his father. They become friends, and the four help one another find what they're searching for.</p> <p>White effectively balances sadness with humor, and comedy with tragedy, creating a charming and memorable portrait of 1950s rural Appalachia, its people, and language. Excellent for Appalachian Studies.</p> <p>Pam B. Cole Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>Shadow Life: A Portrait of Anne Frank and Her Family</i> by Barry Denenberg Scholastic Press, 2005, 240 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Nonfiction/Historical Fiction ISBN: 0-439-41678-7</p> <p>Utilizing an unconventional format, Denenberg creates another viewpoint using the voice of Margot Frank, Anne's older and quieter sister. She apparently kept a diary while in the attic, too, and in her words, as the author imagines them, Anne is revealed with additional fictional insight.</p> <p>Following meticulous research, the reader moves from Frankfurt, Germany, to Amsterdam, and then to the death camps through vivid, horrific detail. Heartbreaking oral histories of camp survivors, many who knew the Frank women, complete the history of the family in the moving final section. Pairing this text with <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i> provides accurate information to satisfy questions adolescents may have about the Franks, the end to their ordinary middle class family life, the tense years in the attic, and the final days in Bergen-Belsen. Denenberg creates a riveting addition to Holocaust literature, a must read.</p> <p>Judith A. Hayn Skokie, IL</p>

<p><i>Smiler's Bones</i> by Peter Lerangis Scholastic, 2005, 160 pp., \$16.95</p> <p>Much as Mene hears the calling of his father's spirit to return home in <i>Smiler's Bones</i>, Peter Lerangis felt the calling to breathe life into history by recreating the emotional experiences of this young Eskimo. Mene was the sole survivor of six native Eskimos transplanted to America at the turn-of-the-century by the famed explorer Robert Peary. Records indicate Mene was bounced among caretakers, contemplated suicide, and publicly threatened the Museum of Natural History for his exploitation. However, the person behind the headlines had yet to be discovered until this novel.</p> <p>Swept from the icy white arctic to the industrial prowess of New York, readers share in Mene's account of both the Eskimo people's bold journey south and the tumultuous repercussions felt after their relocation.</p> <p>Eloquent descriptions, historical basis, complex character development, ethical dilemmas and cultural exploration make this novel an excellent addition to any classroom and a great read.</p> <p>Elaine A. Cobb Lenexa, KS</p>	<p><i>So Yesterday</i> by Scott Westerfeld Razorbill (Penguin Group), 2004, 225 pp., \$16.99</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old Hunter Braque works as a "cool spotter," that is, he is paid by corporations to notice and report back what he predicts will be the next big trend. Occasionally he attends "cool tastings," (known as "focus groups" yesterday). Hunter meets Jen when he asks to take a photograph (using his cell phone, of course) of the innovative way she has tied her shoelaces. He invites Jen to a cool tasting, and the mystery begins. Readers will enjoy challenging themselves to identify the most current cool products from Hunter's descriptions of them (he refuses to do product placement—naming brands—in his story).</p> <p>This clever novel is full of visual detail and would make an entertaining movie. Don't delay in offering it to students, however, because it is saturated with the newest and the coolest and will not stay current very long. Westerfeld has built obsolescence right into his novel; soon it, too, will be "so yesterday."</p> <p>Jaime Hylton Scarborough, ME</p>
<p><i>Talk</i> by Kathe Koja Frances Foster Books, 2005, 133 pp., \$16.00</p> <p>Although Kit has never been in a play, he has won the lead role in his high school play, <i>Talk</i>. But when he thinks about it, he's been acting his whole life so that no one would know he is gay. Lindsay, the drama queen, plays opposite Kit and questions, for the first time, what she wants in life, particularly in a boyfriend. Her conclusion that she wants, no needs, Kit causes an eruption within the school about the nature of the play, hate crimes committed against Kit, and the severing of ties with so-called friends.</p> <p>Koja masterfully weaves several stories throughout this stream of consciousness, alternating the voice of the narrator across the books, and providing teases of the script <i>Talk</i> throughout. The result is a realistic account of understanding identity and coming to grips with reality.</p> <p>Faith H. Wallace Kennesaw, GA</p>	<p><i>Tiger's Blood</i> by Laurence Yep Harper Collins, 2005, 204 pp., \$15.99</p> <p><i>Tiger's Blood</i>, sequel to <i>The Tiger's Apprentice</i>, dives from the San Francisco Pier into the mysteries of the uncharted ocean, as Tom Lee and his fantastical crew of cross species companions rely on magic, wit, and skill to renew their defense of the ancient phoenix egg from power-hungry villains. Tom, a Chinese-American boy, becomes the apprentice to Mr. Hu, a shape-shifting lion who is the guardian of the phoenix egg. Mr. Hu sacrifices his own life blood to save Tom Lee; now the two are linked in purpose and heart as they protect the egg from the deceptive intrigues of the Dragon Kingdom and the villain Vattan.</p> <p>Tom learns about courage, honor, loyalty, trust, and friendship. These values, blended with Chinese lore and magical escapades, make this novel the perfect recommendation for both beginning and devoted readers of the fantasy genre.</p> <p>The award-winning author has seamlessly woven Chinese mythology, fantasy, and adventure into this didactic tale of good versus evil.</p> <p>Elaine A. Cobb Lenexa, KS</p>

<p>24 Girls in 7 Days by Alex Bradley Dutton Books, 2005, 265 pp., \$15.99</p> <p>After Jack fails to get a date for the prom, his best friends place a personal ad in the online school newspaper. Jack has seven days to date twenty-four girls and pick his prom date, and that is the easy part. Jack Grammar, the geek who can name all of Shakespeare's plays from memory and has the maximum number of AP credits allowed, is suddenly the coolest kid in school.</p> <p>Jack faces two drunken flashers, group dates, a wheelchair bound jock, and illegal rockets. He takes kissing lessons, centered around the word "olive," and faces his own awkwardness. As Jack races to narrow down the prospects to that perfect girl, he faces two tough questions: Who is Fancy Pants and who is Jack Grammar?</p> <p>An interesting twist on the usual prom story, <i>24 Girls in 7 Days</i> explores the definitions of true love and self-identity. While the situations are amusing, the ending is almost predictable. <i>24 Girls in 7 Days</i> is most appropriate for high school aged readers.</p> <p>Karolinde Young Manhattan, KS</p>	<p>The Unsuspecting Gourmet (Missing Persons Book 4) by M. E. Rabb Speak, imprint of Penguin Group, 2004, 169 pp., \$5.99</p> <p>This delightful mystery centers on two orphaned girls, Sophie and Sam, who are living incognito in Venice, Indiana due to a conniving stepmother.</p> <p>Working part time at a detective agency, the girls are familiar with missing persons. When the mistress of the local diner turns up missing, the sisters help solve the case. The twists and turns of the mystery keep the reader engaged as do romance and the insecurities of growing up.</p> <p>This book is the fourth in a series and is sure to be a book for readers interested in recurring characters.</p> <p>Joy Ferichs Chatsworth, GA</p>
<p>The Year They Won by Gerald Purciello Brown Barn Books, 2005, 118 pp., \$8.95</p> <p><i>The Year They Won</i> is a delightful adventure into the future of baseball. One does not have to be a baseball fan to enjoy this book, but it certainly doesn't hurt. The syntax and usage of the novel places the reader squarely in the midst of a preteen dilemma. Should these twelve-year-old boys rescue the struggling Boston Red Sox or should they let fate play out its course? As the boys play their own game of baseball nearly every day they watch in anguish as their beloved team goes on another losing streak. There is just enough future slang and technology to make the reader believe they are in 2024, but not too much to take away the universal appeal of a coming-of-age story. The boys battle super computers, nosy parents, a faceless creature who hides in the sewer, and an evil maintenance man in a wheelchair.</p> <p>Kenan Metzger Shawnee, KS</p>	<p>Sports Heroes/Urban Life ISBN: 0-974648159</p> <p><i>Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:</i> Lori Goodson 409 Cherry Circle Manhattan, KS 66503</p> <p><i>To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Lori Goodson at lagooodson@cox.net</i></p>



“Our World with One Step to the Side”:

YALSA Teen’s Top Ten Author Shannon Hale Talks about Her Fiction

TAR: This quotation in the *Salt Lake City Deseret News* would probably be of interest to inspiring creative writing majors: “Hale found the creative-writing program at Montana to be very structured. ‘You get in a room with 15 people and they come at you with razors. I became really tired of the death-oriented, drug-related, hopeless, minimalist, existential terror stories people were writing.’” This seems to be the fashion in university creative writing programs, but it is contrary to the philosophy of secondary English ed methods of teaching composition classes (building a community of writers where the environment is trusting and risk-taking is encouraged as opposed to looking for a weakness and attempting to draw blood). What do you find is the best or most useful approach to responding or seeking response to your work in its early drafts?

Shannon: I don’t know that the University of Montana supported any particular philosophy. It was more determined by the attitudes of the instructor and the participants. I think what made U of M different than, say, my undergrad workshops, was that everyone there was very serious about becoming a writer. This was not a fun elective class—this represented a serious gamble of time, money, and hope, and no one took it lightly. I don’t think anyone set out to be harsh, but we were. In a way, I think that’s good because it helped me to develop a tough skin, which any artist needs to have to face the rejections (I had dozens of rejections before I ever received my first acceptance) and reviews and slow sales . . . Regardless of the type of environment, I think

the workshopping experience is helpful because I learned to accept feedback on my own work, even if ultimately it didn’t take me where I want to go (it’s all for practice at that point!). As well, reading and giving feedback on early drafts of other people’s work was crucial for training me to be a better editor of my own writing.

What I don’t like (and I don’t think this is a program-specific problem) is the mob mentality that springs from a workshop-style setting. Anything experimental, anything too different, is going to get questioned or criticized. I found myself changing what I wrote, trying to find what I thought would please my professors and colleagues, not trying to find what most pleased me. This is one reason why, I think, publishable material is rarely produced in an MFA program. I wrote *The Goose Girl* after graduating.

TAR: How do you see the role of a female protagonist or how do you want your female protagonist to be perceived by your readers?

Shannon: I’m very lucky to be writing after decades of writers have fought for their genuine, interesting, and varied heroines. I don’t have the burden of writing on offense, trying to prove that girls actually are interesting enough to be main characters and do come in various shapes and kinds. It’s a luxury I’m mindful of often. I now get to go forward and tell stories as though it’s always been this way. I get to think of myself as a realist instead of as an aggressive feminist.

