

Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature, Issue 2

Welcome to the second issue of *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature*. One of the editors was graced with the opportunity to serve for three years on the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) Nilsen-Donelson award, tasked with selecting the best article from the three issues published in that year. The committee was comprised of a librarian, a classroom teacher, a university educator, and one of the journal's co-editors. Though these are three very different constituencies with unique needs and interests on the surface, the selection process the last three years showed that there's more overlap than difference. The article chosen in 2015—Cammie Kim Lin's "Queer(ing) Literature in the Secondary Class Room"—appeals to all three groups. *Study and Scrutiny*, along with *The ALAN Review* and *SIGNAL*, endeavors to meet the needs of all teachers of young adult literature. Together we can help assure that YA literature continues to astound readers, young and old, in and out of classrooms. As has been said elsewhere, young adult literature has come of age. Starting with this issue, seek it out. This scholarship will expand what you think of YA literature as a reader and grow its use in classrooms across the age spectrum.

This issue begins with Linda Parson's "The (Re)presentation of Fat Female Protagonists and Food Addiction in Young Adult Literature," a qualitative analysis of a selection of novels published between 2000-2013. The article argues our society has an unhealthy stance toward obesity, one that does more harm than good (see the second paragraph of the article to see why Parsons choose to use the term fat). The study analyzes a set of award-winning novels that both bolster and fight back at this negative point of view. Parsons offers this study to secondary teachers, to instructors of young adult literature courses, and to teacher educators to jumpstart the kind of discussions we need to have to minimize the harm we have done to women (and men) who have bodies that deserve respect and not revulsion.

Crag Hill and Janine Darragh also use a content analysis methodology to argue that like our discourse on obesity, our conversations on poverty may be more destructive than

constructive. Analyzing over 70 novels published between 1996-2013, this study documents the role YA literature plays in the discourse, both reinforcing and resisting stereotypes about people in poverty. This study shows that YA literature is providing a more nuanced portrait of poverty than one sees in the public media.

Judith A. Hayn, Karina R. Clemmons, and Heather A. Olvey’s “Fostering Inclusion of Disabled Youth Through Young Adult Literature: Action Research with *Wonder*” contributes to the growing body of research testing the efficacy of studying young adult literature in the classroom, especially in teacher preparation classes. In an action research study that utilized R. J. Palacio’s *Wonder* (2012) in a class for preservice teachers, the researchers found that students’ perception toward people with disabilities were more positive after reading and discussing the novel than before. This authors argue that this study “serves as a call to action for teachers to search for quality YAL that can effectively teach social-justice issues.”

Adam Van Buren’s “Presenting the Past: How the Novels of A.S. King Provide Temporality to the Teenage Experience” tackles stereotypes about youth, particularly the notion that youth focus only on the present. He uses three A. S. King novels—*Glory O’ Brien’s History of the Future*, *Everybody Sees the Ants*, and *Please Ignore Vera Dietz*—to make his case, showing that her characters are anything but atemporal. King’s fiction is difficult to characterize—magical realism, speculative fiction, a new not yet named genre—but it nonetheless has a hard realistic edge honed by its juxtaposition with the surreal, the possible sharpened by the impossible, forcefully joining the chorus of contemporary authors (Anderson, Crutcher, Woodson, De La Pena, and Booth, among others) who believe in the ability of youth to thrive in the present, possessing a reflective wisdom of the past with an engaged vision toward *their* future.

Study and Scrutiny continues to stretch the interview genre. In Issue 1, Rodrigo Joseph Rodriguez conducted an interview with Benjamin Saenz incorporating deep textual analysis (<https://journals.shareok.org/studyandscrutiny/article/view/115>). In this issue, Bryan Crandall weaves in a conversation with Kwame Alexander and participants in a

year-long professional development program with a Connecticut middle school centered around Kwame Alexander's *The Crossover* (2014) and *Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band* (2011). In and out of schools, YA literature matters on its own terms. Mix in commitment with teachers and administrators with a visit from a charismatic writer and YA literature performs like no other content offered in English classes.

Crag Hill, Leilya Pitre, and Steve Bickmore

Acknowledgments

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As usual, we welcome 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 any of the editors, and we will gladly include your name and contact information in our database of reviewers.

We hope you all stay tuned to the ongoing progress of *Study & Scrutiny*. In the introduction of Issue 3 we will introduce the editorial board. We will describe their duties and responsibilities as well as provide brief biographical statements of each member. The work of a journal doesn't happen in a vacuum and we would like to acknowledge the work and the inspiration that our editorial board provides.

Study & Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature is an open access journal. As such it provides immediate access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public and supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

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