



Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the NCTE

ALAN Online News

ALAN Announces Establishment of Konigsberg Award

The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of Teachers of English (ALAN) is pleased to announce the establishment of a new ALAN award, the Bill Konigsberg Award for Acts and Activism for Equity and Inclusion through Young Adult Literature. The Konigsberg Award will be presented annually to an individual who has acted in selfless advocacy of marginalized youth through the creation, teaching, funding or other form of promotion of young adult literature. The award is open to anyone: authors, publishers, educators and other individuals standing up for groups of young people who are victimized by hate speech or actions.

The award for 2019 will go to Mr. Konigsberg, himself, with future winners to be selected by a subset of the ALAN Awards Committee from nominations submitted by ALAN members. Annual winners will receive \$300 and be recognized at the ALAN Breakfast. After Mr. Konigsberg delivered an inspiring talk about standing up against hate speech and actions against LGBTQ youth at the 2018 ALAN national convention, an anonymous donor offered to fund the establishment of this award. ALAN remains committed to wielding the power of young adult literature with thought and intention to make the world a better place.

If you'd like to view the speech from award-winner Bill Konigsberg, that was delivered at the ALAN Workshop in 2018 (and consequently inspired in part this award), you can read [the text here](#) or view a video of [the speech here](#).

If you are interested in donating to this or other ALAN awards [HERE](#)

New Information on ALAN Social Media

ALAN is proud to be expanding its social media purpose! In addition to posting ALAN Workshop information, our accounts will now include a focus on educational conversations including sharing young adult literature professional development text and favorite reads on the 7th, 15th, 23rd, and last day of each month. Watch for these posts, in addition to any posts focused on the workshop, on the official ALAN Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/alanorganization>) and Twitter account (@ALANorg). Furthermore, watch for an upcoming announcement about a new official ALAN Twitter chat (#ALANChat)!

If you have a question/concern/discussion topic you would like posed on the ALAN social media OR if you YAL-focused PD book/text coming out in 2019 (or recently published), please fill out our Google form: <https://goo.gl/forms/RnD9McpNCWEcolFg1>.

Call for Manuscripts: The ALAN Review

Call #2: Adolescents On the Move: Immigration, Refugeeism, Asylum-Seeking, and Border Control in YA Literature
Manuscripts due 7/1/2019

Immigration has been a focus in the news and public opinion of late, with worldwide politicization around immigration, refugee rights, asylum, and border control. The 2016 election and significant actions on immigration taken by the current administration have further raised the issue in political and public debates. Several recently published young adult novels focus on the immigrant and refugee experience, shedding light on the violent historical and modern events that have forced people to flee their homelands, and the varied lived experiences of documentation, deportation, family separation, and discrimination. For this call, we are interested in hearing from you about the immigration and refugee teen literatures you are reading, teaching, and using in your research. We invite correspondence about ideas for articles, and submission of completed manuscripts. Here's a partial list of topics, meant only to suggest the range of our interests for this issue:

- How can young adult literature help us navigate conversations in our classrooms and communities about freedom of movement as a human right, and who is and isn't allowed to seek refuge or a new home in the United States?
- How can young adult literature help us examine and better understand the lived experiences of youth and their families directly implicated in legal mechanisms and global processes of border control?
- What experiences of immigration, refugeeism, and asylum-seeking--and discursive constructions of refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers--are presented in young adult literature? Whose stories are being told, and by whom? Whose stories are missing?
- How can young adult literature help us examine and better understand the intersectional identities (e.g., race, class, [dis]ability, gender, religion, age, geography, sexual orientation) of immigrant and refugee teens, including adolescent identities?
- Many teens want to better understand the hardships that immigrants and refugees face, and what leads to someone needing to leave their homeland. What books about immigration and the refugee experience are the teens in your lives reading, and what do teens have to say about these books? What can youth learn about the immigration and refugee experience--and themselves--through literature that explores adolescents on the move?
- In her 2018 YA novel *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes*, journalist and refugee Atia Abawitells the story of a Syrian teenage boy, Tareq, who loses many of his family members in a bomb strike and must flee Syria. At the end of the book, Tareq reflects on all he has lost: "...when your soul feels too much, that trauma makes a home in your heart. But it's not a weakness or even an illness. To feel so much means you can find empathy. When you can sense the pain of others, that is a power to hold onto. That is a power that can change the world you live in" (p. 221). When we read stories about youth like Tareq--or see US immigration agents fire tear gas at men, women, and children fleeing violence in Central America on our TV screens--how do we respond? What is our response-ability when we are called to bear witness to human trauma and tragedy? What is our responsibility in the current humanitarian crises taking place at our borders?
- YA books about immigration tell the stories of those who are seeking a better life, yet leave whole existences behind. These books also "look at life after the movement happens, exploring what it means to live with a foot in multiple cultures while trying to establish a sense of self" (Jensen, 2018). As example, in Sara Farizan's new YA novel *Here to Stay*, Bijan Majidi, a teenage male of Jordanian and Persian descent, is suddenly the popular kid in school when he makes the winning basket in a varsity basketball game. But when someone sends the entire school an anonymous email, captioned "Our New Mascot," with an image of Bijan Photoshopped to portray him as a terrorist, he realizes he will have to take a courageous public stance. How can young adult literature help us examine and understand all of the movements--the multiple steps and phases--adolescents

- experience in their immigration, refugee, and asylum-seeking journeys?
- How can YA literature help us better understand the role US economic, transnational, and foreign policies have played in im/migration and refugee movements?
- Other ideas welcome!