As a storyteller, I was drawn to powerful girls who lacked masculine strength and interesting girls who didn't swing a sword. Although I think it's fabulous that "girls with swords" stories exist (at last!), I consciously chose to tell another side of that—girls don't have to fall into traditionally male roles in order to be powerful or interesting. I'm not athletic, I'm not physically strong (and am very aware of it next to my 6'3", 300-pound-bench-pressing husband), and I want to shout out to all my sisters out there that we're just as good as the marathon runners. I still stumble across the idea that the "cool" girls, the honorable girls, are the ones that grew up wrestling in the dirt and eating worms and never crying. Why? I don't want to propagate that nonsense.

TAR: While you were writing *Princess Academy* you held down a full-time job, taught Sunday school, cared for a husband and looked after a son, and those are just the things we know about!! Many people will say, "I am leaving my job to raise a family" or "I am leaving my job to write a book" or "when my kids are grown, I will have time to pick my writing career up again," but not you. How do you do it and what is your philosophy around all of that?

Shannon: I know lots of women who want to be writers but can't or don't get started until after the kids are in school. I feel very lucky to have had a head start. A big part of it for me was the MFA. Contrary to what I had supposed, the MFA program did not hook me up with contacts in the publishing world, teach me the secrets of storytelling, or help me produce the great American novel—but it did help me to fall into the habit of writing every day. That was invaluable.

I had started *The Goose Girl* before I was married and sent off the final draft of *Enna Burning* a week before the birth of my first child. (I just

Although I think it's fabulous that "girls with swords" stories exist (at last!), I consciously chose to tell another side of that—girls don't have to fall into traditionally male roles in order to be powerful or interesting.

have the one, or indeed this would be nearly impossible.) Now the mania is firmly in control, and I MUST write. I've always thought that the drive to write was a form of mental illness, and in many ways it's helpful. When you have to do something, like going to the bathroom, you'll find a way. I certainly can't write as much as I used to (the period when I worked full time and had a baby was very difficult), but I'm home now with Max. I wrote the first draft of *Princess Academy* during maternity leave with him asleep or playing on my lap. I did the

rewrites in the evenings and, when I got to quit my job, during nap times. When we have another baby someday, I imagine my output will greatly slow down, but I don't think I could ever stop now.

TAR: What role do parents and teachers play in developing a young person's love of literature?

Shannon: Huge! I attend an inner-city church and teach 8- to 11-year-old girls on Sundays, and every week I ask them if they've been reading. The ones that do are the ones with parents that read with them and take them to the library. The girls whose parents neglect reading and don't read books themselves, almost never read. My own parents always read to us.

I think teachers and librarians are so important too in pointing kids to books they'll enjoy. In my experience, kids who don't like reading (barring developmental issues and learning disabilities) just haven't found the kinds of books that capture their interest. I remember re-reading the same books over and over because, in part, I didn't know where to go to find something else I liked. I didn't even realize there might be more books out there for me. What a tremendous gift it would be to give kids monthly one-on-one time with a librarian or reading specialist who could talk to them, figure out their interests, and place them with a hand-selected book.

TAR: What role does fiction reading play in a person's life, young, old or in between?

Shannon: I've spoken to teacher groups before who are passionate about getting kids to read, and then I ask, "How many of you have read a book for pleasure this past month?" The response is appallingly low. Adults start to get so stubbornly practical, we think we need to be constantly productive, reading non-fiction and self help and such, and believe that fiction is frivolous and a waste of time. Didn't we do away with this notion already? No room in the Republic for poets? Yikes! I wish I knew irrefutable scientific evidence to prove it, but I just believe that our brains need great fiction books. For me as a kid, reading was escape, adventure, relief, entertainment, confidence building, instructional, character forming. . . . While those needs are more intense in children, they certainly don't go away. Adults need fiction, too!

TAR: Does your use of fairy tales reflect any sort of beliefs in archetypes or stories common to the human experience across time and cultures?

Shannon: Absolutely. I chose to write a novel from "The Goose-Girl" because it had always been my favorite fairy tale, and I thought, if this is a story that survived decades and perhaps centuries in oral form, there must be some universal truth here. Little children will ask for the same book read to them again and again, night after night, because it satisfies something in them, soothes some need in their current development. Fairy tales are the stories we tell ourselves again and again. I love that we as readers have the same need for stories that people did hundreds of years ago. I love that "Cinderella" has reappeared in dozens of forms in dozens of countries over the past 1500 years. It was around my eighth draft of *Princess Academy* that I suddenly realized, hey, this could be read as a retelling of Cinderella!

I had started *The Goose Girl* before I was married and sent off the final draft of *Enna Burning* a week before the birth of my first child. (I just have the one, or indeed this would be nearly impossible.) Now the mania is firmly in control, and I MUST write.

TAR: What is left out of a fairy tale as told by the Brothers Grimm? Why were their tales so violent? How do you decide what to keep and what to leave out, especially in regard to the violence?

Shannon: The Grimm brothers did a service in recording those oral tales, but they also permanently froze their version of the tales. How was "The Goose-Girl" different when a grandmother told it by a fire in Austria? What happened to Little Red Riding Hood according to some hausfrau 300 years ago? There's no way we can know what was

lost—which is why I love that so many writers retell the tales. That's what they're for! No one's version is the *right* one.

Violence is tricky, because it's "bad." I as a



reader don't like to read gratuitous violence, but I did feel it was important to pay homage to the elements of the original tale. I decided, for instance, to keep the lady-in-waiting's horrid fate but let it happen offstage. As well, I didn't want to see the horse die, though that event is essential in the princess's development. Fairy tales are where we experiment with the bad bits of life in a safe environment, and where we find out that there is always hope and always the possibility of a happy ending. To completely Disney-fy them defeats the wholeness and brilliance of these tales.

TAR: Is there a purity or honesty about animals compared to the dishonesty and deceitful nature of people? Why do animals so often play a role in fairy tales in which the protagonists are people?

Shannon: I think animals are highly symbolic. You can say, "fox," "horse," "lion," "vulture," and immediately get a sense of character type. They certainly represent different aspects of personality and characteristics inside every human. I think it's also a study of agency, which is a major component of fairy tales. People make choices while animals respond to instinct.

TAR: Ani was headed for an arranged marriage to someone she has never even met and meets with an obstacle of gigantic proportions. You knew your husband for 12 years before marrying him. Anything going on under the surface here?

Shannon: Ha. Yes, I suppose there might be, though not consciously. While writing, I tried to do justice to the original tale, keep what was essential to it, and make it interesting and believable. But my own life experiences must play a role in how I interpret what the story is and how to tell it! Certainly I do believe in life companionship, romantic love, and happy endings after long struggles.

TAR: You may have been asked this so many times you hate to hear it again, BUT, does Ani fit Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, and if so, was this a conscious construction or just another evidence of the universality of stories, heroes and the human experience?

Shannon: No conscious construction, though I am familiar with the theory. I think Campbell's brilliance is he saw the pattern laced inside the world's stories.

TAR: (OK, this may sound silly, but) Does Enna Burning have anything in common with the X-men series? People with special powers who must face many challenges above and beyond what non-mutants face, including learning to wield powers and learning to cope with being different?

Shannon: That's an interesting connection. I hadn't thought of it. I do love superheroes, comics, and I do know the X-men series, so perhaps on an unconscious level it slipped in. The type of "magic" I developed to tell *The Goose Girl* came about from what I found in the original tale—there was a talking horse, a close connection to geese, and a mystical power over the wind, and from there I created a magic system that would work for me. I had decided not to create a world where people with superpowers run rampant or magic abounds. I wanted it to feel real and possible, our world with one step to the side, and not alienate non-fantasy readers. So the stories do deal with people who have abilities that are not common.

TAR: What went through your mind when you were announced as being in YALSA Teens' Top Ten for *The Goose Girl*?

Shannon: Surprise, delight, relief, elation...some mix of all that, I think. *The Goose Girl* hadn't been included on any ALA lists, so it was especially nice. I love that the teen readers themselves get to bestow an honor. Some of those authors on the list like Rowling and Cabot already have so many honors and best seller status and on and on that it can't be a big deal for them anymore, but for little people like me, these things are huge! My publisher forwarded me the announcement in email, and I was thinking, "Dang! Shouldn't there be a parade or something?" I doubt such awards and honors mean as much to anyone as to the novice novelist.

The Goose Girl

Reviewed by Jean Boreen, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona

Fans of retold fairy tales will enjoy Shannon Hale's version of the Grimms' story of the princess who must endure life as a goose girl before she can become queen. *Goose Girl* introduces us to the Crown Princess Anidori-Kiladra, otherwise known as Ani, who is born with the gift of animal-speak. As a young child, she is aided in her learning by her aunt, who shares the same gift as Ani; however, after Ani's mother becomes suspicious of her daughter's relationship with her aunt, she sends her sister away and puts Ani under rigorous "princess training." As Ani grows older, she comes to understand and somewhat fear her own mother's gift of "people-speak" (the ability to direct other people's actions through her words).

When Ani's father dies, the sixteen-year-old crown princess finds that her mother plans to usurp Ani's right to the throne in favor of her younger brother, Caleb. Questioning her mother, Ani finds that the queen has promised her daughter in marriage to the eldest son of the king of Bayern. Both Ani and the queen know that Bayern has turned its eyes to conquering Kildenree. With no recourse, Ani is sent to Bayern with her lady-in-waiting, Selia, and a small troop of Kildenree soldiers; her only true friend on the trip is her mount, Falada, the horse she has raised since childhood. And Falada is the only one who comes to her aid

when Selia, supported by the captain of the guard, Ungolad, determines to kill the princess and take over her identity.

It is here where Ani's journey to adulthood truly begins. Betrayed by those she trusts, she turns to the animals of the forest into which she escapes. She is also befriended by the widow Gilsa and her son when she becomes desperate for food and directions to the Bayern capitol; although Ani has been consistently betrayed by her mother and other Kildenreans, she is determined to continue on to the city to reclaim her rights as princess and wife-to-be of the crown prince. However, getting on to the palace grounds and into the palace itself is not an easy task, and Ani takes a job as the goose keeper to obtain access to the grounds. The job is demanding, but through it, Ani learns a great deal about friendship, loyalty, and love.

With a new cunning born of friendship as well as desperation, Ani uncovers the whole of Selia's evil plans: to encourage Bayern to go to war against Kildenree so that there will be no one to challenge Selia's claims to power. Gathering support from the forest people—those who are considered to be second-class citizens in Bayern because they lack the opportunity to earn a javelin, one of the mightiest symbols of power in the war-driven country—and those with whom she has worked in the palace yard, Ani forces the king of

Bayern to listen to her claims. But it also takes the assistance of the young soldier Geric, who is, in truth, the heir to Bayern and Princess Ani's intended, to make the king and his circle understand the true intentions of Kildenree.

