



## From the Editors

### The World of Young Adult Literature

**T**he world of young adult literature extends beyond the United States. And yet, readers in our nation are not often invited to consider stories published in or written about other lands, cultures, and communities. While the US is rich in diversity, and the field is increasingly recognizing the need to share stories for and about all readers, we are a single nation on a globe inhabited by many. We wonder what might be gained from increased exposure to the wider array of young adult literature that lies beyond our national borders. We wonder, too, what challenges exist in finding, publishing, and teaching such titles and how we might address these with care and humanity.

In this issue, contributors consider the stories of adolescence that are written around the globe and tackle questions related to international literature, both broadly and narrowly defined. They examine the common experiences, realities, and ways of knowing, doing, and being that exist across cultures. And as they explore how differences might reveal our biases—and enhance our understandings—they question whether cultural differences are ever too big to bridge. Finally, they reveal the role of translators in telling stories to new audiences whose members might be unfamiliar with particular places and people, and they invite consideration of whose stories get published and whose remain untold to a larger community.

In the end, these contributors help us consider whether and how literature can unite people across distant places. Is it true that “Even when you got crazy people or drunk people on buses, people that

went on stupidly, and shouted rubbish or tried to tell you all about themselves, you could never really tell about them either” (Almond, 2000 p. 13)? Or can story help us know an unfamiliar somebody a bit better? Although “two mountains can never meet, . . . perhaps you and I can meet again. I am coming to your waterfall” (Danticat, 1998, p. 283).

We begin this issue with “Translated from Page to Page: Cultures, Norms, and Opportunities,” a collaborative conversation between Olga Bukhina, Mara Faye Lethem, Lyn Miller-Lachmann, Avery Fischer Udagawa, and Laura Watkinson. These five translators, whose experience extends across eight languages, share the intricacies, cultural and professional norms, and complexities that come with the process of translation.

Janine J. Darragh, in “Let Us Pick Up Our Books’: Young Adult Literature and the Refugee Experience,” invites readers to consider how young adult literature may provide an effective vehicle by which to start conversations about refugees in the United States today. She describes a research project that sought to analyze how the refugee experience is portrayed in young adult literature that has appeared on the Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People lists over the past five years. The piece shares the results of the study, ideas for classroom implementation, and available resources for teaching about refugees.

In Stacy Graber’s article, “Existential Meditation on Morality: Janne Teller’s *Nothing*,” she argues that, despite the desolate and chaotic universe portrayed in Teller’s novel, the author offers readers a rich,

intellectual conversation on meaning, morality, and authenticity. The resulting article demonstrates how *Nothing* can invite students into the moral conversation advanced by philosophical literature and engage in dialogue with existentialism, a theory that emphasizes ethical critique and personal accountability, essential to the process of growing up in a complicated world.

In her article, “Adapting Elaine: Tennyson’s ‘The Lady of Shalott’ and Feminist Young Adult Novels,” Aimee Davis explores how two YA novels, Meg Cabot’s *Avalon High* (2006) and Libba Bray’s *A Great and Terrible Beauty* (2003), critique the gender-related sanctions placed upon their adolescent female protagonists by utilizing adaptations of the story of the Lady of Shalott, an important figure in Arthurian legend and the title character of Tennyson’s 1842 poem. Davis analyzes how these authors offer their characters and their readers models of womanhood that enable them to challenge gendered social norms and affirm their own identities.

In his final Book in Review: A Teaching Guide column, Toby Emert brings readers on an adventure—a road-trip adventure. Titled “Of Porcupines and Trusty Sidekicks and Road Trips to Infinity,” Emert’s column peels back the layers of the “road-trip” YA novel to highlight three titles that send queer and questioning characters on the road: Julia Watts’s *Finding H. F.* (2011); Bill Konigsberg’s *The Porcupine of Truth* (2015); and Kristin Elizabeth Clark’s *Jess, Chunk, and the Road Trip to Infinity* (2016). Emert explores the physical and psychological journeys the characters take and provides innovative teaching resources and strategies for using these texts with students.

Angel Daniel Matos partners with Dani Green in his last Right to Read column, “Reframing Critique: Young Adult Fiction and the Politics of Literary Censorship in Ireland.” Green, a scholar of nineteenth-century British and Irish literature with an interest in issues of modernity, space, and narrative, offers an account of contemporary acts of censorship in Ireland and explores how Irish YA literature is particularly suited to express ideas deemed unspeakable and unprintable. By way of example, she argues that Kate Thompson’s (2005) YA novel *The New Policeman* enables a cultural critique that is often impossible to achieve in other forms of Irish literature, highlight-

ing the potential of YA fiction to challenge censorship through genre-bending, formal experimentation, and disruption of the familiar.

In her final Layered Literacies column, “Booktubing: Reader Response Meets 21st Century Literacies,” Peggy Semingson invites Colombian scholars Raúl Alberto Mora and Tatiana Chiquito into a discussion of the global impact of booktubing, a medium of video-based expression. Together these authors provide illustrative descriptions and examples of booktubing and offer both strategies for and benefits of booktubing for educators, librarians, and youth themselves.

We express heartfelt thanks to our outgoing column editors. Toby, Angel, and Peggy, your wisdom, care, and passion have resulted in writings that make a significant contribution to this journal and the field. We appreciate you.

