

Casey H. Rawson. Checking the Lists: Protagonist and Author Diversity in Award-Winning and Bestselling Young Adult Fiction. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. November, 2010. 70 pages. Advisor: Sandra Hughes Hassell

Librarians often rely upon preassembled title lists, such as YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) list or the *Publishers Weekly* bestsellers list, to make collection development decisions. This study was developed to examine three such lists for the prevalence of diverse protagonists and authors with the goal of determining which list most closely aligns with actual demographic data for U.S. teens. Award-winning, Teens' Top Ten, and bestselling titles were included in the study. Overall, the award-winning title list included the highest percentage of minority authors and the highest percentage of protagonists belonging to most marginalized demographic groups, while the bestselling title list included the lowest percentages in these categories. However, all three lists underrepresented protagonists and authors from certain demographic categories. Based on these results, it is recommended that librarians supplement list-based collection development with purposive collection of titles featuring minority protagonists and/or written by minority authors.

Headings:

Multiculturalism

Publishers and publishing -- Young adults' literature

Children's literature -- Authors and illustrators

Young adults' literature -- Book lists

Young adults' literature -- Selection

CHECKING THE LISTS: PROTAGONIST AND AUTHOR DIVERSITY IN AWARD-
WINNING AND BESTSELLING YOUNG ADULT FICTION

by
Casey H. Rawson

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

November 2010

Approved by

Sandra Hughes Hassell

Introduction

According to demographers, 2010 will mark a turning point for the United States: this year, for the first time in American history, more minority babies will be born than white babies (Roberts, 2010). By the middle of this century, minorities are expected to comprise a majority of the U.S. population; among the under-18 population, that landmark is expected to be reached in the next decade. Librarians who serve young adults are already seeing increasingly diverse service populations, and this diversity extends beyond race and ethnicity to include adolescents representing a wide range of religions, family backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses and sexual orientations. Making collection development decisions that will meet the needs of such varied populations is a challenge that has recently been compounded by the current economic climate, which has seen library budgets and staff positions slashed across the nation.

Numerous studies (discussed below) have emphasized the importance of giving young adults access to titles in which they can see a reflection of themselves – a character or author who shares their race, religion, living conditions, or sexual orientation. Yet in libraries with limited budgets and limited staff – such as school libraries, many of which employ only one librarian – determining which titles will accurately represent that library's diverse service population might be considered too time-consuming. While several popular review sources such as *Multicultural Review* and *VOYA* provide author and character information for many young adult titles, perusing each issue of these sources is a lengthy process. Thus, many libraries rely heavily on pre-assembled title

lists, such as YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) list or the Publishers Weekly Children's Bestsellers list, to determine their acquisitions. In some cases, such lists are actually written into libraries' collection development policies as standing orders or as part of purchase approval plans. But does either of these lists accurately reflect the diversity of the nation's young adult population?

This study will examine award winning young adult fiction, teen-selected "Top Ten" titles, and bestselling young adult fiction to determine the representation of diverse protagonists and authors. Comparing such categories of titles in terms of diversity will help librarians serving these populations to more efficiently select fiction that will be representative of their patron populations.

Literature Review

Several studies report that, despite fears to the contrary, the majority of U.S. adolescents still read outside of school (Creel, 2007; Marra, 2005; Swenor, 2006). However, national reading statistics, especially for minority students, paint a grim picture of literacy: while 41% of white students scored at or above proficiency on 8th-grade reading tests (a low number in and of itself), only 14% of black students and 17% of Hispanic students reached proficiency (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Similar results are obtained when family income is examined: only 16% of those eligible for the National School Lunch Program (those whose family incomes are equal to or less than 185% of the poverty level) scored at or above proficiency, compared to 42% of students who are ineligible for the lunch assistance program.

Given the poor literacy rates and growing numbers of minority students, strategies for improving variables relating to reading and literacy among these groups abound in educational and library science literature. One strategy which has received significant attention involves connecting young adults with literature in which they can find themselves accurately reflected (Bell & Clark, 1998; Feger, 2006; Ganji, 2008; Pirofski, 2001). And while much has been written about literature for various races and ethnicities, it is important to note that diversity has several dimensions – including gender, nationality, religion, family status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and disability (Winston, 2008; Agosto, 2001; Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, & Gilmore-Clough, 2003). As stated by Agosto et al. (2003), “Constricting the discussion of multiculturalism to groups identifiable by racial identity alone excludes other marginalized groups from the debate and perpetuates their marginalization” (p. 261). Numerous studies have looked at each of these variables:

- *Gender*: A number of studies have examined issues related to gender in children’s literature; less has been done in this arena with young adult literature. Among children’s literature studies, the focus has predominantly been on analyzing not only the numbers of male vs. female characters, but also the portrayals of those characters in comparison to stereotypical gender-specific behaviors or characteristics (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus & Young, 2006; Poarch & Monk-Turner, 2001; Taylor, 2003). While in general these studies have found that female characters are both underrepresented and stereotyped within the studied samples, at least one study (Dellmann-Jenkins, Florjancic, & Swadener, 1993)

found that portrayals of males and females in nontraditional gender roles are on the rise.

- *Race and Nationality:* Many studies have looked at the role of race in children's and young adult literature and/or the prevalence of minority characters in titles for this age group. One of the earliest such studies was led by Nancy Larrick (1965); this study looked at 5,000 children's books published in the early 1960's and found that only 6.7% included at least one African American character. Since Larrick's work, additional research has been done into children's and young adult literature for or about African Americans (Bishop, 1982; Taxel, 1986), Hispanics (Barry, 1998; Nilsson, 1995), Asians (Louie, 1993; Morgan, 1998), and Native Americans (Caldwell-Wood & Mitten, 1992; Tjoumas, 1993), among other minority groups. These and other studies have consistently found that minority-race characters are underrepresented in fiction for children and young adults, and that existing portrayals of minority characters are often riddled with stereotypes or otherwise negative images. Studies dealing with nationality of authors or characters are less common. One study that did deal with the issue of nationality in fiction novels was Griswold (1981), which found that titles by American authors included a higher number of minority-race characters than titles by foreign authors; however, minority characters in books by U.S. authors were more likely to be one-dimensional and stereotypical in their portrayal than minority characters in books by foreign authors.
- *Religion:* "Sex, politics, and religion are the three traditionally taboo subjects in polite American society," wrote Patty Campbell, "and in young-adult literature

the greatest of these taboos is religion” (1994, p. 619). While little if any quantitative research has been done in this area, several researchers have completed limited content analysis studies looking at young adult titles which do have religious themes and characters (Campbell, 1994; Caywood, 1997; Mendt, 1996; Shaw, 1995). These authors conclude that given the prevalence of religion among adolescents and the U.S. population as a whole, there is a significant scarcity of titles dealing with religious themes being written for this age group. However, some authors are optimistic about future offerings in this area; Riess (2008) states, “The appetite for new Christian fiction seems to have no end, and publishers are solidifying their positions in the full range of genres the category now embraces... [including the] burgeoning YA market” (p. S2).

- *Family Status:* Young adult novels deal with themes of adolescence, one of which is increasing independence and separation from one’s parents or guardians. Thus, traditionally parents have not played large roles in young adult fiction. However, family structure is still an important element of diversity; the impact that a teen’s family setting has on the teen’s outside life cannot be ignored. Most studies in this area have focused on portrayal of families in television media; for example, Skill and Robinson (1994) studied family demographics among prime-time households and found that the prevalence of traditional, dual-parent family units had decreased over the time period studied (1950 – 1994). However, some authors have written about the role of family structure in the young adult novel, focusing on how teen fiction can be used to teach about the diversity of family types and other family issues (Burner, 1989; Cosby, 1997).

- *Sexual Orientation:* Several content analysis studies have been published related to the portrayal of LGBT characters in fiction for young adults (Cart & Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, 1993; Jenkins, 1998; St. Clair, 1995). These studies have found that portrayal of LGBT characters varies from novels which present homosexuality as a problem to be overcome to novels which are sympathetic to the character or view homosexuality as simply one relatively unremarkable facet to the character's personality and lifestyle. In general, most research on this topic agrees that while some instances of problematic portrayals of LGBT characters persist, in general the trend is toward a more complex, more sympathetic representation of these characters.
- *Socioeconomic Status:* The 2009 American Community Survey found that 20% of children under the age of 18 are living below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a). Dutro (2009) found that texts offered to children in poverty often present poverty as a temporary problem, a construct which is far removed from the systemic poverty actually experienced by these children. On the other end of the class spectrum, YA books about the fabulously wealthy (i.e. the Gossip Girls, A-List, and Privileged series) are enjoying robust sales despite what many see as negative or even damaging portrayals of teenage sex, drugs, and the "mean-girl" lifestyle. In a 2006 article, Naomi Wolf harshly criticized these books for their depictions of class issues: "In the world of the "A-List" or "Clique" girl, inverting Austen (and Alcott), the rich are right and good simply by virtue of their wealth....Success and failure are entirely signaled by material possessions."

- *Disability*: Numerous studies have attempted to quantify and/or evaluate fiction for children and teens that includes characters with physical or mental disabilities (Heim, 1994; Matthew & Clow, 2009; Smith-D'Arezzo, 2003). Andrews (1998) discusses the importance of such literature, especially in educational settings where disabled students are integrated into mainstream classrooms. As she states, "reading good literature can do much more than teach literary skills. Promotion of positive attitudes toward inclusion and students with disabilities must take place" (p. 422).

Literature that includes diverse characters gives adolescents "an opportunity to see their own faces reflected in the pages of good books" (Cart, 2009, p. 279). Yet it is not only visions of their own reflections which are of value for young adults; encountering characters unlike themselves can be of equal value. As Hazel Rochman states in her book *Against Borders: Promoting Books for a Multicultural World*, "Books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community; not with role models and literal recipes, not with noble messages about the human family, but with enthralling stories that make us imagine the lives of others" (1993, p.19). And providing a diverse collection of young adult literature is not merely about increasing test scores or leisure reading; some researchers maintain that such literature is vital for overall success in life. Bishop (1992) argues that adolescents who never see themselves reflected in literature may develop a decreased sense of self-worth and may come to believe that they have little value within either the school or social community.