Fairy tales were created to provide children with some type of moral compass from which to make decisions. As with most retold fairy tales, *The Goose Girl* provides adolescent readers with much to consider as far as relevant life themes. In this novel, one of the most obvious is the development of one's identity apart from others' expectations. As Crown Princess, Ani has had her life defined by others' expectations of what a princess is. More importantly, and probably more painfully, Ani has been impacted by her mother's disapproval of her ability to animal-speak. Ani also senses that people see her as clumsy, both physically and verbally. Her ability to work with the horses she and her father love is dismissed as unladylike. It is not until Ani is forced to fend for herself that she begins the necessary process of self-evaluation. While becoming a goose girl is difficult, it is the manner in which Ani handles the job and those with whom she works in the palace stables/yard that gives her the confidence to begin asserting herself in those relationships and in her relationship with Geric. These relationships are also influenced by Ani's ability to animal-speak, the

talent she can actually develop once she is away from the punitive attitudes of her mother and Selia. Ani's confidence in working with Falada, the geese, and Geric's seemingly irascible horse grows to the point that she is able to shift that self-assurance to her interactions with humans. This newly mastered poise enhances the leadership skills Ani had never been allowed to develop under her mother's control. By the end of the novel, Ani is confident enough to demand her rightful place as Crown Princess of Kildenree and to express her love for Geric.

Ani's growth and eventual self-identification is an important evolution for younger readers to consider. All of us struggle with identity; our contemporary society sends mixed messages to young people all of the time, whether through the advertisements on television or in magazines, the pop-ups that blanket their computer screens, or in the lyrics to the music they sing. Reality shows like "The Bachelor" and MTV's "Real Life" present a way of life that seems very less than real to many of us, yet they, too, influence how young people think about themselves and others, and often lead to a kind of ruthlessness in how we view people who aren't "perfect." For those reasons alone, it is imperative that younger readers have access to texts that encourage them to consider how other people/characters define themselves within social and societal situations.

Another important conflict in this novel focuses on issues of loyalty and power. Throughout the novel, various characters—the Queen, Ani, the King of Bayern, Selia—argue that they make their decisions based on the good of their countries. However, only Ani actually seems concerned with the good of the *people* of her sovereign state, quite opposite of the machinations of the Queen, the King of Bayern, and Selia. In their various cases, the good of the country is used as an excuse to bolster personal positions. The Queen of Kildenree retains her power after her husband's death by moving Ani out of the picture of favor of her more malleable younger brother. The King of Bayern rules a country with very specific ideas about military prowess and its impact on the class system within the country; to consolidate his power, he provides various opportunities to his upper caste to war on others and reap the benefits. Selia, the daughter of the Queen of Kildenree's key mistress (a formidable personage in her own right), has been raised to think herself as good as the Crown Princess; Selia finds that easy since she is more at ease with those in power than Ani seems to be. Indeed, Selia also has the same gift of "people-speak" Ani's mother has, although she has not honed it to the level of the Queen. Selia's usurpation of Ani and her portrayal of the Crown Princess to the Bayern people solidifies Selia's grasp for power; her further willingness to trick

Bayern into a war on Kildenree is key to consolidating her position and making sure that no one can question who she is within Bayern.

While younger readers may not be as interested in the political intrigues Ani uncovers, they should be interested in Ani's developing appreciation of what true friendship and loyalty really look like. When Ani is forced to become the goose girl, she learns that she cannot take everyone at face value; rather, she must get to know people as individuals. In her interactions with the Bayern forest people—those who are not considered the highest class—Ani learns that they embody the goodness, loyalty, and friendship she thought she would never find. In her friend, Enna, Ani finds someone to whom she can turn to and confide her feelings about Geric, her fear of losing her name forever, and her concerns about the war against Kildenree. With Enna's aid, Ani is able to rally the forest people to her cause and confront the King with the truth about Selia and Kildenree.

The Goose Girl is an excellent story for those readers who enjoy a fantasy firmly grounded in a character who is easy to relate to on a number of levels. Ani's experiences and journey toward self-identity provides a wonderful blend of escapist literature with life truths that make this book a delightful read.

Hale, Shannon. 2003. *The Goose Girl*. New York: Bloomsbury. 383 pp. ISBN: I-58234-843-X. US \$17.95.

Enna Burning

Reviewed by Lori Atkins Goodson

In *Enna Burning*, Shannon Hale's sequel to *The Goose Girl*, Enna, prompted by the illness of her mother, has left the city and returned to the Forest to live. After the death of her mother, Enna and her brother, Leifer, carry on their rather simple lives. But their Forest life shifts drastically when Leifer brings home a mysterious piece of vellum he has found buried beneath the ground. That vellum gives him insight into a new talent—starting fires from a power within him.

Enna first senses the danger when, in a fit of anger, Leifer sets the edge of her dress ablaze during an argument. Aware of her brother's volatile abilities, Enna then watches as Leifer uses his newfound ability to help the King battle an invading army. With the king killed in battle, Leifer helps the King's army push back the invaders by setting the enemy and the battlefield afire. Once again, Enna has seen the power—and the destruction—the language of fire can bring.

With her brother's death on the battlefield in his heroic efforts, Enna takes the undamaged vellum from her brother's charred corpse and begins to discover her own fire-starting abilities. Enna notices that she can feel the heat given off

by all living things, just as the words on the vellum had explained. While trying to keep her abilities a secret, she finds the urge to start fires nearly unavoidable. She finds herself setting flames to help her friend win a duel, which eventually leads to her joining the army's efforts to defeat the invading Tiran.

As news of her fire-starting abilities moves through the land, Enna becomes a target for the Tiran, who seek to use her power for their own advantage—to help them defeat the King's army and Enna's homeland of Bayern. In a rage to save her country, Enna races through enemy territory, setting places ablaze to help defeat the Tiran. And her gift of fire-starting becomes more than an unusual ability—it becomes a force of its own that Enna can barely control. The heat builds up within her, and she must find somewhere to send that flame.

Eventually, a leader of the Tiran orchestrates Enna's capture, where Enna is given strong medicine that keeps her fire-starting abilities in check. When two of her dear friends from Bayern are captured, she is forced to use her powers for the good of the Tiran. She gradually recognizes that her main captor's own ability

to use language to persuade and the medicine are interfering with her own judgment.

Eventually, Enna breaks free from the enemy and joins efforts with her friend, Isi, who is married to the deceased king's son and becomes queen of the land upon the death of her husband's father. She has her own special ability—commanding birds and the wind. Both find their powers debilitating, to the point that Enna is herself burning to death inside. The two journey to another land, where they hope to find a way to save Enna from the same fate as her brother.

Hale provides an elaborate tale of adventure and bravery, where the heroine seeks a happy-ever-after ending on her own terms, knowing that such an ending wasn't possible for her brother and may not be for her, as well. She must decide just how—if at all—she is to use this unusual gift of fire-starting. Enna battles herself, just as much as she takes on the Tiran, as she struggles with remaining loyal to her country and friends while also demonstrating loyalty to her own beliefs.

Hale, Shannon. 2004. *Enna Burning*. New York: Bloomsbury. 300 pp. ISBN: 1-58234-889-8. US \$17.95.



Outlier Literature Lives

Over the years, I have become convinced that the corollary is true: most English types have an aversion to anything mathematical. Of course, I must admit the operative word is “most.” For all I know, some of you might have picked up *The ALAN Review* immediately after seeking a solution to an algebraic equation. Exaggerations aside, I’ll acknowledge that anything is possible, but choosing to solve a few algorithms is as foreign to me as choosing to chew glass.

In our English world, one that takes pleasure in the merits of young adult literature, we contentedly deal with plots, themes, and devices rather than proofs, permutations, and integers. Ours is not a perfect world. We have come to enjoy and expect multiple truths, while in math, there is always a lovely and definitive answer. Given my math phobia, it has given me a measure of comfort to know neither could co-exist, at least until now. With my high regard for literature and its tolerance for subjectivity, imagine my surprise at the title of an excellent literary article that came across my desk. It was entitled *Outlier Literature Lives* by Joseph O. Milner.

“Outlier” was not a word I was familiar with. For half a century, the words “in and out” have made perfect sense to me, but operating with a near-meaning of the word “outlier” was just not good enough. A simple Google search was called for, and to my astonishment, the search confirmed a growing suspicion: a math term had infiltrated, and very effectively infiltrated, our business of English.

The question was obvious. In what way could an outlier, a data point that is located far outside standard deviations or far from the rest of the data, possibly refer to the literature of adolescents? First of all, what was an outlier in literature? Secondly, if, in math, an outlier required investigation, would outlier literature also suggest an investigation of something unsuitable or badly out of place? In this very interesting essay, I learned that our mutual pedagogy begged for investigation. I was pleased to learn the answer, and after you read about the importance of enriching our students’ lives with outlier literature, all of us may finally understand why mathematicians spend so much time with their calculators and theorems.

Outlier Literature Lives Joseph O. Milner

Decades ago when I was seeking my doctoral degree at the University of North Carolina I realized that I was an outlier. I did not have the rich reading repertoires of my fellow English dons and I had a much stronger social-political awareness than most of them. I was attracted to the vitality of Victorian prose and American texts that were heavily loaded with political and religious subtext. My advisor accentuated these unacceptable tendencies, having been a journalist and remaining an ardent baseball fan.

So, I was naturally attracted to American Studies programs at Minnesota, California Berkley and Harvard, but an esteemed and wise professor cautioned me about the unlikely possibility of most candidates completing Harvard’s arduous program and the lack of good fit of the other two with English departments who might hire me. My compromise was to focus on the marginal literature of the old Southwest (the present Southeast) that appeared in Eastern newspapers and was the forerunner of

Twain's magnificent disingenuous narrative *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

I was interested in how Twain used the ironies of Huck's report to deliver scalding criticism of the social mores of that time and how he'd learned how to create this duplicitous look at his culture from the newspaper humorists who had themselves created unvarnished spokesmen to deliver their wayward opinions of the rough frontier. I looked at four of the best known newspaper humorists, (Longstreet, Baldwin, Harris, and Thompson) to unearth the social, economic, political and religious rhetoric embedded in their work. When I arrived at Wake Forest to teach English, I realized that one of my tenure track colleagues was an American Studies graduate from Minnesota who shared many of my same broad interests in texts. Through the early years of our teaching, I could see that both of us were not in sync with our colleagues about how we taught or what we taught. To make matters worse, I was becoming ever more concerned with pedagogy because I was teaching an English methods course that no one else in the English department would have had the least bit of interest in. In addition, I taught a course in contemporary literature, "Cats Cradle to Cuckoo's Nest," that appealed to students and gave serious attention in the rhetorical postures in emerging sixties and seventies texts that were considered outside the canon much like my dissertation's literature. As I became more fully committed to preparing teachers and my appointment was shifted to Education, I

began to discover the rich vein of adolescent and children's literature that was similarly non-canonical and equally loaded with life issues. These books had some of the same humor and poignancy that flowed through the pages of *Huckleberry Finn*; but more than that, they begged for exploration of the social, economic, and political and religious dimensions of contemporary life. Moreover, the Reading Cycle (Milner and Milner, 2003) that I developed urged teachers to help students *enter, explore, and extend* these texts, so unearthing such implications became a regular part of my methods class since they were such compelling features of many of the captivating adolescent texts. Because they are too often excluded from the canon, they become forbidden fruit and all the more powerful texts for adolescent readers.

