



Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the NCTE

## ALAN Online News

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### #ALANCHAT

**This in...Just in time! Thursday, May 23, 2019 at 7pm ET**, Georgia Parker will be hosting a **twitter chat with Dhonielle Clayton**. Dhonielle is a librarian, the COO of We Need Diverse Books, co-founder of Cake-Literacy, and author of *The Everlasting Rose*, *the Belles*, *Black Enough: Stories of Being Young and Black in America*, and several others. Tune in on twitter with the #ALANCHAT to pose questions for Dhonielle. Be sure to follow @ALANorg and learn more about future chats.

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### Join the Process: The Walden Award Committee

Applications due June 1, 2019

The Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award, presented annually by ALAN, is an award in the United States for a book that exemplifies literary excellence, widespread appeal, and a positive approach to life in young adult literature. Named for Amelia Elizabeth Walden, who was a pioneer in the field of Young Adult literature, it is presented annually to the author of a title selected by ALAN's Amelia Elizabeth Award Committee.

As per Walden's request, honor and winning titles must be works of fiction, ideally novels (stand-alone or part of a series), published in the United States within one year prior to the call for titles (although it may have been published outside the US at an earlier date). Winners and honor winners must possess a positive approach to life, widespread teen appeal, and literary merit.

The selection committee is composed of ten ALAN members (3 teachers, 3 university professors, 3 librarians, and one chair) and is appointed by the previous year's chair and current ALAN president. One title will be selected as the winner with up to four additional books honored.

Applications for the 2020 award committee are due on June 1, 2019. Visit the [ALAN Website](#) for more information and for the [application form](#).

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### 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?

## Mini Book Reviews

Please share your one paragraph book reviews of books published in the past two years (and have not been featured in [ALAN Picks](#)). We know you're reading the books-or passing them on to your students, so we'd love to pass your recommendations onward to other ALAN members. A simple paragraph from you or your students to grab a new reader's attention supports the purchase of these wonderful books. Please email to [Helene Halstead](#).

## 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](mailto: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  
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### 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.

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Individual (\$30/year\*)  
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