Research suggests that collecting titles written by authors from varying backgrounds is just as important as collecting titles with diverse characters. As

Mikkelson (1998) states, “one central concern of scholars, literary historians, and critics these days is the matter of authenticity, especially the authenticity of cross-cultural and multicultural stories, and the ensuing conflict or question, Who will produce the literature of parallel cultures?” (p. 33). She goes on to explain that problems arise when “outsiders” try to write about characters of an ethnicity other than their own; “[outsider] writers will attend to surface features (observable details, facts, and idioms) but miss the bigger picture – the values, beliefs, and world view of the insider that can so easily be subsumed, usurped, or crowded out entirely by an outsider's pervasive thinking” (p. 38). The scarcity of minority authors, particularly on bestseller lists, has also been documented; Harris (1991) found that only eleven titles on the children’s bestseller list in 1990 featured non-white characters, and only two of those titles were written by a non-white author.

So if diverse texts are championed by research, why aren’t they more visible in libraries that serve young adults? Studies have identified several barriers to the use and collection of such titles. One barrier is a lack of education and training among educators and librarians regarding diverse texts (Asimeng-Boahene & Klein, 2004). Another, perhaps more critical, obstacle is the scarcity of titles written by minority authors or featuring minority characters (“minority” in this case referring not only to race, but also to the other dimensions of diversity discussed above). Several studies have documented the dearth of diverse literature for young adults; these studies have consistently found lower percentages of minority authors and protagonists represented in young adult and children’s literature than would be expected based upon the nation’s actual demographics (Agosto et al., 2003; Benedikt, 1999; Fitzgibbons & Tilley, 1999; Hughes-Hassell,

Barkley, & Koehler, 2009). Hill (1998) and Harris (1991) investigated the many factors that contribute to such a lack of books and found that minority authors face barriers at every stage of the book-writing process, from initial acceptance by a publisher to marketing of the finished product. Harris (1991) states the problem as follows:

[P]ublishers want conventional material that will not be controversial and is easy to distribute and to sell. Culturally conscious books often do not fill these requirements.... While large presses are aware of the demand for representation of people of color, on average they are not making efforts to recruit new authors. Librarians are trying to find a variety of material but still prefer the products of large publishers. Bookstores in general are not carrying these books. These tendencies limit the availability of culturally conscious material to the public (pp. 41, 43).

Despite these barriers, building a diverse library collection for young adult patrons is possible. Given time constraints experienced by all professionals, including librarians, identifying categories of items which fulfill a demonstrated need is an important goal of professional research. The study described below will compare three categories of young adult literature in terms of author and character diversity in order to provide librarians with guidelines which will help them identify booklists that will more accurately reflect the diversity of their young adult populations.

Methodology

Included Titles

Three categories of young adult fiction were analyzed to determine their relative levels of diversity in terms of both authors and protagonists. The three categories of literature included in the study are as follows:

1. *Award-Winning Young Adult Fiction:* This category included fiction novels which won either the Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature

or the YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) award between 2000 and 2009. The Michael L. Printz Award is sponsored by *Booklist* and is given each year to a single title that “exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature” (American Library Association (ALA), 2010c). Up to four additional titles may be chosen each year as Printz Honor books. The titles are chosen by a committee that includes a chairperson appointed by YALSA’s Vice President, four appointed members, four elected members, and a consultant from *Booklist* (ALA, 2010d). All members serve two-year terms and meet in person to choose the Printz winner and honor titles at ALA’s midwinter meeting. All committee meetings are confidential. While choosing the year’s “best” book is always a subjective process, there are some stated criteria written into the Printz Award policy document on which titles are judged: story, voice, style, setting, accuracy, characters, theme, illustration, and design (ALA, 2010d).

YALSA’s “Top Ten BBYA” award is also decided annually by a committee of ALA members. The BBYA committee is comprised of fifteen appointed members, each of whom serves a renewable one-year term. As with the Printz Award, final title selections are made during a face-to-face committee session during ALA’s midwinter meeting. However, BBYA selection meetings are open to other ALA members and guests. Nominations for the BBYA list may come from within the committee or from outside via completion of a nomination form available on the YALSA website. Criteria for selection include:

- a. “proven or potential appeal” to young adults,

- b. literary quality,
- c. effectiveness of presentation,
- d. believability of characterization and dialog,
- e. readability (ALA, 2010a).

The BBYA policy document also includes a diversity statement:

Librarianship focuses on individuals, in all their diversity, and that focus is a fundamental value of the Young Adult Library Services Association and its members. Diversity is, thus, honored in the Association and in the collections and services that libraries provide to young adults...Although the list attempts to present a variety of reading tastes and levels, no effort will be made to balance the list according to subject or area of interest (ALA, 2010a).

Books which have won the Printz Award, the Printz Honor, or the BBYA Top Ten Award between 2000 and 2009 were included in this study. Since the focus of this study was on protagonist characteristics, the nonfiction, short story, or poetry titles which have won these awards were excluded from analysis. Fiction titles appearing on both the Printz and BBYA Top Ten lists were analyzed, but only counted once.

2. *Teen-Selected Top Ten Fiction Titles*: Each year, fifteen teen book groups at libraries across the country nominate a list of current young adult titles to be included in YALSA's "Teens' Top Ten" contest. These fifteen book groups are part of the YA Galley Project run by YALSA. New groups are chosen through an application-based system by the members of the YA Galley Committee during ALA's annual meeting; each group serves for two years but may serve consecutive terms (ALA, 2010e). These book groups receive advance galley copies of young adult titles from a variety of publishers and in return must

evaluate the titles and provide feedback to the publishers in a timely manner (ALA, 2010g). In March, the groups nominate titles for consideration on the Top Ten List. The criteria for making their nominations was developed by a pilot group of teens in 2001 and includes the following considerations:

- a. *Appeal and Involvement*: The title should have “lasting and universal appeal” and the book’s packaging should be attractive and appropriate for the content within,
- b. *Literary Quality*: The title should be “unique – not a clone of every other teen book” and a “book of substance,”
- c. *Characters*: Characters should be “realistic and compelling,”
- d. *Content and Style*: A strong title will be “realistic, not sugar-coated” and “never condescending to the reader,”
- e. *Plot*: The title should have “a strong, memorable plot that plays out in your head like a movie,” and
- f. *Genres*: The ideal Top Ten list will represent a wide variety of genres (ALA, 2010b).

In August and September, teens are allowed to vote for their three favorite titles through the YALSA website. While YALSA states that the voting is open to “any teen (ages twelve to eighteen),” in practice anyone with an internet connection may vote since the ballot is online and there is no system in place to verify a voter’s age (ALA, 2010f). The top ten vote-getters are announced each year during Teen Read Week. Fiction titles appearing on this list between 2003 (the first year this list was published) and 2009 will be included in the study. This

group represents a middle ground between the award-winning books discussed above (which are determined by adults and are generally considered to emphasize literary quality over popularity) and the bestselling books discussed below. Teens choose the titles that appear on this list, but the teens who participate in the process are already involved in the library and presumably already enjoy reading, which introduces a bias into this list.

3. *Bestselling Young Adult Fiction*: The ten top-selling young adult fiction titles for each year between 2000 and 2009 as determined by Publishers Weekly made up the third group of titles in this study. The Publishers Weekly bestsellers list includes both children's and YA titles; children's titles were discarded from the list and only items published for ages 12 and up (as determined by book review sources) were included in the study. Only "frontlist" books published in each calendar year were included to eliminate duplications; backlist titles published in earlier years were not considered even if they had more total sales in a given calendar year than frontlist titles.

Books appearing in more than one of the above categories were counted once in each applicable category. The data collected in this study were compared across subgroups and with the actual demographics of the United States teen population, as determined by U.S. census data and other demographic resources such as the National Center for Education Statistics.

Fiction titles were chosen as the exclusive focus for this study mainly because the vast majority of bestselling young adult titles are fiction. Including non-fiction or other genres in the other categories would have introduced coding differences; for example,

many nonfiction works cannot be said to have a protagonist, so a different variable applying only to nonfiction works would have to be determined to reflect the diversity of the subjects in such titles. Focusing only on fiction works allowed all titles to be compared across similar variables. For similar reasons, books with non-human protagonists were excluded from this study.

Coding Categories

As discussed above, diversity has more than one dimension. This study examined dimensions of gender, race, nationality, religion, family status, socioeconomic status (SES), sexuality, and disability (presence or absence) for protagonists of each title, and gender, race, and nationality for authors of each title. For the purposes of this study, the protagonist was defined as the main character or characters as discussed in the review sources used for this study. Most books had only one protagonist, but some titles had multiple main characters and in those cases all protagonists were analyzed. “Author” was defined as only the primary writer or writers of the text (not illustrators or editors). For each dimension of diversity, the following categories were used:

- Gender: Male and Female were the only categories included in this study; no transgendered or third-gendered protagonists or authors were found.
- Race/ethnicity: U.S. Census categories for race were used in this study: White, Black / African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian. An additional category of “Other” was included for protagonists and authors who do not belong to any of these groups.
- Nationality: Birth country was recorded for both protagonists and authors.