The social dimension of these non-canonical books blatantly permeates their pages. They explore and expose serious problems in the social fabric through the eyes of engaging adolescent characters. These narrators are as out of kilter with mainline adult understanding as were my newspaper observers of the old Southwest. These narrators see the failures of adults and their world and seek to replace them with ideal worlds and pure relationships. John and Lorraine in *The Pigman* see the flaws of parents, the foolishness of conventions, and the need for a stay against the loneliness of the Mr. Pignattis of the world. In *A Hero Ain't Nothing But a Sandwich* and *That Was Then, This Is Now*, we see the social dread wrought by drugs and the slim family ties that leave open the door

to self degradation. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and *Night John* are books from rural settings with very different tones that nevertheless

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make the social injustice and evil of racism their central story.

The economic inequities of our culture are ever present in the lives of students but are perhaps for that reason less often dramatized and

The economic inequities of our culture are ever present in the lives of students but are perhaps for that reason less often dramatized and somewhat less poignantly portrayed in this literature. The book that most forcefully presents the grinding poverty of daily life is *Out of the Dust*. Billy Jo's family is literally smothered by the ubiquitous dust; her community is being snuffed out by its grip.

somewhat less poignantly portrayed in this literature. The book that most forcefully presents the grinding poverty of daily life is *Out of the Dust*. Billy Jo's family is literally smothered by the ubiquitous dust; her community is being snuffed out by its grip. The dust jacket picture does not really point to the sad saga of the dust bowl, but it is appropriate because it captures the equally economically devastated share cropper world that James Agee and Walter Evans etched in America's soul with their telling words and somber photographs in *Let Us Now Praise Famous*

Men. While Billy Jo's world is growing grimmer and her father's labors seem less purposeful, we see the hand of the caring federal government reach into their world and the image of Roosevelt as the restorer ever more present in their lives. It is not the intruding or marauding hand that some reactionaries complain about today, but a healing and supporting hand that sustains the weak and needy.

Religion often provokes powerful classroom discussions. Jim Fowler's *Stages of Faith* (1981) claims that the introduction of certain faith issues changes the nature of class so fundamentally that mere recitation becomes authentic discussion when these issues emerge. When core issues that embrace metaphysical or religious questions arise in the classroom, a new level of seriousness is engendered. *The Chocolate War*, *The Slave Dancer* and other books that touch on such issues as humans' predisposition for evil captivate students and make these non-canonical novels powerful attractors. Even less seriously treated children's books' non-canonical stance allows them to raise serious questions about belief and dogma. When a simple scheme of belief steps taken from *Engaging the Powers* is laid out from childlike concreteness to gnostic abstractness, young readers can see how *Dog Heaven's* warm fuzzy afterlife appeals to one part of our religious understanding, while the more perplexing *The Next Place* and the antagonistic *Starry Messenger* speak of a theological belief system more closely allied with process theology. When these non-canonical texts are thoughtfully encountered their

capacity to create cognitive dissonance concerning religious issues is powerful.

Politics is central to these fictive stories. The science fiction genre and others that would seem to be even more closely reflective of our present social arrangements embody strong and dichotomous rhetorical stances that are a part of their non-canonical assessment. *The Giver* and *The White Mountains* both create exaggerated portraits of our present culture. Lowry's powerful book shows us a world where intrusion and control are subtle and not so obviously noxious while Christopher charts a society where external and internal control are complete and life is

The *Enchantress from the Stars* shows us controlling and exploiting social states very like our own, but Engdahl also shows us a culture built on a wholly altruistic principle. The leaders from that hyper-moral world live out a Kohlbergian stage six existence where explorers give their lives to save lesser developed humans rather than control them for their own purposes.

worn bare. Both are so debilitating and life denying that the heroic adolescents who people these stories see the loss of will and personal choice for what it is and break away from the culture to an uncertain but exhilarating freedom. The *Enchantress from the Stars* shows us controlling and exploiting social states very like our own, but Engdahl also shows us a culture built on a wholly altruistic principle. The leaders from that hyper-moral world live out a Kohlbergian stage six existence where explorers give their lives to save lesser developed humans rather than control them for their own purposes.

Social issues, economic forces, religious concerns and political

pressures run deep through the pages of these non-canonical texts, just as they did 150 years earlier in newspaper print. Neither was acknowledged as true literature, they were clearly outside the canon. Interestingly, today, the schools of my state are squeezing out these questionable adolescent texts and replacing them with Dante's *Inferno* and Pascal's eternal wager essay. The message in the old canon seems more palatable to rigid adults and frightened members of our Board of Education. They see such texts as time tested through ponderously onerous and use the authority of their longevity to further instill them in the canon at the expense of books that more surely speak to the lives of today's

students. But if we are to create classrooms where true learning is aroused, we need to turn to these outliers as well as the sacred texts. They create words on world, as James Moffet said, not mere words on words.

Joe Milner is co-author of Bridging English, has served as Chair of CEE and is now chair of the Department of Education at Wake Forest University.

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History Flows Beneath the Fiction:

Two Roads Chosen in *Redemption* and *A Northern Light*

History is a version of events, a story that features a cast of characters much like you and me. In any age, people laugh, hurt, stumble, and endure, emerging sometimes unaffected, sometimes scathed, always representative of a human condition that the alteration of time and place can never erase. Julie Chibbaro and Jennifer Donnelly, two new voices in the world of adolescent fiction, have crafted tales that allow readers to serve as witnesses to events of the past, to see themselves in the people who lived lives far removed from their own. Through the creation of well-developed characters situated in a given time and place, a refusal to water down historical facts, and the skilled use of literary techniques, both authors provide a glimpse into the past that few, if any, history textbooks can provide.

When Fact and Fiction Meet

Redemption

Julie Chibbaro's novel, *Redemption* (2004), is set in early sixteenth-century England and the New World. At the novel's outset, readers are introduced to twelve-year-old Lily and learn that she lost her father when the baron's men took him during the night. His disappearance is surrounded by accusations regarding his involvement with Frere Lanther, a man excommunicated from the Church due to his questioning of the practice of indulgences. Unable to defend rights to their land, Lily and her mother flee England with fellow religious protesters and voyage to the New World. During the trip, Lily goes without adequate food and supplies, suffers when the baron demands

sexual favors from her mother, and is befriended by the baron's son, Ethan. Upon landing, Lily and Ethan are separated from their shipmates. Together, the two young people set out to find Lily's mother and are saved when members of an Indian tribe find them hungry and in enemy territory. Lily is overjoyed to find that her father is among the natives but wonders how he could have taken up with another woman when he remains married to her mother. Members of the tribe volunteer to continue the search for Lily's mother, only to find her dead. There is hope, however, as Lily undergoes a process of mourning and reflection and begins to find her place among the tribe.

Chibbaro's story is based upon the often unwilling journey to the New World of English colonists aligned with Martin Luther. In her research, Chibbaro came upon the story of a group of nobles who had an idea to colonize a part of America and claim it for England. After a disastrous first try that resulted in the death of the colonists, they sent another group to give it a try. When the nobles returned to check the progress of this batch of colonists, they found no trace of them and returned home to Europe. Around the time when Jamestown and the other colonies were being settled, the new colonists encountered a group of white-skinned Indians. As a result of uncovering this intriguing tidbit, Chibbaro says, "My curiosity about these White Indians was set aflame. I began to create a story around them, to place myself in their skin and imagine who they were, where they came from, and how their fate could have occurred" (Author's Note 258). Chibbaro based her research upon old ledgers,

badly kept account books, and unreliable, boasting journals of nobles, as well as myths, art, and written memories and oral histories created by native peoples (Author's Note 257-59).

A Northern Light

Jennifer Donnelly's *A Northern Light* (2003) is set in the Adirondack Mountains in the year 1906. The protagonist, sixteen-year-old Mattie Gokey, feels trapped. Her mother has died, her elder brother has fled, her father is emotionally distant, and she is now responsible for the domestic work on the farm, including taking care of her younger sisters. These responsibilities interfere with Mattie's desire to write. Her liberal-minded teacher, Miss Wilcox, encourages her to apply to Barnard College. Mattie fears, however, that even if she is admitted on scholarship, she will not have the money to go and, more importantly, will not have the courage to leave her father and sisters when she thinks they need her most. Mattie's dilemma is further complicated by Royal Loomis' romantic interest in her. She appreciates his charms but fears losing sight of her goals. When money gets tight, Mattie convinces her father to allow her to spend the summer working at Glenmore, a resort a few miles up the road from her rural community in the Adirondacks. While there, Mattie and her coworkers learn of the death of one of the patrons, a young woman who drowned while in a boat with her male companion, Carl. Just prior to her death, the woman, Grace, gives Mattie a bundle of letters and begs her to dispose of them. Overtaken by curiosity, Mattie reads the letters and learns the truth behind Grace's relationship with Carl and the murder that ended Grace's life. This truth drives her to make a difficult decision regarding her own future.

Donnelly's novel is based upon the sensationalistic murder of a young woman named Grace Brown whose body was discovered in the waters of Big Moose, a lake on the edge of the Adirondacks (interestingly enough, also the inspiration for Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* and the film, *A Place in the Sun*). The boat in which Grace Brown had been

Chibbaro based her research upon old ledgers, badly kept account books, and unreliable, boasting journals of nobles, as well as myths, art, and written memories and oral histories created by native peoples.

found was capsized and floating amongst water lilies in a secluded bay. Her companion, a young man who rented the boat under the name of Carl Graham, was nowhere to be found and believed dead by drowning. It was learned that Grace Brown was single and pregnant and that the man who had taken her boating was the father of her child. Chester Gillette, the real name of her companion, was ultimately tried, convicted, and executed for Grace's murder. Grace's letters begging Gillette to rescue her before it became obvious that she was with child served as key pieces

of evidence in the case. Donnelly casts her judgment in the claim, "Chester Gillette hoped to improve his social standing by courting a wealthy girl and marrying her. To do so, he first needed to rid himself of the factory girl he had once seduced, a girl he once loved but later came to regard as an obstacle" (Author's Note 381-82). In her research, Donnelly utilized transcripts of the Gillette murder trial; diaries of Lucilla Arvilla Mills Clark; exhibits from the Adirondack Museum library and the Farmer's Museum (Cooperstown, NY); photos, oral histories, census and tax records, and information on early Inlet businesses and the Inlet Common School via the Town of Webb Historical Association; out-of-print Adirondack titles from the Port Leyden Community Library; and visits to the Waldheim and Glenmore hotel sites (Acknowledgments 383-84).