Call #3: Exploring Adolescent Neurodiversity and Mental Health in YA Literature

Manuscripts due 11/1/2019

Approximately one third of adolescents nationwide show symptoms of depression, and one of five adolescents has a diagnosable mental health disorder. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in 15- to 24-year-olds, and the majority of adolescents who attempt suicide have a significant mental health disorder, usually depression. Yet teen depression, anxiety, and other mental health illnesses may go unrecognized, misunderstood, or ignored by teachers and other adults, and an ongoing stigma regarding mental health illnesses inhibits some adolescents and their families from seeking help. As YA author A.S. King shared at the 2018 ALAN Breakfast, her teenage daughter's depression was often written off by teachers and other adults as "drama and a need for attention." Fortunately, authors of young adult literature have begun to explore issues associated with mental health in the genre, confronting the stigma of mental illness head-on while presenting narratives of inclusion, validation, hope, agency, and empowerment for adolescent readers. For this call, we are interested in hearing from you about the YA literature depicting adolescent mental health and neurodiversity you are reading, teaching, and using in your research. We invite correspondence about ideas for articles, and submission of completed manuscripts. Here's a partial list of topics, meant only to suggest the range of our interests for this issue:

- How can young adult literature help us navigate conversations in our classrooms and communities about what it means to see and experience the world in different ways? How can young adult literature help us think about the idea that neurological differences (e.g., ADHD, depression, anxiety, autism) should be recognized and respected as any other human variation? What does it mean to be a "normal" human being? What does it mean to be abnormal, disordered, or sick?
- Neuroscience increasingly identifies the complexity of human brains, and is beginning to shift cultural perceptions of mental health. Some psychologists explore and celebrate mental differences under the rubric of *neurodiversity*. The term encompasses those with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism, schizophrenia, depression, dyslexia, and other disorders affecting the mind and brain. The proponents of neurodiversity argue that there are positive aspects to having brains that function differently. But others, including many parents of affected youth, focus on the difficulties and suffering brought on by these conditions. What experiences of adolescent mental health and neurodiversity--and discursive constructions of neurodiverse youth--are presented in young adult literature?
- Whose stories are being told, and by whom? Whose stories are missing?
- Do YA books stigmatize, romanticize, and/or normalize adolescent mental health and neurodiversity? What are the dangers of these representations?
- How can young adult literature help us examine and better understand the intersectional identities (e.g., race, class, [dis]ability, gender, religion, age, geography, sexual orientation) of neurodiverse adolescents?
- How do TV and movie adaptations of YA novels depicting adolescent mental health and neurodiversity (e.g., the Netflix series "Thirteen Reasons Why") affect readers' understandings of adolescent mental health? What intertextual connections about adolescent mental health can be drawn from multiple representations of the same story?
- Popular YA author John Green admits to writing his own mental illness into his latest novel, *Turtles All the Way Down*, explaining that "having OCD is an ongoing part of my life." Similarly, in Jessica Burkhart's edited collection *Life Inside My*

Mind: 31 Authors Share Their Personal Struggles, YA author Sara Zarr describes her ongoing struggles with depression (“Sometime between getting out of bed and standing in front of the coffeepot, I feel the cloud...Maybe more like quicksand than a cloud....I feel fear and worthlessness, or fear that I’m worthless” [p. 260]). In the same collection, YA author Francisco X. Stork describes his own suicide attempt and experiences with bipolar disorder (“When I talk about bipolar disorder, I use words like ‘loneliness’ and ‘uncontrollable longing’ rather than words like ‘depression’ and ‘mania’ because the former are more descriptive of what I actually feel, even though depression is a bundle of feelings and thoughts more complicated than loneliness, and mania is more than irrepressible longing” [p. 284]). We wonder: When YA authors disclose their own struggles with mental health, how does this impact teen readers?

Where's MY ALAN Review?

Don't miss a single issue of The ALAN Review or any ALAN communications. Keep us updated with your most current (and preferred) email and mailing addresses. Want to know your expiration date? Look at your mailing label. Your expiration date is printed there.

If you attended the 2018 ALAN Workshop, your membership is included in the registration and has been extended a year. We use the mailing address from your registration for The ALAN Review. Please contact Suzanne Metcalfe at alanya.membership@gmail.com with any changes or questions.

Time to Renew?



Would you ever spend \$5 for \$3 worth of merchandise or services? That doesn't seem like a sound investment – and ALAN doesn't think so either. For that reason, ALAN will no longer accept credit card payments with **mail in** memberships.

Credit card processing companies charge a monthly fee for the privilege of enabling credit card payments whether the service is used or not. In addition, each transaction triggers an additional fee. In the last 6 months, only a few credit card payments were processed. The fees take a big chunk out of the funds collected that make offering mail in credit card payment not very cost effective, especially since credit card payments are accepted online. So, from this point on, credit card payments that are mailed in will no longer be processed.

Credit cards can still be used, as always, for online membership. You can find that link at <http://www.alan-ya.org/join/>

-Daria Plumb- ALAN Treasurer
P.O. Box 14
Bellaire, MI 49615

Join ALAN Today

Get three issues of *The ALAN Review* and bimonthly emailed newsletters that provide resources, insights, and information about young adult literature in the classroom and beyond. [Click here](#) to join.

Membership Rates

Individual (\$30/year*)

Institutional (\$50/year*)

Student (\$10.00/year*)

Supporting ALAN

[Donate Here](#)

See what's happening on our social sites:



Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of
NCTE (ALAN) | heleneh@uga.edu

[Visit our website](#)