- Religion: Three major religions were found among protagonists in this study: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. Two additional categories were included: “Not Mentioned,” for titles which do not specify a religious background for their protagonists, and “Other” for titles in which the protagonist practices a religion other than Christianity, Judaism, or Islam.
- Family structure: Categories for family structure were adapted from Nisse (2008). Protagonists were coded as having Dual Parents if they lived in a home with two biological parents or one biological parent and a stepparent. Protagonists were coded as having a Single Parent if they lived with only their biological mother or father. Two categories were used for protagonists being raised by non-parents: Guardianship by a Relative or Guardianship by a Non-relative. If the protagonist lived on their own, they were placed into the “Orphan / No Guardian” category.
- Socioeconomic status: Protagonists were coded as belonging to either the Low, Middle, or High socioeconomic class. “Low” was defined for this study as lacking some basic needs such as food or shelter, “Middle” was defined as having sufficient resources to meet all basic needs, and “High” was defined as having an abundance of resources.
- Sexuality: Protagonists in this study fell into four sexual identity categories: Straight, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning. In cases where the protagonist had no demonstrated romantic interest within the novel, the character was coded as being straight.
- Disability: Characters were coded as either having a disability (“Yes”) or not (“No”) based on the criteria defined by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (2008): “An individual is considered to have a "disability" if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”

Two additional pieces of information – genre and setting – were recorded for each title. Genre determinations were made with the assistance of the NoveList database and tag clouds from LibraryThing. Even with the assistance of these resources, many titles did not clearly fit into a single genre, and in such cases the ultimate decision was the author’s. Four setting categories – Rural, Suburban, Urban, and Other – were used to describe the predominant location of each title. The “Other” category was used when a variety of settings appeared in the same book with no single setting achieving clear prominence, as in several of the action and adventure or fantasy books.

Literature databases were used as the primary data source for this study, with the actual titles being used when necessary to confirm ambiguous data or to determine missing data. The primary review sources consulted were NoveList and the Children’s Comprehensive Literature Database (CCLD), both of which contain basic bibliographic information and reviews for a range of titles. Reviews incorporated into each database record come from *Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)*, *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*, and a variety of other sources. Tag clouds on LibraryThing (<http://www.librarything.com>) were also consulted for some titles and were of particular help when determining genre. Characters and authors were coded as belonging to one of the above categories where explicitly stated in the review sources or where clearly inferable from the original text.

Author demographic data were collected from biographical information in *Something About the Author* and on NoveList, publishers' websites, and authors' personal websites. While gender and nationality were typically stated explicitly in these sources, race was rarely mentioned, particularly for white authors. However, nearly all authors had written biographies and photos on their websites, and while these are imperfect sources for determining race they were the best sources available given the time frame for this study.

After gathering the data for all included baseline titles, the three categories of young adult fiction were compared to each other and to the U.S. demographic data. Results from this analysis are reported below.

Study Limitations

One limitation of this study is that only two awards (the Printz award and the BBYA award) are included in the "award-winning fiction" category. There are many "best-of" lists for young adult literature, and many other formal awards (such as the Alex award and the William C. Morris award, to name only two). The Printz and BBYA lists represent only two opinions regarding the qualities of top-quality writing for young adults, and both are determined by members of the same organization (YALSA, a division of the American Library Association). However, these two awards were chosen for specific reasons. The Printz award, first given in 2000, is considered to be the most prestigious award in young adult literature (similar to the Newbery Medal in children's literature). The BBYA list is widely publicized by ALA and a familiar choice for librarians in search of booklists.

This study suggests that librarians use only one type of booklist as their primary collection development tool. Of course, in reality, librarians consider several sources when making acquisition decisions. Librarians are unlikely to purchase *only* bestselling titles, or *only* BBYA titles. However, it is assumed here that librarians do tend to rely more heavily on certain types of book lists than others. This study identifies which type of book list is most diverse according to the dimensions discussed above in the hopes that librarians will base more of their future collection development decisions on that list.

Ideally, multiple coders would be used in order to ensure that the coding scheme was reliable and that categories are well-defined. However, having multiple coders was not an option for this study due to time limitations. This means that when subjective determinations were necessary, decisions were made solely by the author. Also due to time constraints, some titles are missing certain data. As stated above, review sources were the primary means of data collection, with the actual text being consulted only when necessary; even when the text was consulted, some characteristics of the protagonist remained ambiguous. In those cases, no further effort was made to acquire the missing data.

A final limitation of this study is the comparison of the diversity statistics within the fiction categories to the actual demographics of the U.S. young adult population as a whole. Such demographic data looks at the entire nation and represents average percentages of each population value. It is unlikely that a librarian's specific service population will exactly match the demographics of the nation as a whole. For example, a librarian serving young adults in downtown Harlem will likely have a very different service population than a librarian serving young adults in Appalachia. Despite this

limitation, the comparison with national data generalizes the study and makes it applicable to a wider range of libraries and librarians than if one specific local population was selected as the comparison.

Results

A total of 248 unique titles were included in this analysis. 114 award-winning novels, 74 Teens' Top Ten novels, and 92 bestselling novels were included. Some books appeared on more than one of these lists; for a list of these titles, see Appendix B.

Overall, over 90% of titles were successfully coded for all variables; of the remaining, no book had more than three uncoded variables.

Genre

Of the 248 titles included in the sample population, the most common genres represented were realistic fiction (28.6%), fantasy (27.0%), and historical fiction (12.5%). There were significant variations in these numbers across the three categories of titles. Among award-winning titles, realistic fiction was prominent (47.3% of the titles), and historical fiction also appeared at a higher rate (23.3%). Fantasy titles, while still the third most popular genre in the award-winning category, comprised only 9.8% of titles. In contrast, within the Teens' Top Ten and bestsellers categories, fantasy novels had the highest representation at 36.5% and 41.3%, respectively. In the Teens' Top Ten category, realistic fiction (25.7%) and science fiction and chick lit (8.1% each) were the next most popular genres. In the bestselling titles category, humor novels (15.2%) and science fiction and chick lit (8.7% each) were popular. Historical fiction was much less common

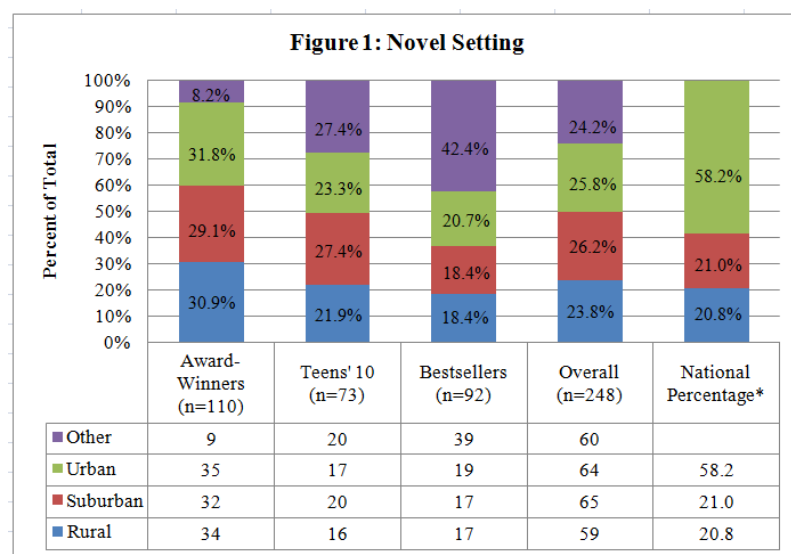
among Teens' Top Ten and bestselling titles (4.1% and 2.2%, respectively) than in the award-winning category. See Table 1 for complete results.

	Award-Winning Titles (n=112)	Teens' Top Ten Titles (n=74)	Bestselling Titles (n=92)	Overall (n=248)
Action and Adventure	3.6% (4)	1.4% (1)	7.6% (7)	4.8% (12)
Chick Lit	0.9% (1)	8.1% (6)	8.7% (8)	4.4% (11)
Fantasy	9.8% (11)	36.5% (27)	41.3% (38)	27.0% (67)
Folktale	0.0% (0)	1.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (1)
Ghost Story	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.1% (1)	0.8% (2)
Graphic Novel	3.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.6% (4)
Historical Fiction	23.3% (26)	4.1% (3)	2.2% (2)	12.5% (31)
Humor	1.8% (2)	2.7% (2)	15.2% (14)	6.9% (17)
Mystery	2.7% (3)	6.8% (5)	0.0% (0)	3.2% (8)
Realistic	47.3% (53)	25.7% (19)	7.6% (7)	28.6% (71)
Romance	1.8% (2)	5.4% (4)	4.3% (4)	2.4% (6)
Science Fiction	4.5% (5)	8.1% (6)	8.7% (8)	6.0% (15)
Sports	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (3)	1.2% (3)

Setting

Setting information was recorded for 110 award-winning titles, 73 Teens' Top Ten titles, and 92 bestselling titles. Overall, the breakdown between coding categories was fairly even, with 23.8% of novels taking place in rural settings, 26.2% in suburban settings, 25.8% in urban settings, and 24.2% in other or mixed settings. Again, there was variation in the data across title categories. In the award-winning group, urban settings (at 31.8%) were slightly more common than rural (30.9%) or suburban (29.1%) settings, with other or mixed settings appearing in only 8.2% of titles. In the Teens' Top Ten category, books with suburban and other or mixed settings, at 27.4% each, together comprised the majority of titles. In the bestselling category, the largest number of titles had other or mixed settings (42.4%). None of these categories closely align with actual national demographics; in reality, over half (58.2%) of United States residents live in

urban areas (defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as cities which have a population greater than 200,000); 21.0% live in suburban areas (defined as “urbanized areas” with a population between 50,000 and 199,999 and “urban clusters” with populations between 2,500 and 49,999); and 20.8% live in rural areas (defined as all regions outside of urbanized areas or urban clusters) (Federal Highway Administration, 2004). See Figure 1 for a complete breakdown of novel setting data.