A Young Person's Perspective

In these two novels, Chibbaro and Donnelly have created engaging characters through whose lives we can see a side of history that research documents alone cannot convey. Although the adult characters in these novels are well-developed and complex, both authors share a young person's perspective not often included in history books. Upon reading these stories, as told through the eyes of teenage protagonists, young readers are afforded both distance and connection. They can imagine an existence that does not include, for example, the search for a prom date, the

quest for a car of one's own, or the pressure to succeed on Friday's math quiz. But they can also participate in an exploration of themes inherent in the human condition—love, friendship, the conflict between both needing and needing to reject one's parents—that comprise a part of life for teenagers in all times and places.

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In writing about the process of developing the protagonist in the novel, Chibbaro says, "For years I tried to look beyond the basic American history dates we all memorized in school, such as 1492 and 1776, to dig deeper and ascertain what really went into the formation of America. . . . I wanted to feel and understand America from its inception, through characters who might have been there" (Author's Note 257). Chibbaro's portrayal of Lily reflects an honesty that encourages readers to empathize with her situation, to work through her confusions just as she does as a character. Lily does not have all the answers. She is confused by the words of Frere

Lanther, wanting to believe in the message of faith he advocates, but knowing that this message resulted in the disappearance of her father. Her first words read, "I saw a bird dead once. It looked perfect, just lying on the ground on its side, its little claws curled up, one eye slightly ajar, the inside white. I ran my finger over its fat, puffed wing and tried not to disturb it. It seemed the bird might wake at any time. I picture my father this way" (1). She is jaded, feeling hurt and alone in her struggles to make sense of her loss. It is Lily's "spiritual battle with her own guilt and with God that draws readers along" (Rochman). Lily wishes to confide in her mother but finds her unable to offer the guidance she craves. At

one moment, the mother is protective and defensive, telling Lily to remain by her side, that Lily is her sole confidant (82). At other times, she frightens Lily with her talk of suicide and disbelief in the Bible and words of Frere Lanther (76-77). At all times, she is dependent upon her child to help her endure. As a child, Lily needs her mother's nurturing care; as a young adult, Lily is forced to nurture and care for her mother.

In the development of the character of Mattie, Donnelly has created a narrator whose love of language and literature and contemplative nature reveal a talented young girl who feels she is a victim of social convention. Mattie is bright and witty, surely capable of attaining her dream to become a writer. Yet, she finds herself wondering if this dream is worth pursuing given the expected norms for women of her day. She wonders if, perhaps, she is foolish for going after what so many women before her have deemed less important than the traditional choice to marry and have children. Mattie describes her admiration for Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen, and Charlotte Bronte, who refused to marry and give up their writing. Emily Dickinson, she argues, was "a damned sneaky genius" who "fought by not fighting Maybe she was lonely at times, and cowed by her pa, but I bet at midnight, when the lights were out and her father was asleep, she went sliding down the banister and swinging from the chandelier. I bet she was just dizzy with freedom" (274). Yet, despite this realization, Mattie feels safe and secure when she finds herself in Royal's arms. Mattie wants to be loved and fears the loneliness that will accompany her freedom, but she longs for the freedom gained in the pursuit of her real love—writing. Ultimately, she must learn "that she cannot live her life for others" (Prolman).

Nitty, Gritty History

Despite the differing inspirations and origins for their novels, both Chibbaro and Donnelly refuse to make history easy or simplistic as they craft their fictional stories around events of the past. They do more than rely on history to tell a compelling story; they reveal historical truths in the presentation of their fiction. In both novels, the authors address issues of power and equity among participants in a community, portray life as lived reality rather than perceived fantasy, and choose to compose endings that may be

hopeful but remain true to the time and place in which the story is set.

Power and Manipulation

Chibbaro and Donnelly understand the power differential that exists in the societies they describe and the subsequent victimization of those who do not hold this power. In *Redemption*, Chibbaro is true to the setting about which she writes. Power resides with those who possess religious ties to the Catholic Church or large holdings of land. In the middle of the night, men in dark capes invade Lily's home and take her father away as a result of his refusal, on recommendation of Frere Lanther, to participate in the drunken festivals held by the church and designed to pacify the locals. Her father is denied the right to express his views freely in a society run by those who wish to suppress free thinking. Although he is a good citizen, a choir leader in the local church, in fact, he is punished for questioning the beliefs of those in control. Several leaders in this community abuse their power in their relationships with Lily's mother, as well. After the disappearance of the father, the prefect, beadle, and others of the baron's men visit Lily's mother on several occasions. They not only demand that she give up her land now that her husband no longer resides there; they use oppressive tactics to persuade her to give in, at times hitting and sexually abusing her to get their way. Once the mother and Lily are aboard the ship headed to the New World, the baron himself takes advantage of Lily's mother and rapes her repeatedly, using her as a sexual toy and manipulating her faith in Frere Lanther in hopes of financial gain.

In *A Northern Light*, Donnelly explores issues in the complex world in which Mattie lives. "In an intelligent, colloquial voice that speaks with a writer's love of language and an observant eye, Mattie details the physical particulars of people's loves as well as deeper issues of race, class, and gender as she strains against family and societal limitations" (Engberg). Power in this novel resides in the hands of white men with money, at least a few dollars more than their victims. Members of the fatherless Hubbard family, for example, serve as representatives of the lowest class. As a result of their status (or lack thereof), even the farmers who earn just pennies more feel entitled to

hurl insults their way. One such farmer, Royal's father, forces the mother, Emmie, to have sex with him in return for the generosity he shows the family. These class issues are compounded by the summer arrival of the wealthy resort-goers whose free-flowing cash serves to support the working class community for just a few months before they head off after Labor Day, leaving the workers to scrimp and save until the next travel season arrives. There is a hierarchy of power aligned with the possession of wealth.

In terms of gender, Donnelly explores the choices provided to men and women in a world in which gender roles are securely intact. Mattie feels held to gender expectations that she is certain will result in the denial of her dream to become a writer. Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, and John Milton did not have to make a choice between family and career. Why should she? she wonders. Mattie's teacher, Miss Wilcox, pushes Mattie to pursue her writing. When she reveals that she is not only "Miss Wilcox, teacher" but "Emily Baxter, author of a controversial book of poems regarding women and freedom," Mattie is inspired. This inspiration is called into question, however, when Mattie learns that Miss Wilcox's husband has the power to cut her off financially and have her placed in a mental institution. Even Grace Brown, the young woman whose death inspired the story, is victim, literally and figuratively, to gender discrimination. As a young girl who finds herself pregnant and unwed in this time and place, her choices are limited. She does all in her power to convince the father to take respon-

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sibility for her actions, knowing, if he doesn't and likely won't, that she will be the one to suffer recrimination and abuse while he continues life as an eligible bachelor.

In terms of race, Donnelly traces the discrimination of blacks even in the free lands of the North decades after the Civil War. Mattie's best friend, Weaver, is a young black man whose father is attacked and killed by white men when he refuses to move off of the sidewalk when they pass by. Like Mattie, Weaver is an intelligent, word-loving student who plans to attend Columbia and become a lawyer. The faulty perceptions of others, however, deny Weaver the place in society he has earned and that he rightfully demands even when it brings trouble upon him.

When, for example, a group of racist white men call Weaver a nigger, he refuses to back down and takes them on, three to one. When these men are fined for their inappropriate behavior, Weaver feels as though all is right with the world. In his unfair world, however, these men use this punishment as inspiration to burn down his mother's house and steal Weaver's college fund. The men head for the border, free and satisfied that their form of justice has been served.

The Language of Reality

In these novels, Chibbaro and Donnelly also succeed in teaching readers about history by portraying an existence that is neither glamorized nor glorified. Although readers might appreciate the slower pace and easier lives associated with these perceived happier days of yore, these authors remind us of the

realities of the described times and places to temper our fantasy-based imaginings. Their use of language draws us into settings that are messy and mired in complexity, much like our own. We experience life alongside the characters, entering their world and mindset through the crafting of vivid images representative of the places in which the characters inhabit.

In *Redemption*, Chibbaro "vivifies the book with inspired descriptions" (*Booklist*). She takes us to the port with its masses of people; honking and snorting pigeons, pheasants, and rabbits; baskets of herbs and wild fruits and vegetables; men shouting and spitting; and Lily clutching her mother's hand (15-16). Among the lowly passengers on board the ship sailing to the New World, we experience the "smell of piss and dung in the room, of people rotting in their stew" (74), providing a stark contrast to the baron's quarters decorated with gilt-framed paintings and a red velvet couch that "feels like rabbit fur, so soft" (91). As the boat sets sail, we are privy to the passengers' fears that their lives will soon end as they sail over the end of the earth into a pit of fire (20-21). Arrival in the New World offers no reprieve. There, Lily and the remaining passengers encounter hunger, fatigue, and violence committed by rival bands of natives. Chibbaro's tale is "harsh, violent, gruesome—not for anyone wanting to view history through a rosy haze. Yet the book is also vibrant, riveting and beautifully written" (*Shannon*).

In *A Northern Light*, Mattie's frank voice gives readers "a taste of how bitter—and how sweet—ordinary life in the early 1900s could be" (*Lindsay*). She describes the fleas that infest the house, the cornmeal mush that serves as dinner for weeks on end, the endless chores necessary in the maintenance of the farm, and the power of illness to potentially decimate a family. She talks of madness being nothing like that which is portrayed in books. When Emmie Hubbard experiences one of her difficult days, Mattie describes her illness:

It isn't Miss Havisham sitting in the ruins of her mansion, all vicious and majestic. And it isn't like in *Jane Eyre*, either, with Rochester's wife banging around in the attic, shrieking and carrying on and frightening the help. When your mind goes, it's not castles and cobwebs and silver candelabra. It's dirty sheets and sour milk and dog shit on the floor. It's Emmie cowering under her bed, crying and singing while her kids try to make soup from seed potatoes. (17)

Mattie tells, too, of labor and childbirth undergone without the safety of hospital facilities and trained doctors, again railing against authors like Dickens and Bronte who fail to tell the truth and write instead of “no blood, no sweat, no pain, no fear, no heat, no stink” (94). Life here can be good, too, however, as when Mattie witnesses an interaction between her best friend (who has just given birth) and her shocked husband. She relates, “Minnie tried to say something but couldn’t. She just lifted one of the babies up for him to take. The emotion on his face, and then between him and Minnie, was so strong, so naked, that I had to look away” (97).

