

Journal Analysis

It goes without saying that young adults are in a class all their own. As a school librarian or as a librarian in a public library charged with young adult services, there are professional resources available to assist in understanding the young adult world as well as the literature therein. The following analysis will examine three print journals and two online resources which focus on the subject of young adults and young adult literature, and concludes with a summarization of an article from each.

PART ONE: THE RESOURCE

The Horn Book Magazine

The Horn Book Magazine is a bi-monthly journal that “features interesting articles on children’s and young adult literature” (Ulrich 2011). Published by Media Source Incorporated, *Horn Book Magazine* costs \$72 annually (Sutton Jan/Feb 2012, 4, 130). Each featured article and regular column showcases the author and his/her credentials. The articles featured pertain to children’s or young adult literature in some relevant way and in glancing through appear long and often unnoticeable where they end. This could be the format of certain articles within the January/February issue pertaining to book award winners rather than the journal format in general. Likewise, regular columns seem to fluctuate issue by issue. One regularly included column is “What makes a good...” (picture book or rock and roll book, for example). The reviews are indexed and consume approximately half of each issue. Reviews of children’s

materials as well as young adult materials are categorized by picture books, fiction, folklore, poetry, and nonfiction. These reviews are also indexed in each issue and are cumulatively compiled twice a year in the *Horn Book Guide* (Grallo 2012). Artwork from the book or the book's cover is included with each professional review. The reviewers are mostly "teachers, professors, and/or librarians" (Grallo 2012) in which their bios are available on the *Horn Book Magazine* website (Sutton Jan/Feb 2012, 65). Color, which was not added until 2010, is used to soften the monotone black type on white pages. Titles are usually in blue font and artwork from the works or the book covers are used throughout. Advertisement is tastefully arranged throughout. An index of advertisers is included in the back of the issue. Advertisers include Horn Book, publishers, and instructional institutes promoting writing programs.

Voices of Youth Advocates (VOYA)

VOYA is "the only magazine devoted exclusively to the informational needs of teenagers" which began in 1978 (Voice of Young Advocates n.d.). Published bimonthly from April to February by E.L. Kurdyla Publishing, *VOYA* costs around \$46.95 a year (2012). Articles featured in each issue focus on teen reading and teen reading interests, vary in length, and are "intended for professions who provide information services to teenagers" (Jackson 2012). Article authors have their credentials listed. Color is used throughout. Not only are pictures and artwork in color, but the pages are often in color as well. This is done tastefully and is not eye-catchingly distracting. Thumb-print snapshots of book covers are used wherever possible. Reviews are peer-reviewed and done in a coded system for quality, popularity, and interest level. Reviews are also broken into categories including fiction genres, nonfiction, series, reference,

and professional. Indexing includes review titles, reviewers, and advertising. Advertising is colorful, matching the overall style, and consists of publishers and library services providers.

Young Adult Library Services

Young Adult Library Services (YALS) is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) division of the American Library Association (ALA). Its purpose is to serve primarily as “a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages twelve through eighteen” (*YALS* Winter 2011, 2). Published four times a year, *YALS* costs about \$25 for members which is included in the yearly ALA/YALSA dues or \$50 for non ALA/YALSA members. The uniqueness of *YALS* is that its issues are all black and white in format and are theme-based. Every article in the issue relates to the issue’s overall thematic topic. Articles are reasonably short, and focus on best practices, professional current interest, and YALSA news and information (*YALS* Winter 2011, 2). Advertising is minimal, limited to ALA and YALSA within and a few book vendors on the inside of the cover and back cover pages.

A Chair, A Fireplace, and A Tea Cozy

A Chair, A Fireplace, and A Tea Cozy is a blog created by Liz Burns in 2005 (Burns 2005-2010). In July 2010, Burns’ employer, *School Library Journal (SLJ)*, brought the blog under its corporate umbrella. *A Chair, A Fireplace, and A Tea Cozy* began as a “discussion of books, movies, TV shows with an emphasis on books for children and teens” (Burns 2005-2010).

After moving to *SLJ*'s domain, *A Chair, A Fireplace, and A Tea Cozy* began concentrating “more on young adult books, ages twelve and up, and less on picture books and books for younger readers” (Burns 2005-2010). As with all blogs, they are free access online. Likewise, anyone can participate in commenting on Burns’ reviews and other posts. There does not appear to be any advertising other than the *SLJ* logo and site management, and a few other links across the very bottom of the page. Burns includes a thumb-print photo of herself with each post and attaches book cover images wherever possible. Artwork or other graphics are minimal. Blog entries vary in frequency, topic, and length.

The YA YA YAs

The YA YA YAs is another web-based resource in the main form of a blog. It is run by three young adult librarians who post about YA literature and librarianship. There is no advertising. There are recent and archived posts dating back to 2007 (Gayle n.d.). The blog is set up with several pages, more like a website, including author interviews, booklists, favorite YA books, and information. Like most websites, *THE YA YA YAs* is free to anyone with internet access. Similar to a subscription, new post notifications can be received via email. Posts and comments are varied in frequency, in which of the three librarians respond, the topic, and in length. There is no advertising on the blog. Color and artwork are minimal.