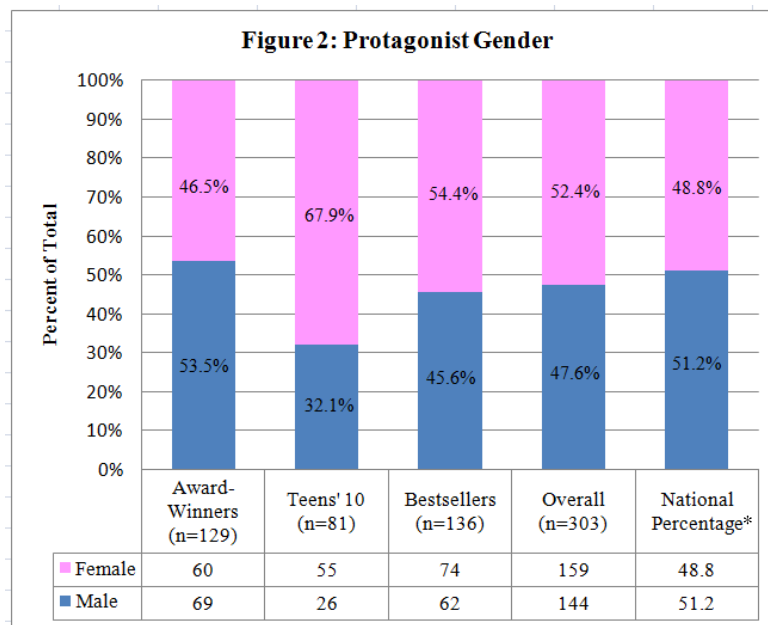


*Federal Highway Administration, 2004

Protagonist Gender

One hundred twenty-nine protagonists in award-winning titles, 81 protagonists in Teens' Top Ten titles, and 136 protagonists in bestselling titles were coded for gender. Overall, 52.4% of protagonists were female and 47.6% were male, for a female to male ratio of 1.10:1. The award-winning category was the only one in which male protagonists (53.5%) outnumbered female protagonists (46.5%), with a female to male ratio of 0.87:1. The largest disparity between female and male protagonists was in the Teens' Top Ten category, where female protagonists made up 67.9% of the total for a female to male ratio

of 2.12:1. In the bestsellers category, females outnumbered males with a 1.19:1 ratio. The award-winning category was closest to national statistics; in the United States, 48.8% of children under the age of 18 are female and 51.2% are male, a female to male ratio of 0.95:1 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a). Figure 2 shows a detailed breakdown of protagonist gender for each category.



*U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a

Protagonist Race

One hundred twenty-five protagonists in the award-winning category, 78 protagonists in the Teens' Top Ten category, and 136 protagonists in the bestsellers category were coded for race. Overall, 81.1% of protagonists were white, 5.4% were black, and 3.7% were Hispanic. This compares to national data of 56.7% white, 15.3% black, and 21.3% Hispanic among children and teens ages 19 and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009b). The award-winning titles category exhibited the most racial diversity; in this category, 65.6% of protagonists were white, 10.4% were black, and 4.8% were

Hispanic. The award-winning category had eight Asian protagonists (6.4%), three American Indian protagonists (2.4%), and 9 protagonists of another race (7.2%); these percentages are all higher than the national percentages for these races (4.1%, 1.3%, and 0.2%, respectively). Within the Teens' Top Ten category, 89.7% of protagonists were white, 2.6% were black, and 3.8% were Hispanic. In the bestsellers category, 92.6% of protagonists were white, 1.5% were black, and 3.7% were Hispanic. No Asian, American Indian, or multiracial protagonists were included in the bestsellers category. Table 2 includes complete data for protagonist race.

	Award-Winners (n=125)	Teens' Top Ten (n=78)	Bestsellers (n=136)	Overall (n=297)	National Percentages*
White	65.6% (82)	89.7% (70)	92.6% (126)	81.1% (241)	56.7%
Black	10.4% (13)	2.6% (2)	1.5% (2)	5.4% (16)	15.3%
Asian	6.4% (8)	1.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.0% (9)	4.1%
Hispanic	4.8% (6)	3.8% (3)	3.7% (5)	3.7% (11)	21.3%
Biracial / Multiracial	3.2% (4)	1.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (4)	3.2%
American Indian	2.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (3)	1.3%
Other	7.2% (9)	1.3% (1)	2.2% (3)	4.4% (13)	0.2%

*(U.S. Census Bureau, 2009b)

Protagonist Nationality

One hundred twenty-seven protagonists from award-winning books, 81 protagonists from Teens' Top Ten books, and 136 protagonists from bestsellers were coded for nationality. Overall, slightly less than half (49.5%) of all protagonists were born in the United States. The second-largest number of protagonists was coded as "Other" nationality; the majority of these protagonists were in fantasy or science fiction novels where modern-day countries did not exist. 13.0% of protagonists were from England. The bestsellers category had the lowest percentage of U.S.-born protagonists at 41.9%, and the highest number of protagonists falling into the "other" category (38.3%),

in keeping with the high number of fantasy titles within this category. In the award-winning titles category, 55.9% of protagonists were natives of the United States, and 64.2% of protagonists in the Teens' Top Ten category were United States natives. See Table 3 for a full breakdown of protagonist nationalities.

	Award-Winners (n=127)	Teens' 10 (n=81)	Bestsellers (n=136)	Overall (n=301)
U.S.	55.9% (71)	64.2% (52)	41.9% (57)	49.5% (149)
England	9.4% (12)	17.3% (14)	12.5% (17)	13.0% (39)
Ireland	1.6% (2)	0.0% (0)	4.4% (6)	2.7% (8)
Australia	4.7% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.7% (6)
Germany	0.8% (1)	2.5% (2)	2.9% (4)	1.7% (5)
Canada	2.4% (3)	1 (1.2%)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (3)
Netherlands	2.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.0% (3)
Other	22.8% (29)	14.8% (12)	38.3% (52)	29.2% (88)

Protagonist Religion

The overwhelming majority of protagonists (89.6%) across all categories were not identified as religious. Of the remaining 10.4%, 5.4% were identified as Christian, 1.3% were identified as Jewish, 0.3% were identified as Muslim, and 3.4% were identified as practicing some other religion. Among the three main categories of titles, award-winning novels had the highest prevalence of religion among protagonists, with 16.7% of protagonists identified as religious. In the Teens' Top Ten and bestsellers categories, approximately 5% of protagonists were identified as religious; see Table 4 (next page) for a complete breakdown of protagonist religion data. All of these categories show a much lower prevalence of religiosity than actual U.S. survey data for children and teens. The National Study of Youth and Religion (NYSR) found that over three-quarters of U.S. teens self-identify as Christian, and only 13% of teens lack a religious affiliation (National Study of Youth and Religion, 2001).

	Award-Winners (n=126)	Teens' 10 (n=81)	Bestsellers (n=136)	Overall (n=297)	National Percent-ages*
Christian	10.3% (13)	1.2% (1)	2.3% (3)	5.4% (16)	76.0%
Jewish	1.6% (2)	2.5% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (4)	1.0%
Muslim	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.3% (1)	< 1.0%
Other	4.0% (5)	1.3% (1)	2.9% (4)	3.4% (10)	9.0%
Not mentioned / None	83.3% (105)	95.1% (77)	94.9% (129)	89.6% (266)	13.0%

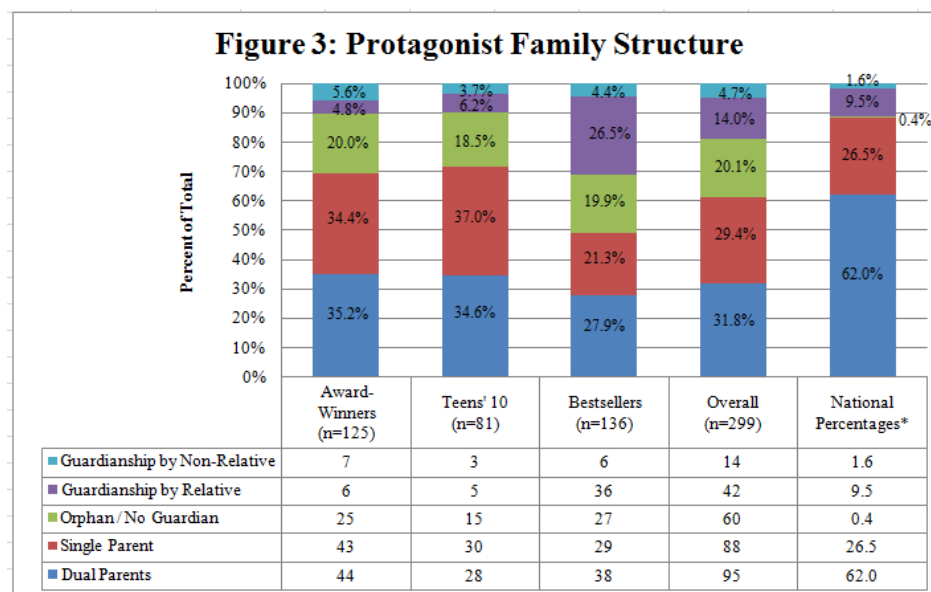
*National Study of Youth and Religion, 2009

Protagonist Family Structure

One hundred twenty-five protagonists in award-winning novels, 81 protagonists in Teens' Top Ten novels, and 136 protagonists in bestselling novels were coded for family structure. Results are shown in Figure 3, next page. Overall, 31.8% of protagonists were raised by dual parents, 29.4% by a single parent, and 18.7% by another guardian. 20.1% of protagonists were orphans or had no guardian. There were no large differences between the results from the award-winning and Teens' Top Ten categories, but bestselling books had a significantly larger proportion of protagonists who were raised by a related guardian (26.5%). Much of this variation can be accounted for by titles in the Harry Potter and Series of Unfortunate Events series, which combined make up 14 of the 92 titles on the bestsellers list; both of these series feature protagonists who are under the guardianship of a relative.