Heather Lennon, Managing Director at North-South Books, a small publisher devoted to publishing books by artists and authors from around the world, shares her publishing expertise in “A Good Book Is Universal.” In this article, she takes readers behind the scenes into the process through which international titles are discovered and secured. She explains concerns of translation and describes how international titles are sometimes modified to fit American cultural norms. In the end, she advocates for a balance between a text’s unique qualities and nuances and the universal merits of story, characterization, and engaging artwork and innovation.

Our final piece in this issue, “A Witness in Red Stockings,” features the careful thinking and writing of Canadian author for young adults Emil Sher. In this challenging and important article, he explores the existence of the benevolent witness in young adult literature, drawing specifically on *Fatty Legs*, the memoir of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (Jordan-Fenton & Pokiak-Fenton, 2010), an Aboriginal person who spent two years in a residential school in the Canadian Arctic. As Sher explains, Pokiak-Fenton’s story “points a damning finger at systemic racism as it paints a compelling portrait of a young girl determined to stand her ground after she has been uprooted.” In doing so, it joins the other articles in this issue in advancing the importance of looking outward around the globe to learn more about those who seem so different and looking inward to recognize our complicity and necessary commitment to others who inhabit our shared earth.

## References

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## Call for Manuscripts

### Submitting a Manuscript:

Manuscript submission guidelines are available on p. 2 of this issue and on our website at <http://www.alan-ya.org/page/alan-review-author-guidelines>. All submissions may be sent to [thealanreview@gmail.com](mailto:thealanreview@gmail.com).

### Summer 2018: Dollars and Sense?—Economic (In)Equities in YAL

#### Submissions due on or before November 1, 2017

Some might agree with Billy Idol: “It doesn’t matter about money; having it, not having it. Or having clothes, or not having them. You’re still left alone with yourself in the end.” Others, like Franklin D. Roosevelt, might subscribe to the belief that “Happiness is not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.” These words, however, reflect the voices of those with money, those who have the privilege of deciding that the money they possess isn’t all that it’s worth. We can’t shake the steady voice of Nelson Mandela who advises us to remember that “Money won’t create success, [but] the freedom to make it will.” When it comes to money, our local and global realities are complicated. We talk of the top 1%, those in positions of power by virtue of their hefty investment portfolios. We learn of the vastly different living wage earned by people around the world. We hear of families in our own communities without homes, of jobs lost, of educational opportunities denied, of institutional oppression that limits access and mobility.

For this issue, we invite contributors to consider the complexities of economics and how they are taken up in young adult literature. How do authors represent class systems in the settings they create? How often is race conflated with socioeconomic status? What are the implications of such representations for young adult readers? How can we support critical reading and understanding of wealth and poverty and their role in politics and policies, in literature and life? Do those with financial equity benefit inequitably? Are they “untouchable, immune to life’s troubles” (*The Dream Thieves*, Maggie Stiefvater, 2014, p. 66)? Is it true that all young people have a chance, that “Someday an opportunity will come. Think about Harry Potter. His life is terrible, but then a letter arrives, he gets on a train, and everything is different for him afterward. Better. Magical” (*Boy 21*, Matthew Quick, 2013, p. 73)? Can we find truth in the advice to “Take care not to listen to anyone who tells you what you can and can’t be in life” (*The Girl Who Could Silence the Wind*, Meg Medina, 2012, p. 79)? Do economic disparities leave us in despair?

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**Fall 2018: The Psychology of YA Literature: Traversing the Intersection of Mind, Body, and Soul**  
**Submissions due on or before March 1, 2018**

Mental illness, the effects of violence, trauma, and other psychological issues permeate the lives of the young people with whom we work and the families and friends who exist around them. Young adult authors have taken up these topics in their writings, providing space and opportunity for readers to find solace and support and to develop understandings that complicate their existing assumptions and beliefs.

In this issue, we invite you to consider how YA authors explore, for example, what it means to feel lost, to be in that “moment when I know that I should scream. But screaming would be hard. And blackness would be easy. Black picks me” (E. K. Johnston, *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*, p. 47). Or to feel worn out, to have “no emotions left: I was a candle that’d burned all the way down” (Rahul Kanakia, *Enter Title Here*, p. 181). Or to want something you can’t have due to forces out of your control: “I want to grab your hand, allow you to pull me through, to take us wherever you want to go, fill my calendar with your smile and laugh the way we used to” (Eric Gansworth, *If I Ever Get Out of Here*, p. 12).

As educators, we invite you to describe your efforts in using YA literature in the classroom. Perhaps your work might help students build richer understandings of the mind, body, and soul and learn to challenge, as noted by David Levithan, how “some people think mental illness is a matter of mood, a matter of personality. They think depression is simply a form of being sad, that OCD is a form of being uptight. They think the soul is sick, not the body. It is, they believe, something that you have some choice over. I know how wrong this is” (*Every Day*, p. 119). We wonder how your work can offer hope. Yes, it is a “hard cycle to conquer. The body is working against you. And because of this, you feel even more despair. Which only amplifies the imbalance. It takes uncommon strength to live with these things. But I have seen that strength over and over again” (*Every Day*, pp. 119–120).

As always, we also welcome submissions focused on any aspect of young adult literature not directly connected to these themes.