PART TWO: ARTICLE REVIEW

Baker, Deirdre F. January/February 2012. Present Tensions, or It's all Happening Now. *The Horn Book Magazine* 88, no 1: 53-55.

Summary

Current fiction trend of how novels are written in the present tense is discussed. Compared to most fiction writing, some popular current authors are using the present tense to tell their stories. The contention is that when an author writes in the past tense he is taking responsibility for telling the story from his perspective, whereas authors who use the now-happening present are showing less responsibility for the way the story is told. One very well-known young adult novel written in the present tense is Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games*. Authors using this present tense writing seem to understand that this is where teens are today with their instant messaging and facebook posts, the now-ness of the story rather than the yesterday's version.

Review

This was a very interesting perspective and insight into a new writing trend in young adult literature. The article seemed to explain the writing style and its reason for popularity among its readers, as well as provide a criticism of writers such as Collins who have successfully written in a not-the-normal style. One particular popular writer, Phillip Pullman, is mentioned and quoted for his criticism of the present-tense story telling in the article.

Burns, Liz. 2012. School Library Journal Battle of the Books. *A Chair, A Fireplace & A Tea Cozy*. Feb 12. <http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/teacozy/category/battle-of-the-books/> (accessed February 24, 2012)

Summary

This post was about *SLJ*'s Battle of the Books. Burns give a brief explanation of what *SLJ*'s BOB is and how to keep track of the books selected for the battle. Similar to sports teams play-off eliminations, books are tracked through eliminations round after round until there is a final book winner. Along with the list, Burns also gives a review of the books she has personally read. Comments from others who follow the blog included how some like certain books on the list and how the books are paired for the battle.

Review

For anyone unfamiliar with this book battle, this is an interesting way to get familiar with current popular books. All the books were newly published last year. Likewise, each book Burns has read and reviewed also has comment posts which add to the information available about the books or the authors. These comments are from readers whose credentials are unknown. However, Burns usually responds to these posts either confirming or clarifying information.

Heller, Mary Jo and Aarene Storms. February 2012. Sex in the Library. *VOYA* 34, no. 6: 564-566.

Summary

Heller is a middle school librarian who purchased a 2001 ALA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers book entitled *Deal with It: A Whole New Approach to Your Body, Brain, and Life as a gURL* by Esther Drill. When Heller noticed the book's increasing popularity, she checked it out herself to read. All seemed fine until she hit a part where the book candidly discusses oral sex. Heller admits to feeling that the book contained too much information and asked the health/sex education teachers about it. The consensus was parents would not approve of the book. To still provide this information to students, Heller decided to remove the book from her school's collection and donate it to the public library. A partnership was then formed between Heller and Storms in which they work together to provide workshops that discuss the selection of books and the missions of both the school and public library. Additionally, during the programs, both librarians perform booktalks about the newest books available in their library, their shared or differing opinions of the books, and what sexual content is contained within the books they are discussing.

Review

While a positive and successful partnership between the public and school library, this article seems to ignore the fact that Heller chose censorship by moving her questionable content material to the public library. However, the collaborative efforts used to bring the public and school libraries together to hold standing-room-only workshops where books are being discussed

is a powerful message to send, not only to the school librarian but also the public librarian. Any successful effort that brings students, teachers, and parents into the library for information and sparking interest in reading is worth looking at. However, before following suit of this particular program, several things need to be considered such as censorship and removal policies for the school library materials.

Houston, Natalie. Winter 2011. Building a Foundation for Teen Services. *Young Adult Library Services* 9, no. 2: 6-9.

Summary

This article makes suggestions on how to get teens into the public library that include involving all staff in serving teens, setting up or making a teen area within the library, providing information pertaining to teen interests and needs, creating a display of teen related materials, establishing rules for library usage and conduct, and launching programs for teens including youth volunteers and a teen advisory board.

As all the staff embraces their own niche in serving teens, there is more effort to reach the teen community with what might interest them. Simple things like crafts or sports interests can connect staff and patron. Teens want a place of their own and public libraries can provide that with a little attention toward teen material and space. Additionally, including teens in library decisions such as what programs to offer “creates a specific role for teens in the library and formalizes their inclusion into the decision-making processes” (Houston 2011, 9). This can be done through establishing a youth advisory group of teens, teachers, and library personnel.

Review

This article is a great best practices approach to involving teens in public libraries. Suggestions are practical and obtainable for a library of any size and staff. The more invested staff and programs are in reaching patrons, especially young adults, the more successful the library as a whole will be in meeting the needs of the community.

Trisha. 2009. Summer Blog Blast Tour: Rachel Caine. Author Talk. *The YA YA YAs*. May 22.

Summary

This is an interview with *Morganville Vampires* series author Rachel Caine. Caine's sixth *Morganville* book was due out two weeks prior to the interview. Caine answers questions about why she chose to write in third person point of view for the young adult novels rather than the traditional YA first person narrative and about her writing in general.

Review

As part of a series of author interviews, this article gives an idea of who the writer, in this case, Rachel Caine, is and what she is like. Since the interviewer knows the author and her work, the reader is able to glean information that helps to envision the author as well as the style, genre, or perspective from which Caine writes. This is quite helpful for getting to know the authors as well as the novels.

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