Honest (But Not Always Happy) Endings

To remain true to history, neither Chibbaro nor Donnelly composes an ending that is unrealistic or unlikely given the setting of the novel. Each author respects historical context and creates a conclusion that is hopeful but not hokey. In *Redemption*, Lily does indeed find her father alive in the New World. Her search is successful, but it is not as fruitful as she has hoped in that her father has taken up with another woman, a member of the indigenous Nooh tribe whose members willingly adopt whites into their culture. Lily also manages to find her mother after being separated from her upon arrival to the New World. When she locates her, however, she is in a pit of corpses left to decompose after being killed by a group of sea dogs, or pirates. As a result of these findings and losses, Lily is disillusioned. With no immediate opportunities to return to England, she must succumb to her plight and become accustomed to life among the natives, a life that ultimately brings her a sense of belonging and well-being. In *A Northern Light*, Mattie does eventually decide to jump the train to New York to pursue her dream of becoming a writer. We have great faith that she will make it. She has left much behind, however. Weaver remains disillusioned and penniless, his mother without her own home and the men who burned it down roaming free. Miss Wilcox remains in hiding, having fled from her vengeful husband. Mattie’s mother remains dead, unable to see her daughter off on her grand adventure. And Grace Brown remains “stiff and cold in a room in the Glenmore with a tiny life that will never be, inside her” (379).

Form and Function and the Author’s Craft

Both Chibbaro and Donnelly are, plainly put, good writers whose stories reflect their understandings of historical fiction. Chibbaro knows her history, but “historical detail informs her storytelling without overwhelming it” (Krawitz). She utilizes flashbacks, memories, dreams, and visions in the construction of her tale, drawing readers backward and forward in time to learn key details necessary for understanding the history that flows beneath the fiction. Specific facts about Frere Lanther’s beliefs and behaviors are interspersed throughout the narrative. His opposition to indulgences and drunken feasts honoring the saints, use of a secret printing press to spread his ideas, and dependence upon personal reading of Biblical text, for example, become key in understanding the role of Lily’s father as religious protester and the underlying reasons behind his exile. Likewise, Donnelly uses an historical event to spark and shape an intricate story that is large in scope and powerful in design. The organizational structure of the novel is innovative and effective, as two mutually dependent plot lines work together to create a seamless story. Mattie’s account of the one night she spends by the laid-out body of Grace, reading her words and learning about life and love, is intertwined with first-person flashbacks of Mattie’s life on the farm and at the hotel prior to Grace’s death. The two plot lines eventually come together in time, with the murder mystery serving as “a cautionary tale for Mattie” (*Publisher’s Weekly*). Through Grace’s story, as contained within her letters, Mattie learns that her own story must not become mired in the wishes of others. She must give voice to Grace’s lost life in order to live her own.

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A Discussion of Lenses

Thought-provoking and mind-numbing, beautiful and disturbing, these novels conjure up images and ideas that are sure to spark controversy, providing rich evidence to support the claim that historical fiction can serve as political statement. These authors have looked upon events of the past and retold them through a lens shaped not only by the years that have passed but by their own experiences as women, as white women, as educated white women, etc. With this gift of hindsight, Chibbaro and Donnelly impose a critical eye on worlds that, then, seemed perhaps more just than they do now. From a 21st-century perspective, Lily's mother and Grace are, without question, victimized as a result of their gender. Lily is a pawn in a larger conflict of religion. Weaver is punished as a result of the color of his skin. Mattie is denied opportunity just for being a girl. The choices these authors make in their treatment of history reveal much about their own prejudices. Therein lies the power of historical fiction. These stories are both real and unreal. They are drawn from events of the past and shaped by writers living in present history that will soon pass; interpretations remain forever in flux. Yet, these stories transcend setting in their persistent reminder that the human experience is timeless. That these writers write (and we readers read) these novels attests to the human spirit to question, to explore, to understand the connections that bind us—regardless of the time and place in which we live.

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Louise Rosenblatt:

A Life in Literacy

When Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* appeared in 1938, it drew attention from many quarters. For instance, in the June 29, 1938 issue of *The New Republic* in the column "A Reader's List," the magazine's reviewer offered this commentary: "A really important book, in spite of its insipid title. Writing chiefly for teachers of high-school and college English, the author has managed to show the relevance of social science to the esthetic experience, and vice versa, in a way as yet unequaled by some of our best Marxists" (231).

For those who read *Literature as Exploration* today—now in its fifth edition, published by MLA in 1995—it is still "a really important book." As one anonymous reviewer at Amazon.Com succinctly puts it, "If you teach literature (at any level) and haven't read this book, you probably don't know what you are doing." Wayne Booth in his Foreword to the fifth edition amplifies this reviewer's remark:

"Has she been influential? Immensely so: how many other critical works first published in the late thirties have extended themselves, like this one, to five editions, proving themselves relevant to decade after decade of critical and pedagogical revolution? . . . She has in fact been attended to by thousands of teachers and students in each generation. She has probably

influenced more teachers in their ways of dealing with literature than any other critic" (vii).

In *Literature as Exploration*, Rosenblatt reminds us that the reader plays a vital role in the life of any piece of literature: "There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work; there are only the potential millions of individual readers or the potential millions of individual literary works. A novel or a poem or a play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols" (1995, 24).

A half century later in 1978, Rosenblatt published *The Reader, The Text, The Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. In this equally important book, Rosenblatt clearly demonstrates that "no one else, no matter how much more competent, more informed, nearer the ideal (whatever that might be), can read (perform) the poem or the story for us" (141). Further, Rosenblatt notes, "the poem, then, must be thought of as an

event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during the coming-together, as compenetration of a reader and a text" (12).

Rosenblatt reminds us that readers transact with texts for different purposes, which fall along the efferent-aesthetic continuum. At one end of the continuum, for example, is the situation in which



parents are reading the label on the bottle of some poison that their child has just ingested (*Poem 23-24*). In this situation the parents' purpose is to get information about the antidote as quickly as possible. In this case, the parents have adopted an efferent stance, one in which they will carry away information from the text. At the other end of the continuum is the aesthetic stance: "in aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is

centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text" (25). Here's an illustrative example from Duane Roen's life: He once saw a production of Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. Sitting in front of Duane near the back of the theatre were four nuns. During the scene in which the alleged witches were given the opportunity to confess that they were indeed witches in return for leniency, one of the nuns shouted out loudly enough so that much of audience could hear her, "No! Don't confess!" This is the quintessential aesthetic experience.

Given these two extremes at either end of the continuum, Rosenblatt asserts that much of our reading falls into the middle of the continuum, the reader responding to cognitive as well as emotive aspects. She argues, however, that some materials—e.g., newspapers, political speeches, writings about social problems, advertisements—require a predominantly efferent stance while others—e.g., novels, poems, dramas—require the aesthetic. "We have to help students learn to handle the affective as well as cognitive aspects of meaning during every reading event." This applies to the teaching of reading across the middle of the continuum that creates the main teaching problem" (*Karolides 166*).

In her interview with Nicholas Karolides in 1999, Rosenblatt expressed a conviction that had been evident in the classes he had taken with her:

"A novel or a poem or a play remains merely inkspots on paper until a reader transforms them into a set of meaningful symbols" (1995, 24).

"If I have been involved with development of the ability to read critically across the whole intellectual spectrum, it is because such abilities are particularly important for citizens in a democracy" (1999, 169).

At the risk of sounding pompous, I have said that my efforts to expound my theory have been fueled by the belief that it serves the purposes of education for democracy If I have been involved with development of the ability to read critically across the whole intellectual spectrum, it is because such abilities are particularly important for citizens in a democracy. (169)

This comment represents both an underpinning and an outcome in the practice of her transactional theory of literature. It acknowledges the teacher not as an authority representing the meaning and background of the literary work but as a catalyst of discussion, encouraging a democracy of voices expressing preliminary responses to the text and building group and individual understandings. The teacher's voice is at once that of the shepherd and of a partner participant. Student readers are empowered. The outcome—the genesis of a habit of mind: thoughtful, investigative, and evaluative of language and ideas. The importance of this concept to her is marked by the fact that she took the opportunity to focus attention on these goals at both the 1999 NCTE Award for Outstanding Educator in Language Arts ceremony and the 2004 "Birthday Tribute."

More than a century after her birth on August 23, 1904, and just several weeks before her death on February 8, 2005, Louise Rosenblatt was still making scholarly contributions to the field when her book *Making Meaning with Texts: Selected Essays* was published. This collection includes essays that Rosenblatt wrote from the 1930s to the 1990s.

As the anthropologist Margaret Mead notes in her autobiographical *Blackberry Winter*, as a student at Barnard College in the 1920s, Louise was part of a group dubbed the "Ash Can Cats," a name bestowed on them by one of their professors, Minor W. Latham. In addition to Rosenblatt and Mead, the group included Leonie Adams (the well known poet), Eleanor

Pelham Kortheuer, Hannah Kahn, Deborah Kaplan, and Viola Corrigan.

Louise Rosenblatt was professor of English education at New York University from 1948 to 1972. Earlier she taught English at Barnard, the women's college at Columbia University, and Brooklyn College. After her mandatory retirement from NYU, she continued teaching—at Rutgers University, Michigan State University, University of Pennsylvania, and others. During World War II she served the United States in the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service for the FCC in 1943-1944 and as Associate Chief of the Western European Section of the Bureau of Overseas Intelligence in the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1944. From 1944 to 1945 she served as Chief of the Central Reports Section of the OWI.

Political engagement continued through Louise Rosenblatt's life. A recent example occurred in 2001 during the deliberations in Congress about the No Child Left Behind bill promoted by the Bush administration. She was in frequent contact with her New Jersey representative to the House of Representatives—sending emails and conferring with him in his Washington office in attempts to reorient the bill and to diminish its focus on testing as a way to improve learning.

Rosenblatt's many awards included a Guggenheim fellowship (1942), NCTE's Distinguished Service Award (1973), NCTE's David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in English Teaching (1980), Columbia University's Leland Jacobs Award for Literature (1981), NCTE's Assembly for Literature Award (1984), National Conference on Research in English Lifetime Research Award (1990), Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Arizona (1992), the International Reading Association's Reading Hall of Fame Award (1992), the NCTE Award for Outstand-

More than a century after her birth on August 23, 1904, and just several weeks before her death on February 8, 2005, Louise Rosenblatt was still making scholarly contributions to the field when her book *Making Meaning with Texts: Selected Essays* was published.

ing Educator in Language Arts (1999).

The two of us, along with several hundred other members of the profession, saw Louise for the last time at the "Birthday Tribute to Louise Rosenblatt" at the annual NCTE convention in Indianapolis on November 20, 2004. In that session, she spoke eloquently about her life's work—work that will influence teachers and students for many years to come.

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Young Adult Literature:

Rite of Passage or Rite of Its Own

“I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself: ‘All right, then, I’ll go to hell’ and tore it up”
—*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain, 1339.

“My name is Jerry Renault and I am not going to sell the chocolates”
—*The Chocolate War*, Robert Cormier, 129.