Actual family situations for U.S. children under the age of 18 indicate that 62.0% of children and teens live in dual-parent families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a). This number is well above the percentage of protagonists in dual-parent families for any of the categories included in this study. Roughly 20% of protagonists in this study were orphans or had no guardian; this is much higher than the actual national percentage of 0.4% (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2000a). Currently, 26.5% of U.S. children and teens are being raised by a single parent, and 9.5% are under the guardianship of a relative; these numbers are comparable to those seen in this study.

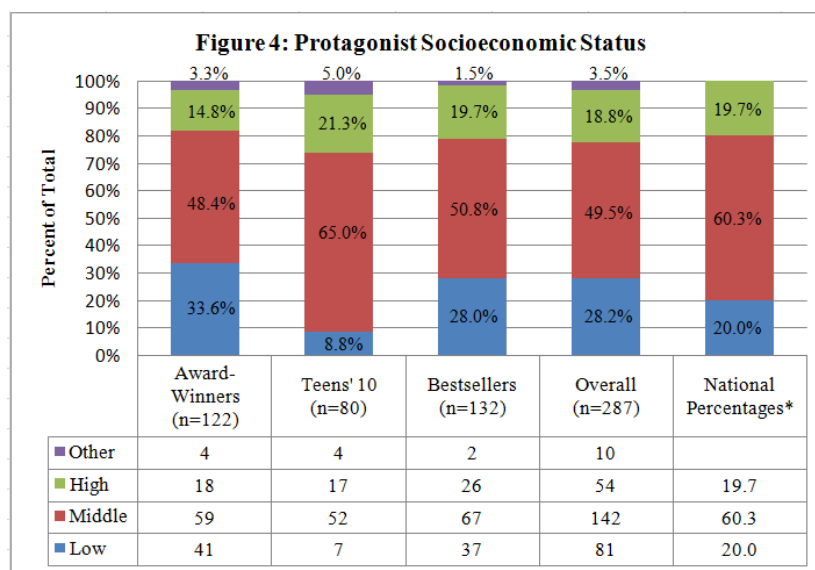


*U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a

Protagonist Socioeconomic Status

One hundred twenty-two protagonists from award-winning titles, 80 protagonists from Teens' Top Ten titles, and 132 protagonists from bestselling titles were coded for socioeconomic status; results are shown in Figure 4, next page. The largest percentage of characters for all three lists belonged to the middle class. This aligns with actual national data, which indicates that 60.3% of families are in the middle class (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). For award-winning and bestselling titles, higher percentages of protagonists were identified as belonging to the low socioeconomic class (33.6% and 28.0%, respectively) than the actual percentage of children and teens in poverty in the United States (20.0%). In contrast, protagonists in the Teens' Top Ten group exhibited a lower prevalence of

poverty (8.8%) and a higher prevalence of protagonists in the upper socioeconomic class (21.3%) than other categories.

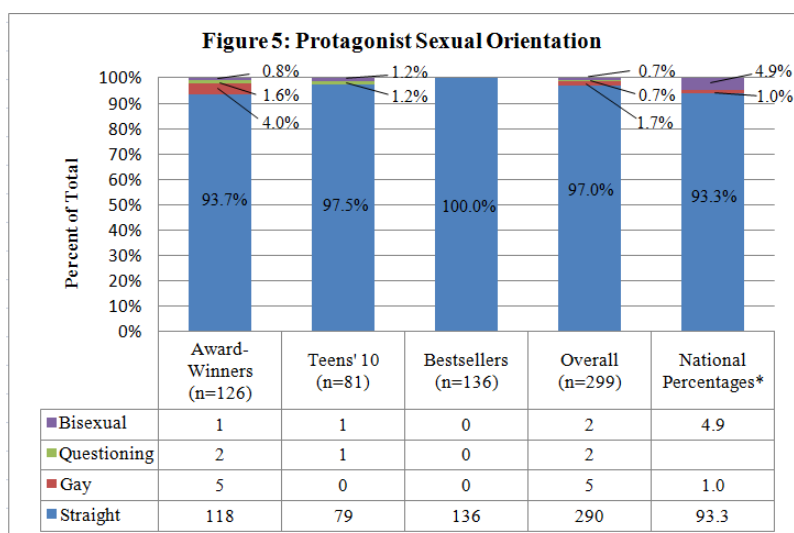


*U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a

Protagonist Sexual Orientation

More than 90% of protagonists across all three novel categories were coded as straight. Within the bestsellers category, there was not a single LGBTQ character among 136 coded protagonists. The award-winning category had the highest percentage of LGBTQ protagonists, with 4.0% identified as gay, 1.6% as questioning, and 0.8% as bisexual. Within the Teens Top Ten category, there was one bisexual protagonist (1.2%) and one questioning protagonist (1.2%); no protagonists were identified as gay in this group. There were no transgendered protagonists in any of the novels. While national estimates of the incidence or prevalence of homosexuality typically vary between 3% and 8% and do not always include adolescents (Robison, 2002), one recent study did include teens in its sample population and found that 1.0% of U.S. teens self-identified as gay or lesbian and 4.9% of teens self-identified as bisexual, with 93.3% of respondents

identifying themselves as straight (Herbenick, Reece, Schick, Sanders, Dodge, & Fortenberry, 2010). Complete results are shown in Figure 5.



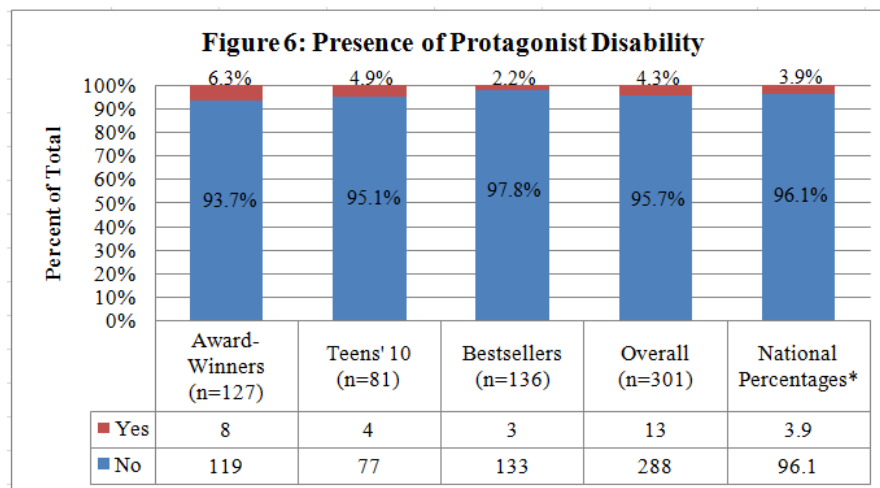
*Herbenick et al., 2010

Protagonist Disability Status

Overall, the prevalence of disability among protagonists (4.3%) aligned closely with the actual prevalence of disability among U.S. children and teens under the age of 18 (3.9%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Protagonists in bestselling titles had the lowest prevalence of disability, at 2.2%, and protagonists in award-winning books had the highest, at 6.3%. In the Teens Top Ten group, 4.9% of protagonists had a disability. Full results are shown in Figure 6, next page.

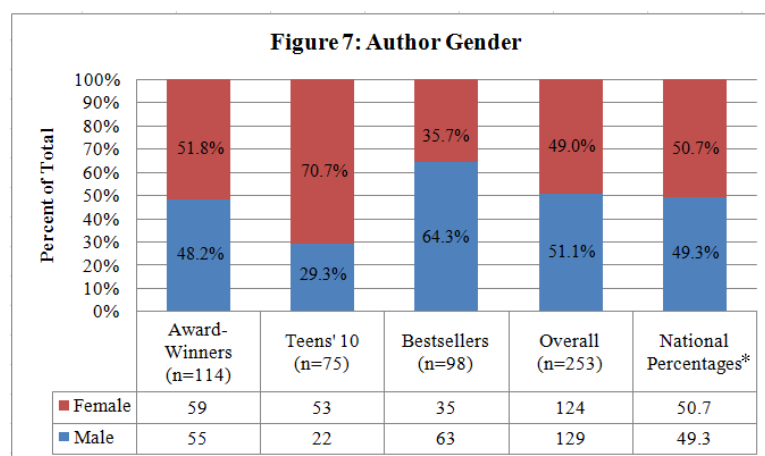
Author Demographics

One hundred fourteen authors in the award-winning category, 75 authors in the Teens' Top Ten category, and 98 authors in the bestsellers category were included in this analysis. Overall, author gender (49.0% female and 51.1% male) correlated closely with



*U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a

national data (50.7% female and 49.3% male). However, there was quite a bit of variation among title categories. The award-winning category was closest to the national numbers, with 51.8% female authors and 48.2% male authors, for a 1.07:1 female to male ratio. In the Teens' Top Ten category, however, 70.7% of authors were female and only 29.3% were male, for a 2.41:1 female to male ratio. The bestsellers category exhibited the reverse trend, with only 35.7% female authors and 64.3% male authors for a 0.55:1 female to male ratio. See Figure 7 for a summary of the gender breakdown among authors.



*U.S. Census Bureau, 2009a

The majority of coded authors across all three categories of books were white. In fact, the percentage of white authors outweighed the percentages of white protagonists for the books included in this study. Full results are shown in Table 5. Award-winning books had the highest percentage of minority authors at 17.0%. The minority writers in this category included eight black authors (7.1%), four Asian authors (3.6%), four Hispanic authors (3.6%), and two American Indian authors (1.8%). Among Teens' Top Ten authors, only 2.7% (two authors) were non-white; both minority authors were black. In the bestsellers category, all 96 coded authors were white. In each category, there were two authors whose race was undetermined.

