

Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature*, Volume 3/Issue 1. This issue opens with an empirical study by Ann Smith, Lisa Hazlett, and Sean Lennon, “Young Adult Literature in the English Language Arts Classroom: A Survey of Middle and Secondary Teachers’ Beliefs about YAL.” Using a survey methodology, this qualitative study explores the reasons why young adult is used or not used in K-12 classrooms. A staple in many middle school classrooms, the study shows that YAL has gained in popularity with middle school teachers.

“Wisdom, Mystery, and Dangerous Knowledge: Exploring Depictions of the Archetypal Sage in Young Adult Literature” is a critical study in which Ian Parker Renga and Mark A. Lewis draw on the archetypal sage character. Employing a sociocultural, constructivist understanding of archetypes, the authors unpack features of the sage through the examinations of the Receiver of Memory in *The Giver*, Haymitch Abernathy in *The Hunger Games*, and Anatov in *Akata Witch*. Their analysis reveals how these characters, isolated from society and its institutions, are each marked with physical or behavioral abnormalities, and thereby possess dangerous knowledge of eros (*The Giver*), power (*The Hunger Games*), and identity (*Akata Witch*). These characters are depicted in sharp contrast to more typical teachers in the relationships they form with students and the degree of vulnerability they display. All of these characteristics, the authors argue, might explain the appeal of the sage character in YAL.

In “Exploring the ‘Lively Art’ of Young Adult Literature,” Terri Suico conducts a wide-ranging interview with one of the formative scholars of young adult literature, Michael Cart. As Suico writes in the introduction to the interview, “Few have championed and raised the profile of young adult literature as long, as well, and as enthusiastically as Cart.” Suico argues that his seminal work, *From Romance to Realism: 50 Years of Growth and Change in Young Adult Literature*, provides a comprehensive history of young adult literature. This interview will give readers a sense of the breadth and depth of knowledge that Cart possesses.

In the interview, Michael Cart speaks of the tremendous growth of young adult literature during his decades-long career. That growth can now be also seen in the scholarship and teaching of young adult literature. The last five years in particular has seen an explosion of books focusing on young adult literature, critical studies, broad and specific, and pedagogy. This body of work needs—demands—careful review. Terri Suico has agreed to write reviews of these books for this journal, beginning with reviews of two of Cart’s books in this issue: *Young Adult Literature: From Romance to Realism* (3rd Edition, 2016) and *Cart’s Top 200 Adult Books for Young Adults: Two Decades in Review* (2013). If you are interested in reviewing recent professional books, email Crag Hill (crag.a.hill@ou.edu) for the list of books Suico has compiled.

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As always, we invite teachers, librarians, graduate students, and educators who would like to review for us in the future. We invite reviewers who are passionate about YA literature and are able to share their knowledge and expertise to improve *Study & Scrutiny* as well as to spread the word about the journal. Please email Leilya Pitre (Leilya.Pitre@selu.edu), and we will gladly include your name and contact information in our database of reviewers.

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