Rahib-*sahib* will reach out to me for the rest of his life and never unlock the secrets of my heart”
—*Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind*, Suzann Fisher Staples, 240.

Myths swirl about young adult (YA) literature, from *Huckleberry Finn* to *Harry Potter*: It’s literature for teenagers; it’s literature about teenagers; it’s stylistic and simplified literature; it’s overly didactic and, of course, shorter than a real novel. It is a rite of passage.

But it is much more. It is about life, its histories and potentialities, transformations and choices; it is about conflicts between the claim of the individual and the claims of culture (Freud); it is about life’s fantastic flux of being. It is about new beginnings and other directions; of young heroes who wind up threads and carry wisdom, of the child-one who sees, clearly, that the emperor has no clothes. It is not only about rites of passage, but is also a rite of its own, an archetypal icon-bearer of the monomyths that re-create us, as an examination of *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Chocolate War* and *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind*, three very different novels spread out over time, illustrate.

Monomyths, or what Kerenyi named the great mythologems in his essay, “Prolegomena” (2-3), are

the immortal plays of primordial history that act like themes of music in the collective consciousness of women and men. They are the “dramas of Providence” (Burke); we know them, but we are not sure of how we know them. They reside in the heritage of imagination that is ours as humans and they carry meanings for us that arrive in our conscious imagination in holistic thematic apprehensions. They are the bridge between earned knowledge and contemplative wisdom. These great myths, the mythologems, re-create us because they connect us to the wealth and beauty of the past and provide the lens through which we may contemplate the future from the conscious present.

One of the most common and significant archetypes within these mythologems is the child archetype (Jung, 70). It is this archetype that young adult literature preserves in the “world history of literature for women and men of all ages. Young protagonists are not young because their intended readership is young. They are young protagonists because it is necessary. The choice of a young protagonist in a

literary work allows the author to stake claim to the archetypal function the motif provides, to awaken within the collective unconscious of readers the wonder of the potentialities and prophetic warnings the conscious mind has slept away, forgotten or failed to dream. YA literature is a genre of the possibilities of returning to begin again, an empowerment of the hero child within and the archetypal message bearer of wisdom in the remembering of youth.

The separation from childhood is a complex trial, begun in adolescence and symbolic of all transformations of consciousness, particularly from one state of understanding to a higher or clearer one: A reason why adolescence is worthy, according to Joseph Campbell, of the elaborate rites of primordial societies, who celebrated it. These rites forced the child, he says, “to give up its childhood and become an adult—to die, you might say, to its infantile personality and psyche and come back as a responsible adult. This is a fundamental psychological transformation that everyone has to undergo” (124). Because everyone can identify with the transformational ‘call’ of adolescence and its demands, it is a universal link to its mythological association with the hero’s call, its tests and wisdom-based rewards, as well as to psychological associations with transformations of knowing.

Carl Jung in his essay, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype” from *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, which he co-authored with C. Kerényi, states that “One of the essential features of the child motif is its futurity. The child is potential future” (83). Furthermore, within the construct of youth there is also a symbol-tradition of mediation, “it is a symbol-tradition which unites opposites; a mediator, a bringer of healing, that is one who makes whole” (83). The child god brings about a *cyclic* resolution of past, present and future direction, a unification. The powerful futurity images evoked by the archetype of the youth in the collective unconscious, allow us to fully appreciate YA literature as a rite of its own within literary tradition celebrating both fresh directions and recoveries.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

YA literature in the United States has been a rite of its own for 135 years. As a genre of singular merit, its roots extend at least as far back as 1869 and Louisa

May Alcott’s *Little Women*. Yet, as an icon of the potentialities of transformation and regeneration, it is in Mark Twain’s 1885 work, *Huckleberry Finn*, that American YA literature has one of its most defining moments. Like many of the great forerunners of the genre, *Huckleberry Finn* had immediate trouble with the censors and ranks fifth on the American Library Association’s 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990-2000 (ALA).

Chapter 31 of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* begins the climax of the novel, the capture of Jim, and the beginning of the resolution of the adventures. It could be called the thinking chapter; language denoting cognition occurs over 30 times in the first third of the chapter, before Huck sets out for the Phelps’s place. Huck’s interior struggles from this point forward in the novel finally lead him to the conviction that all men are more alike than they are different, and a belief that knowledge of moral good must be held interiorly, born of convictions claimed for one’s self. In this chapter, Huck breaks out of the constraints of dependency on the language of others, the formulas and social rubrics that have confused and mystified him, in order to claim responsibility for his own soul, to claim his own destiny by his own hand.

It is at this point that Huck discovers Jim missing and thinks deeply about the significant experiences he has endured in the preceding chapters of the novel. His reflection leads him to ask himself if his acts of either omission or commission have led to the situa-

Young protagonists are not young because their intended readership is young. They are young protagonists because it is necessary. The choice of a young protagonist in a literary work allows the author to stake claim to the archetypal function the motif provides, to awaken within the collective unconscious of readers the wonder of the potentialities and prophetic warnings the conscious mind has slept away, forgotten or failed to dream.

tion in which he finds himself. Eventually he arrives, by self examination and careful reflection, at a decision about his sin and his culpability. Taking full liability for the decision to continue to support Jim in his quest for freedom, Huck finally absolves himself, in truth, although condemning himself by the standard conventions of the religious and political hierarchies of his world and destroys the treacherous letter he had written to Miss Watson informing on Jim. By supporting the natural right of Jim to be free and defying the religious convention of his day that condoned slavery in the long passage that ends with “All right, then I’ll go to hell” (1339), Huck frees himself from the unnatural imposition of civilization as defined by the few that has enslaved him and Jim for its own purposes and prevented both of them from defining their own life directions. This freedom from interference in the statement of life purpose and individual path is the ideal of the Enlightenment and foundational to the American independent spirit. The uneducated, un-“sivilized” Huck becomes an icon of the principles of the Enlightenment, the wisdom of inherent natural laws that do not depend on either the academy or the church for explanations, but are available to each individual and proper to him/her by natural right.

Fascinating parallels exist between the character, Huck, and standard bearer of the Enlightenment, Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau’s mother died in child-birth and his father, “a dissipated and violent man,” showed little regard for him, finally leaving him to fend for himself. Rousseau often ran away from caretakers to escape their discipline. Sometimes staying with neighbors in exchange for service and in at least one case charged with theft, Rousseau, like Huck, wandered from place to place (“Rousseau”). Clemens, in modeling Huck on the personal history of Rousseau and imbuing him with his spirit, conjures up two powerful images, a return to the ideals of the

Huck is not another *Peck’s Bad Boy* (1883). Huck and Tom are closely crafted spirit-selves, each reflecting the other; for Huck, the self alone and the self-with-Tom; Huck seeking his true self, the self in truth, and then seeking a place in a society worthy of the gift of such a self, worthy of the hero’s gift to something bigger than oneself.

Enlightenment for an America looking for a new direction after the horror of the civil war and the ancient monomyth, “the child god [who] is usually an abandoned foundling” (Kerenyi,) 21; both images, one political, one mythical, so powerful that Huck remains imbedded in the American consciousness, despite the outrages of censorship.

Clemens’ novel was not another nostalgic, bad boy tale, popular with young people in his day, a rite of passage. Huck is not another *Peck’s Bad Boy* (1883). Huck and Tom are closely crafted spirit-selves, each reflecting the other; for Huck, the self alone and the self-with-Tom; Huck seeking his true self, the self in truth, and then seeking a place in a society worthy of the gift of such a self, worthy of the hero’s gift to something bigger than oneself. With the publication of *Finn*, Clemens gave America the

birth of a fully developed genre, American YA literature, vehicle of the hero myth and the salvific child archetype, icon of renewal, speaking both to history and futurity with the power of the “primordial realm of mythology where the most marvelous creations grow and flourish” (Kerenyi, 27).

The Chocolate War

The youth who points out with clarity a situation that separates us from our illusions and constructed innocence is emblematic of the archetypal child that leads. This archetype is skillfully employed by Robert Cormier to point out the banality and deceitfulness of contemporary cultural institutions. In *The Chocolate War*, the protagonist, Jerry Renault, voices a shocking revelation.

Jerry Renault is compelled to take a singular stand against robotic routines of obeisance to institutional priorities and humiliating submissions to self-serving hierarchies at his institutional system, Trinity High. Renault resists with a defiance to die for, inspired by a

poster imprinted with the quote from “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” “Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?”

From the moment that Renault gives himself completely over to his own truth that, “My name is Jerry Renault and I’m not going to sell the chocolates,” (Cormier, 129) he takes the road that wants for wear, the heroic journey. The narrator relates that “The words and his voice sounded strong and noble” (129). His destiny is fixed. His act of civil disobedience, an investment of self in principle, follows the classic course and expectations of the mythical heroic paradigm. Until, at the end of his trials, his revelation, his message, brought back from the near-dead, is announced.

From Jerry’s gift of self in civil disobedience come—nothing. The heroic life given to an idea bigger than oneself isn’t “worth it. It changes nothing. Renault’s message is: don’t follow me.

To his friend, Goober, Jerry says, “They tell you to do your own thing, but they don’t mean it. They don’t want you to do your thing, not unless it happens to be their thing, too. It’s a laugh, Goober, a fake. Don’t disturb the universe, Goober, no matter what the posters say.” He continues, “It’s important. Otherwise they murder you” (187). And there is no resurrection.

Robert Cormier disturbed our universe. Destroying the safe distance of the reader by unplugging the set of assumptions his imagery had foreshadowed, he forced his readers to take and confront their own idyllic innocence and denial of the deceptions inherent in contemporary institutional life. Our institutions, religious institutions not excluded, create and empower characters like Brother Leon, Obie and Carter and, of course, Archie, silent heroes without heroic messages, simply examples of exploitation. In giving us the ending of *Chocolate War*, Cormier flung the challenge out of the novel and prophetically back onto his readership. Pub-

lished in 1974, it has been a visionary treatise on the implacability of institutional evil. Like *Huck*, the book has had trouble with censorship and raised issues concerning its appropriateness for youth by the keepers of formulas for the protection of idyllic innocence and inertia. They are wrong.

In uniting the message of social responsibility and the importance of the singular value of the individual with the image of mythological child god, who returns from the realms of the dead with a message of life, Cormier has armored a novel of social and cultural importance with the force of the monomyth to challenge *our* lives in a way meant to disturb *our* universe as he gave us a literary work important for our times, worthy of a rite of its own.

Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind

Suzanne Fisher Staples’ novel about a young woman facing a (re)arranged marriage, set in the Cholistan Desert near Pakistan’s border with India, illustrates another rite of its own/rite of passage, through a feminist perspective. Within monotheistic religions, the feminine principle has been seen as an

other-ness antithetical to the principle of integrity. Therefore other-ness has been defined as complementary and the tradition has been that the complement is less than the complemented, though necessary.