	Award-Winners (n=112)	Teens' 10 (n=73)	Bestsellers (n=96)	Overall (n=247)	National Percentages*
White	83.0% (93)	97.3% (71)	100% (96)	92.3% (228)	64.9%
Black	7.1% (8)	2.7% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (9)	12.4%
Asian	3.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (3)	4.5%
Hispanic	3.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (4)	15.8%
Biracial / Multiracial	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.4%
American Indian	1.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (2)	0.8%
Other	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (1)	0.1%

*U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a

Just as minority authors were less common than minority protagonists in this study, authors from countries other than the United States were also less common than international protagonists. Overall, 73.8% of authors were born in the United States (compared to 49.5% of protagonists). Roughly half of the remaining authors were from England (13.3% overall), with smaller numbers from Australia (4.0%), Ireland (3.2%), Canada (2.8%), and Germany (1.6%). The Teens' Top Ten category had the lowest number of international authors (20.0%); both the award-winning and the bestsellers

categories had just fewer than 28% international authors. See Table 6 for a full breakdown of author nationality data.

	Award-Winners (n=112)	Teens' 10 (n=73)	Bestsellers (n=98)	Overall (n=247)
U.S.	71.1% (81)	80.0% (60)	71.4% (70)	73.8% (183)
England	11.4% (13)	13.3% (10)	16.3% (16)	13.3% (33)
Australia	7.9% (9)	1.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (10)
Canada	5.3% (6)	1.3% (1)	1.0% (1)	2.8% (7)
Ireland	1.8% (2)	1.3% (1)	7.1% (7)	3.2% (8)
Germany	0.0% (0)	2.7% (2)	4.1% (4)	1.6% (4)
Other	2.6% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1.2% (3)

Cross-Category Comparisons between White and Minority Protagonists

Looking across all three categories of books, there were 241 white protagonists and 56 minority-race protagonists. When compared to white protagonists, protagonists of color were:

- more likely to be featured in realistic fiction (42.0% of minority protagonists vs. 25.7% of white protagonists), historical fiction, (26.0% vs. 8.9%) and science fiction (8.0% vs. 5.2%) titles;
- less likely to be featured in fantasy (10.0% of minority protagonists vs. 31.9% of white protagonists), humor (0.0% vs. 8.9%), and action and adventure (2.0% vs. 5.8%) titles;
- more likely to be male (58.2% of minority protagonists vs. 46.1% of white protagonists);
- more likely to be identified as religious (25.0% of minority protagonists vs. 8.0% of white protagonists);

- less likely to be part of a dual-parent home (25.9% of minority protagonists vs. 33.2% of white protagonists) and less likely to be raised by a related guardian (5.6% vs. 16.4%);
- more likely to be an orphan or to have no guardian (27.8% vs. 18.0%) and slightly more likely to be part of a single-parent family (31.5% vs. 28.6%);
- more likely to be in the low socioeconomic class (44.2% vs. 24.3%) and less likely to be in the high socioeconomic class (7.7% vs. 21.7%);
- more likely to be identified as gay, questioning, or bisexual (5.4% vs. 2.5%);
- more likely to have been written by a male author (59.2% of books featuring a minority protagonist were written by males vs. 48.9% of books featuring a white protagonist);
- much more likely to have been written by an author of color (38.3% vs. 1.0%);
and,
- more likely to have been written by an author from the United States (83.3% vs. 68.4%).

Discussion

Where should librarians turn to find ready-made booklists that reflect the diversity of their service populations? The results of this study show that if YA librarians rely only or mostly on bestseller lists for collection development, many minority groups will be underserved. The bestsellers list was fairly balanced in terms of protagonist gender, included a large percentage of foreign-born characters, and included a diverse range of titles as far as protagonist family structure and socioeconomic status. However, non-

white, LGBT, and religious protagonists are underrepresented on this list, as are protagonists identified as having a disability and those living in urban areas. Author diversity within the bestsellers group is even scarcer; while almost a third of the bestsellers were written by foreign-born authors, female authors were underrepresented and representation of non-white authors was nonexistent.

The Teens' Top Ten list fared a bit better than the bestsellers list in some categories and a bit worse in others. The Teens' Top Ten list featured slightly more urban, LGBT, disabled, and non-white protagonists, and did have some representation by non-white authors (although the percentage is still very low). However, this list also has deficits in comparison to the bestsellers list and to national demographics: male protagonists and authors are underrepresented, as are protagonists in the low socioeconomic class, and religious protagonists are still rare.

Overall, the award-winning books most closely matched the actual demographics of the U.S. teen population, although even this list had some shortfalls. This list was fairly balanced in terms of its protagonist gender breakdown and included a higher percentage of urban protagonists than the other two groups (although urban protagonists are still underrepresented on this list when compared to national data). The award-winning titles had the highest percentage of non-white protagonists and included at least one protagonist from each racial group identified by the U.S. Census (the only list which did so). This list also included the highest percentage of religious protagonists and the highest percentage of protagonists from the low socioeconomic class (who are actually overrepresented on this list compared to national data). Award-winning titles featured LGBT protagonists at a rate that is consistent with national estimates overall, if not in the

specific breakdown of protagonists within the LGBT category. These titles also featured disabled characters more commonly than titles in the other groups. Authors of award-winning titles were fairly balanced in terms of gender, represent a variety of nationalities, and are more commonly non-white than authors in either of the other two groups. Given that the written procedures for creating the BBYA list specifically include a diversity statement, it is perhaps not surprising that this list should include the highest percentage of non-white and/or otherwise marginalized characters and authors.

So does this mean that librarians can fully rely on award-winning title lists? No. Aside from considerations of readability and popularity of these texts versus bestselling titles, the award-winning list still falls short in some dimensions of diversity. Along with the other lists, the award-winning list:

- lacks adequate representation of Hispanic protagonists,
- underrepresents protagonists in urban settings,
- underrepresents religious protagonists,
- is heavily skewed toward a small number of genres, and
- underrepresents minority authors.

Hispanic protagonists are severely underrepresented on all lists in comparison with the actual demographic data for U.S. adolescents and children. This may be because there has not yet been a major movement among scholars, parents, teachers, and librarians to push for titles for and about Hispanics and Latinos as there was for titles for and about African Americans in the U.S. in the 1970's (Harris, 1991). As the Hispanic and Latino population in the U.S. continues to grow, a movement for titles in this arena may be on the horizon.

All lists underrepresent urban-dwelling protagonists. However, this may be at least partially explained by the large numbers of historical fiction and fantasy titles included in this study. While books were coded as having urban settings if they took place in cities of the past or in fantasy cities, large numbers of these books took place in rural settings or had other / mixed settings.

The need for more titles featuring religious protagonists is confirmed in this study. Across all categories, religious protagonists comprise a small minority; protagonists from non-Christian religions are particularly rare. Most protagonists in the “other religion” category practiced a fictional religion rather than an existing one (for example, two of the protagonists in G. P. Taylor’s *Shadowmancer* practice a religion which resembles Christianity, but is not). Religion is a major part of life for many, if not most, children and teens in the U.S.; one recent study found that 65.3% of children and teens ages 6-17 participate in religious activities once a month or more (Dye & Johnson, 2009, p. 5). The lack of young adult titles which address this aspect of teen life is puzzling; the idea that authors view religion as somehow “taboo” seems to be an inadequate explanation for this since authors and publishers seem perfectly willing to feature other, even more sensitive, issues such as teen sex, pregnancy, drug use, and abuse. More research into this question is necessary.

Each of the three lists included in this study is heavily skewed towards one to two genres. Thus, relying on any one of these lists would result in a collection which is lacking in several key areas. The award-winning titles are biased toward realistic fiction and historical fiction; fantasy, science fiction, action and adventure, and sports novels (all popular genres) are comparatively neglected. Among Teens’ Top Ten books, fantasy and

realistic titles are included at a high rate at the expense of other genres; among bestsellers, fantasy and humor novels together comprise the majority of titles.

All lists underrepresent non-white authors, although the award-winning list does so to a lesser degree than the other lists. The challenges facing minority authors are well-documented; among them is a preference by large publishing houses for “established” writers (Hill, 1998). This preference means that authors who have already demonstrated sales success are more likely to be signed by large publishing companies and thus more likely to continue to put out successful titles – the publishing world’s version of the Matthew Effect. In the sample for this study, not a single bestselling title was written by a non-white author, which does not bode well for the future of minority authors in this arena if the trend discussed above continues. Unless more publishers begin actively seeking young adult contributions from minority authors, little is likely to change. Interestingly, while a lack of minority voices in children’s and young adult literature is an oft-cited problem, the same may not hold true for adult titles. As early as 1993, Publishers Weekly was making bold claims regarding adult books by non-white authors: “[these titles] all attracted increasing amounts of reader and critical attention, and it looks now as if, at least in books, ‘culture’ has become multicultural, and the old white-bread bestselling author lineup has gone the way of the tweedy gentleman publisher” (Baker, p. 32). Further research is necessary to determine whether minority authorship is in fact more common in contemporary adult fiction and, if so, what factors may account for the disparity.

Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, and Gilmore-Clough (2003) wrote about the scarcity of minority protagonists in genre fiction, particularly fantasy titles. This study supported

their conclusions; 31.9% of white protagonists were featured in fantasy titles, versus 10.0% of minority protagonists. Of the five minority protagonists who were featured in fantasy titles, one was black (a protagonist in G. P. Taylor's *Shadowmancer*), and the remainder were classified in the "other" category because they were described as being of a fictional race. Science fiction was a bit better; of the four minority protagonists, one was Asian, one was Hispanic, and two were other (alien). The tendency of authors to feature minority protagonists in realistic or historical fiction is an interesting trend and worthy of future research. This tendency may be an outgrowth of a repeated call among researchers for "culturally conscious" (Hill, 1998) or "enabling" (Tatum, 2009) texts which challenge racial stereotypes, give minority teens literary role models, and connect with teens' cultural heritages. Authors who feature minority protagonists may be choosing to create such texts by directly confronting historical or contemporary racial issues (a task to which historical fiction and realistic fiction are well suited) rather than dealing with such issues indirectly in a different genre.