Dr. Jenny Yates, Jungian Analyst, speaking at the Fifteenth Triannual Congress of the International Association for Analytical Psychology at St. John’s College in Cambridge, England, August 2001, suggested that in the Christian tradition, if Christ is the anthropos Self model, then Sophia, Divine Wisdom may be the archetypical feminine Self (236). Of course neither Self model is exclusively male or female, but bears qualities that are to be integrated into the personalities of both genders. Located in a gynocentric presentation of the demoralizing and

Robert Cormier disturbed our universe. Destroying the safe distance of the reader by unplugging the set of assumptions his imagery had foreshadowed, he forced his readers to take and confront their own idyllic innocence and denial of the deceptions inherent in contemporary institutional life.

dehumanizing effects of disenfranchising woman, *Shabanu* celebrates the ultimate power of nature to attain fulfillment as well as the ultimate futility of its restraint.

The eponymous, *Shabanu*, in many ways an Athena-figure, must navigate an ambivalent paternal relationship as her father's favorite daughter, a relationship that allows her unusual freedom and growth, with he who is both proud father and agent of death-dealing patriarchal power. After many early difficulties, *Shabanu* finds herself in an extraordinary one. She has been given in marriage by her father to *Rahim-sahib*, a wealthy man, old enough to be her grandfather, with three wives her senior. This arrangement is the centerpiece of another bargain to find a husband for *Phulan*, her elder sister, whose

intended husband was slain in a complicated tribal neighborhood dispute—a dispute the *sahib* was instrumental in settling. The settlement included *Shabanu* for the *sahib's* wife.

In the proposal, *Phulan*, now lacking a betrothal, will marry *Shabanu's* intended groom, *Murad*, and *Shabanu* will marry the *sahib* in a convenient rearrangement. The new marriages pacify both the disputers and the suitors, as well as significantly increase the family's wealth and status. But *Shabanu* is devastated. She refuses and attempts to rebel, but is reminded by her mother that the arrangement is final—she has no choice.

Unable to come to terms with a future so repugnant to her, feeling trapped and betrayed, *Shabanu* seeks out her mentor, her favorite aunt, *Sharma*. The sense of ensnarement and intensity with which she envisions an imprisoning future enclose *Shabanu*. Mournfully she exclaims to *Sharma*, "But there isn't any choice! [. . .] Even if I am desperately unhappy, I can never leave him." To which *Sharma* replies, "No matter what happens, you have you. That is the

important thing. And as long as you have you, there is a choice" (225). Although *Sharma* never attempts to solve *Shabanu's* problems, *Sharma's* relationship with her niece serves only to empower *Shabanu*. *Sharma's* independence, her lack of both fear and attachment becomes a fulcrum for *Shabanu's* emerging self possession.

On the night before *Phulan's* newly arranged wedding to *Shabanu's* former love, *Murad*, *Sharma* offers advice that is immediately claimed by *Shabanu* as meant for her. *Sharma* says:

You can lavish love and praise on him and work hard by his side. Yes, and have your sons. That will help. But the secret is keeping your innermost beauty, the secrets of your soul, locked in your heart so that he must always reach out to you for it.

Phulan looks confused, but she smiles sweetly and thanks *Sharma* for the advice.

Sharma's words lift my heart, and it soars like a partridge taking flight from the desert floor. I see myself in a new light, with value I'd never attached to myself before. There are secrets that will lie deep in my heart, for me alone. I repeat *Sharma's* exact words, committing them to memory, and know they are the perfect gift of wisdom (217).

Shabanu's thoughts beat rhythmically across her mindscape:

I keep waiting for the enormity of my flight to frighten me or to make me sorry—knowing that I'm letting *Mama* and *Dadi* down, that *Murad* could lose his farm, that I could be caught and beaten. But nobody felt sorry or frightened for me when they offered me to *Rahib-sahib*. (236-237)

Riding swiftly on the great camel *Xhush Dil*, *Shabanu* could have reached *Sharma's* house if *Mithoo*, her young camel, had not followed her, fallen and broken a leg. She chose to remain and not to leave him to the jackals, just as she had chosen to flee. And subsequently, she chose to wait for her father, praying that he would forgive her "one hope for freedom" (239), that he would help her get *Mithoo* back to camp, that the young camel would survive, that she would survive. Her father could "beat me to death if he likes" (240):

Dadi's face shows no expression when he sees us, just as the sun rises. It's as if he'd expected us to be here in this exact spot all along. Without speaking he lifts me to my feet and brings his stout stick down across my shoulders. I stand straight and let the stick fall against my ribs and shoulders. I am silent. 'Keep your reserves hidden.' I repeat

"But there isn't any choice! [. . .] Even if I am desperately unhappy, I can never leave him." To which *Sharma* replies, "No matter what happens, you have you. That is the important thing. And as long as you have you, there is a choice" (225).

Sharma's words over and over, drawing on the strength of my will [. . .] . I hear sobbing, as if from a great distance, and my knees crumple. Dadi catches me in his arms and buries his face against my bloody tunic. He holds me against him, and through a haze of pain, I realize it is Dadi sobbing, not me." (240)

Her final statement, spoken to herself, ends the novel:

The secret is keeping your innermost beauty, the secrets of your soul, locked in your heart', Sharma's voice whispers in my ear, so that he must always reach out to you for it. *Rahib-sahib* will reach out to me for the rest of his life and never unlock the secrets of my heart (240).

Shabanu gave birth to the most important self of all, her Self: whatever her choice, it was undeniably hers and in making it she discovered and claimed a part of her that was inviolable. The reader recognizes Shabanu's increasing ability to analyze her problems and her reactions, to arrive at new attitudes that produce self-empowering adaptations to her situations. Each negotiation moves her forward toward a greater command of her Self. Set against the backdrop of her physical maturation, the external transformations she experiences as a girl transforming into a woman, these multiple transformations evoke the archetypal image of the feminine principle, a transcendent and teleological Wisdom that gives life and moves it toward fulfillment.

Jamake Highwater, Native American philosopher, reduces this situation to a formula, "the same paradoxical Western position: one plus one equals One" (Highwater, 66). The principled-complement has been the feminine, a necessary but other-than-not-half of "a tormented dualism [that] has steadily nagged at the consciousness of Western intellectuals" (66). "Amorphous sensibilities, such as intuition, imagination, passivity, sensuality, ambiguity, and holisticsity have long been dissociated from the oneness of the West and attributed to the non-rational and the feminine," (66) and considered as other. Highwater suggests that otherness could imply a multiverse of possibilities within a concept of "sympathy" experienced as a kinship, a "solidarity of life" (69).

Kerenyi opens his study of the Kore, the mythologem of the Divine Maiden, the girl, a dominant Greek myth, with the words of an Abyssinian noble woman: "How can a man know what a woman's life is?" (101) and continues "Maiden-goddesses are far more typical of Greek religion than

boy-gods or even, perhaps, divine youths

[. . .] . It is as though the Olympian order had thrust the great Mother Goddesses of olden time into the background for the sole purpose of throwing the divine Korai into sharper relief (106). The primordial maiden is the "Protogonos Kore" (103), a monomyth of transformational discipline, the trials and losses inherent in gaining Wisdom, the force of life and its fulfillment, a feminine principle.

Central to the Kore persona is its "budlike capacity to unfold and yet to contain a whole compact world in itself" (106). The image is one of reflective promise, the girl as image of girl-woman-mother-in-journey, transformation. "Persephone is above all her *mother's* Kore: without her, Demeter would not be a Meter" (109). According to Kerenyi, the Kore is always a three-sided myth: birth, death and transformation, Mother and Daughter and Moon. The daughter is the mother's Kore, passed in becoming Mother, a double figure that is moving and transforming. "The idea of the original Mother-Daughter [or Daughter-Mother] goddess, at root a single entity, is at the same time the idea of *rebirth*" (123). The moon is symbol of rebirth in its dying and returning, its waning and waxing (131).

Many Kore myths across cultures are associated with moon symbolism and with life principles of transformation enshrined in the feminine:

A woman's life is quite different from a man's . . . God has ordered it so . . . The man is the same after his first love as he was before. The woman is from the day of her first love another. That continues so all through life . . . The woman conceives. As a mother she is another person than the "woman without child . . . Something grows into her life that never again departs from it . . . She is and remains a mother even though her child dies, though all her children die. For at one time she carried the child under her heart. And it does not go out of her heart ever again. All this the man does not know . . . Only a woman can know that and speak of that. That is why we won't be told "what to do by our husbands (Abyssinian noble woman qtd. in Kerenyi, 101).

Shabanu gave birth to the most important self of all, her Self: whatever her choice, it was undeniably hers and in making it she discovered and claimed a part of her that was inviolable.

Unlike Cormier in *The Chocolate War*, Staples chooses but one tense, the present, and one voice, Shabanu's, to create a distinctive use of the first person narrative as the solitary *internal reflective voice* of her protagonist. The reader becomes a listening-witness to events in time but ever present to the character's mind. Shabanu's psychic journey, with its trials and revelations, appears in the moments and the ways she wove them into her life. Her transcendent functioning: how she recognizes and solves her problems, how she adapts to swift changing circumstances and most importantly how she speaks to herself is apparent.

YA Literature: A Rite of its Own

In the introduction to *Interpreting Young Adult Literature: literary Theory in the Secondary Classroom* by John Noell Moore, Moore makes the argument that for young adult literature to come of age, and "lose its stepchild status" it must be able to be treated as serious literary work (Moore, 2). As a rite of its own, young adult literature is capable of and indeed perfectly suited to examination using all forms of literary criticism. Moore's work defends the complexity and richness of YA Literature and its right to be placed alongside "the classical canonical texts" (Moore 6). Young Adult Literature, carrying and carried by the Divine Child as a rite of its own, delivers its message, not only on the wings of the mythologems, but with a unique voice despite the wide variety of settings and stories— both fantastic and realistic—of current contemporary young adult novels.

Unabashedly unmastered and unfinished, the voice of the archetype of the Divine Child is fashioned by more humble perceptions and speaks with a graciousness that elicits the wealth of nature's providence as surely as it tests the mettle of its own self-reliance. Employing vulnerability, the Child is open to help from the spiritual realities beyond and above its control. Never exclusively of its own making, the Child's reality is a playful participation in-and-with the world; his solutions—her conquests conversationally mannered.

Perhaps the extraordinary success of the Harry Potter series and the recent growing interest and popularity of YA literature in general demonstrate the

value of this disposition. For YA literature presents the world of imagination as real not hallucinatory, feelings as reliable not deceitful, nature as essential not expendable, danger as challenging not demoralizing, enemies as teachers as well as adversaries, and life as a surprising process neither exactly fair nor completely capricious. Young Adult Literature, as a rite of its own, has its own prophetic role.

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