Another interesting finding was that in this sample set, non-white protagonists were more than twice as likely to be identified as gay, bisexual, or questioning as white protagonists. The reasons for this are unclear; perhaps it is the case that authors who feature protagonists who are marginalized in terms of race are more willing to also feature protagonists who are marginalized in terms of sexuality. Further research would be interesting to see if these findings would be duplicated across a broader sample of young adult literature.

The findings regarding the race of authors who feature non-white protagonists are also interesting. The fact that 38.3% of non-white protagonists in this sample were

penned by non-white authors also means that the majority of minority protagonists – 61.7% – were written by white authors. This study did not look at the content of each title in terms of how protagonists are portrayed (for example, whether they exhibit stereotypical race- or gender-based behaviors). As Tatum (2009) and others have written, it is not enough to simply have books with minority characters on the shelves – those books must provide accurate and rich portrayals of those characters. If it is true, as Mikkelsen (1998) wrote, that “outsider” authors are likely to “attend to surface features...but miss the bigger picture” (p. 38) when writing about minority characters, then it could be the case that the true diversity within the texts in this study is even less than the numbers suggest. This study also supported the findings of Griswold (1981) by determining that U.S. authors wrote about non-white protagonists more often than foreign authors in this sample; again, further research would be necessary to determine whether his second finding (that U.S. authors also tended to stereotype minority characters) is also true for this sample.

Another question that this research does not address, but which would be a potentially fruitful course of study, is why so little protagonist and author diversity (at least in several of the dimensions studied here) exists for bestselling young adult novels. To some extent, the market controls what sells and what doesn't, and it could be the case that books with minority protagonists or books written by minority authors are truly not as appealing to wide audiences. However, even if this is the case (which this author doubts), we must begin to ask why that might be so. Are white, straight, middle-class teens uninterested in reading about characters who are different from them, and if so, could this be because the large majority of the books that they have read and enjoyed do

not feature minority characters? Are minority teens not purchasing books, and if so is this because a) they simply don't want to read, b) they can't afford the books, c) there are not enough characters like them in the books to which they have easy access, or d) some other reason? How does the marketing of young adult titles differ between books featuring minorities and other books, and how much might those differences account for the dearth of minority protagonists on bestsellers lists?

The scarcity (or, in this study, the complete lack) of non-white authors on bestseller lists also deserves attention. Hill (1998) started to investigate this question by looking into the obstacles faced by non-white authors in the publishing business. But future research may look into other aspects of this question as well, such as the prevalence of minorities within college-level writing programs, or, going back even further, the writing experiences of minorities in K-12 education.

Conclusion

The job of a youth services librarian in an era of decreasing budgets, decreasing staff, and increasing demand for services is not easy. Collection development is only one of many duties for a librarian, and reliance upon preassembled title lists such as those studied here is understandable when simply keeping a library open can at times consume all of a librarian's work hours. However, study upon study has demonstrated the importance of building a quality collection for young adult library users – a collection in which all users can find themselves accurately portrayed while also experiencing rich portrayals of characters who are unlike themselves. This study has demonstrated that while award winning lists include more diversity on the whole than Teen's Top Ten lists

or bestsellers lists, no single list, or even a combination of these lists, is sufficient across all aspects of diversity studied here.

What does this mean for librarians? It doesn't mean that relying upon lists is necessarily a bad thing – there are many valid reasons why both award-winning and bestselling titles deserve a place on library shelves. However, it does mean that these lists alone are insufficient, and purchasing plans which are based solely on such lists should be reevaluated to include more titles which are purposefully and individually selected by the librarian for the purposes of increasing the diversity within the collection. Books which feature religious protagonists and books written by minority authors are areas of particular need as demonstrated by this study. Despite their lack of representation on commonly-used preassembled lists, books with minority protagonists and books by minority authors do exist – the Library Booklists website links out to hundreds of them (<http://librarybooklists.org/fiction/ya/yadiverse.htm>) and the *Multicultural Review* journal, published four times annually, features new titles which include characters or subjects of differing “ethnicity, race, spirituality, religion, disability, and language” (<http://www.mcreview.com/>).

Whether or not libraries are ready for them, millions of minority children will soon be finding their way into young adult collections for the first time. Whether they come back may well depend on whether the books they find there include characters and authors who look, think, and act like them. And whether they find those books depends on whether librarians are willing to take the time to locate and purchase diverse fiction. If, as a profession, librarians can commit to doing this, then perhaps in ten years when minority children become the majority in this country, our collections will reflect the

wide variety of young adults in this nation and in the world. And perhaps, if every library in the country began ordering titles that featured minority characters and/or were written by minority authors, we might even rewrite the bestsellers list and in so doing help to change the face of publishing in the United States. That is a lofty goal, and one that only people – not lists – can achieve.

References

- Agosto, D. E. (2001). The cultured word: Cultural background, bilingualism, and the school library. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 7, 46–57.
- Agosto, D. E., Hughes-Hassell, S., & Gilmore-Clough, C. (2003). The all-white world of middle-school genre fiction: Surveying the field for multicultural protagonists. *Children's Literature in Education*, 34(4), 257-275.
- American Library Association (2010a). *Best books for young adults policies and procedures*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/bestbooksya/policiesprocedures.cfm>
- American Library Association (2010b) *Criteria for teens' top ten nominees*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/ttcriteria.cfm>
- American Library Association (2010c). *The Michael L. Printz award for excellence in young adult literature*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/printzaward/Printz.cfm>
- American Library Association (2010d). *The Michael L. Printz award policies and procedures*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/printzaward/aboutprintz/michaellprintz.cfm>
- American Library Association (2010e). *Teens' top ten participants*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/yagalley.cfm>

- American Library Association (2010f). *Teens' top ten (TTT) FAQ*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/faq.cfm>
- American Library Association (2010g). *YA galley groups*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/apply.cfm>
- Andrews, S. E. (1998). Using inclusion literature to promote positive attitudes toward disabilities. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 41(6), 420-426.
- Asimeng-Boahene, L., & Klein, A. M. (2004). Is the diversity issue a non-issue in mainstream academia? *Multicultural Education*, 12(1), 47-52.
- Baker, J. F. (1993). Fresh voices, new audiences. *Publishers Weekly*, 240(32), 32-34.
- Barry, A. L. (1998). Hispanic representation in literature for children and young adults. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 41(8), 630-637.
- Bell, Y. R., & Clark, T. R. (1998). Culturally relevant reading material as related to comprehension and recall in african american children. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 24, 455-475.
- Benedikt, A. R. (1999). A question of diversity: An analysis of the young adult library service association's best books for young adults, 1994-1998.
- Bishop, R. S. (1982). *Shadow and substance: Afro-American experience in contemporary children's fiction*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Bishop, R. S. (1992). Children's books in a multicultural world: A view from the USA. In E. Evans (Ed.), *Reading against racism* (pp. 19-38). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Burner, J. (1989). All in the family: Parents in teen fiction. *School Library Journal*, 35(15), 42-43.

- Caldwell-Wood, N., & Mitten, L. A. (1992). "I" is "not" for Indian: The portrayal of Native Americans in books for young people. *Multicultural Review*, 1(2), pp. 26-33, 35.
- Campbell, P. (1994). The sand in the oyster. *Horn Book Magazine*, 70(5), 619-623.
- Cart, M. (2009). The renaissance continues: Young adult literature for the 21st century. *Catholic Library World*, 79(4), 279-285.
- Cart, M., & Jenkins, C. (2006). *The heart has its reasons: Young adult literature with gay/lesbian/queer content, 1969-2004*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Caywood, C. (1997). The sky is falling. *School Library Journal* 43(7), 41.
- Cosbey, J. (1997). Using contemporary fiction to teach family issues. *Teaching Sociology*, 25(3), 227-233.
- Creel, S. (2007). Early adolescents' reading habits. *Young Adult Library Services*, 5(4), 46-49.
- Dellmann-Jenkins, M., Florjancic, L. & Swadener, E. B. Sex roles and cultural diversity in recent award winning picture books for young children. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 7(2), 74 – 82.
- Dutro, E. (2009). Children writing “hard times”: Lived experiences of poverty and the class-privileged assumptions of a mandated curriculum. *Language Arts*, 87(2), 89-98.
- Dye, J. L., & Johnson, T. D. (2009). *A child's day 2006: Selected indicators of child well-being* (Current Population Reports No. P70-118). Washington, D.C., U.S. Census Bureau.

- Federal Highway Administration (2004). *Census 2000 population statistics: U.S. population living in urban vs. rural areas*. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census/cps2k.htm>
- Feger, M. (2006). "I want to read": How culturally relevant texts increase student engagement in reading. *Multicultural Education*, 13(3), 18-19.
- Fitzgibbons, S. A., & Tilley, C. L. (1999). Images of poverty in contemporary realistic fiction for youth: Preliminary results of a content analysis using a social psychological conceptual framework. Paper presented at the *Unleash the Power! Knowledge-Technology-Diversity: Papers Presented at the Third International Forum on Research in School Librarianship, Annual Conference of the International Association for School Librarianship*, Birmingham, AL.
- Ganji, J. M. (2008). The unbearable whiteness of literacy instruction: Realizing the implications of the proficient reader research. *Multicultural Review*, 17(1), 30-35.
- Griswold, W. (1981). American character and the American novel: An expansion of reflection theory in the sociology of literature. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 86(4), 740-765.
- Hamilton, M. C., Anderson, D., Broaddus, M., & Young, K. (2006). Gender stereotyping and under-representation of female characters in 200 popular children's picture books: A twenty-first century update. *Sex Roles*, 55(11-12), 757-765.
- Harris, V. J. (1991). Have you heard about an African Cinderella story? The hunt for multiethnic literature. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 7(3), 23-36.
- Heim, A. B. (1994). Beyond the stereotypes: Characters with mental disabilities in children's books. *School Library Journal*, 40(9), 139-142.

- Herbenick, D., Reece, M., Schick, V., Sanders, S. A., Dodge, B., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2010). Sexual behavior in the United States: Results from a national probability sample of men and women ages 14-94. *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 7(Suppl. 5), 255-265.
- Hill, T. J. (1998). Multicultural children's books: An American fairy tale. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 14(1), 36-45.
- Hughes-Hassell, S., Barkley, H. A., & Koehler, E. (2009). Promoting equity in children's literacy instruction: Using a critical race theory framework to examine transitional books. *School Library Media Research*, 12.
- Jenkins, C. (1993). Young adult novels with gay/lesbian characters and themes 1969-92: A historical reading of content, gender, and narrative distance. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* 7(1), 43-55.
- Jenkins, C. (1998). From queer to gay and back again: Young adult novels with gay/lesbian/queer content, 1969-1997. *The Library Quarterly*, 68(3), 298-334.
- Larrick, N. (1965). The all-white world of children's books. *Saturday Review*, pp. 11, 63-65, 84-85.
- Louie, A.-L. (1993). Growing up Asian American: A look at some recent young adult novels. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 6(2), 115-127.
- Marra, T. (2005). Trends in teen reading 2001-2003. *Young Adult Library Services*, 4(1), 17-21.
- Matthew, N., & Clow, S. (2009). Putting disabled children in the picture: Promoting inclusive children's books and media. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(2), 65-78.

- Mendt, K. L. (1996). Spiritual themes in young adult books. *The ALAN Review*, 23(3), 34-37.
- Mikkelsen, N. (1995). Insiders, outsiders, and the question of authenticity: Who shall write for african american children? *African American Review*, 32(1), 33-49.
- Morgan, P. E. (1998). A bridge to whose future? Young adult literature and the Asian American teenager. *ALAN Review*, 25(3), 18-20.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *The nation's report card: Reading 2009* (No. NCES 2010-458). Washington, D.C.: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- National Study of Youth and Religion (2001). *Religious affiliation and its significance*. Retrieved from http://www.youthandreligion.org/sites/default/files/imported/news/docs/1_-_Religious_Affiliation.pdf
- Nilsson, N.L. (2005). How does Hispanic portrayal in children's books measure up after 40 years? The answer is "it depends." *The Reading Teacher*, 58(6), 534-548.
- Nisse, A. (2008). Do you see what I see?: Portrayals of diversity in Newbery-medal-winning children's literature. Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention, Chicago, IL.
- Pirofski, K. I. (2001). Multicultural literature and the children's literary canon. Retrieved from <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/literature.html>
- Poarch, R., & Monk-Turner, E. (2001). Gender roles in children's literature: A review of non-award-winning "easy-to-read" books. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 16(1), 70-76.

Riess, J. (2008, June 2). Joining the clique: YA's bumper crop in Christian fiction.

Publishers Weekly, 255(22), S2=S3.

Roberts, S. (2010, March 11). Births to minorities approach a majority. *The New York*

Times (NY), p. 13.

Robison, J. (2002, October 8). What percentage of the population is gay? Retrieved from

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/6961/What-Percentage-Population-Gay.aspx>

Rochman, H. (1993). *Against borders: Promoting books for a multicultural world*.

Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Shaw, D. G. (1995). The treatment of religion and the independent investigation of

spiritual truth in fiction for adolescents. *The ALAN Review*, 22(2), 20-22.

Skill, T. & Robinson, J. D. (1994). Four decades of families on television: A

demographic profile, 1950–1989. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 38, 449–465.

Smith D'Arezzo, W. M. (2003). Diversity in children's literature: Not just a black and

white issue. *Children's Literature in Education* 34(1), 75-94.

St. Clair, N. (1998). Outside looking in: Representations of gay and lesbian experiences

in the young adult novel. *ALAN Review* 23(1), 38-43.

Swenor, K. (2006). A teen take on reading: Results from the 2005 teen read survey.

Young Adult Library Services, 4(4), 42-44.

Tatum, A. W. (2009). *Reading for their Life*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Taxel, J. (1986). The black experience in children's fiction: Controversies surrounding

award winning books. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 16(3), 245-281.

- Taylor, F. (2003). Content Analysis and Gender Stereotypes in Children's Books. *Teaching Sociology* 31(3), 300-311.
- Tjoumas, R. (1993). Native American literature for young people: A survey of collection development methods in public libraries. *Library Trends*, 41(3), 493-523.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2009a). *American FactFinder: 2009 American community survey 1-year estimates*. Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuId=datasets_2&_lang=en
- U.S. Census Bureau (2009b). *Annual estimates of the population by race, Hispanic origin, sex and age for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008* (No. NC-EST2008-04). Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2008). *Americans with disabilities act: Questions and answers*. Retrieved from <http://www.ada.gov/q%26aeng02.htm>
- Winston, M. (2008). Diversity: The research and the lack of progress. *New Library World*, 109(3/4), 130-149.
- Wolf, N. (2006, March 12). Young adult fiction: Wild things. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/12/books/review/12wolf.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2

Appendix A: Included Titles

Award-Winning Titles:

Alexie, S. (2007). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*. New York, NY: Little Brown.

Almond, D. (1999). *Skellig*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

Almond, D. (2000). *Kit's wilderness*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

Anderson, L. H. (1999). *Speak*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Anderson, L. H. (2002). *Catalyst*. New York, NY: Viking.

Anderson, M. T. (2002). *Feed*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Anderson, M. T. (2006). *The astonishing life of Octavian Nothing, traitor to the nation, volume 1: The pox party*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Anderson, M. T. (2008). *The astonishing life of Octavian Nothing, traitor to the nation, volume 2: Kingdom on the waves*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Bagdasarian, A. (2000). *Forgotten fire*. New York, NY: Laurel Leaf.

Bauer, J. (2000). *Hope was here*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Braff, J. (2004). *The unthinkable thoughts of Jacob Green*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

Brashares, A. (2001). *The sisterhood of the traveling pants*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

Brooks, M. (2003). *True confessions of a heartless girl*. New York, NY: HarperTeen.

Buckhanon, K. (2005). *Upstate*. New York, NY: St. Martin's.

Card, O. S. (1999). *Ender's shadow*. New York, NY: Tor.

Chambers, A. (2002). *Postcards from no man's land*. New York, NY: Dutton.

- Chevalier, T. (2000). *Girl with a pearl earring*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- Clarke, J. (2007). *One whole and perfect day*. Asheville, NC: Front Street.
- Collins, S. (2008). *The hunger games*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Coman, C. (2000). *Many stones*. Asheville, NC: Front Street.
- Conner, L. (2008). *Waiting for normal*. New York, NY: Katherine Tegen Books.
- Cormier, R. (2001). *The rag and bone shop*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Crutcher, C. (2001). *Whale talk*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Curtis, C. P. (2004). *Bucking the sarge*. New York, NY: Wendy Lamb Books.
- de la Pena, M. (2008). *Mexican whiteboy*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Dickinson, P. (2001). *The ropemaker*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Donnelly, J. (2003). *A northern light*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Dowd, S. (2008). *Bog child*. Oxford, UK: David Fickling Books.
- Downham, J. (2007). *Before I die*. Oxford, UK: David Fickling Books.
- Farmer, N. (2002). *The house of the scorpion*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Fletcher, C. (2008). *Ten cents a dance*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Flinn, A. (2001). *Breathing underwater*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Frank, E. R. (2002). *America*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Freyman-Weyr, G. (2002). *My heartbeat*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Going, K. L. (2003). *Fat kid rules the world*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Gratz, A. (2006). *Samurai shortstop*. New York, NY: Dial Press.
- Green, J. (2006). *An abundance of Katherines*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- Green, J. (2005). *Looking for Alaska*. New York, NY: Dutton.

- Haddon, M. (2003). *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time: A novel*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Hartnett, S. (2006). *Surrender*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
- Holt, K. W. (1999). *When Zachary Beaver came to town*. New York, NY: Henry Holt.
- Jenkins, A. M.. (2001). *Damage*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Jenkins, A. M. (2007). *Repossessed*. New York, NY: HarperTeen.
- Johnson, A. (2003). *The first part last*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Jones, L. (2007). *Mister Pip*. New York, NY: Dial Press.
- Jordan, S. (1999). *The raging quiet*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Knox, E. (2007). *Dreamquake: Book two of the dreamhunter duet*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Konigsburg, E. L. (2000). *Silent to the bone*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Korman, G. (2002). *Son of the mob*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- Lanagan, M. (2008). *Tender morsels*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Landy, D. (2007). *Skulduggery Pleasant*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Lawrence, I. (2002). *The lightkeeper's daughter*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Levithan, D. (2003). *Boy meets boy*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Lockhart, E. (2008). *The disreputable history of Frankie Landau-Banks*. New York, NY: Disney-Hyperion.
- Lynch, C. (2001). *Freewill*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Lynch, C. (2005). *Inexcusable*. New York, NY: Atheneum.

- Mackler, C. (2003). *The earth, my butt, and other big round things*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
- Marchetta, M. (2004). *Saving Francesca*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Marchetta, M. (2008). *Jellicoe road*. New York, NY: HarperTeen.
- Maynard, J. (2003). *The usual rules*. New York, NY: St. Martin's.
- McCaughrean, G. (2007). *The white darkness*. New York, NY: Harper Tempest.
- McCormick, P. (2006). *Sold*. New York, NY: Hyperion.
- McNeal, L., & McNeal, T. (1999). *Crooked*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Meyer, C. (1999). *Mary, bloody Mary*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt.
- Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight: A novel*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Monninger, J. (2007). *Baby*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.
- Moore, C. (2002). *Lamb: The gospel according to Biff, Christ's childhood pal*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- Morpurgo, M. (2004). *Private Peaceful*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Mosher, R. (2001). *Zazoo*. New York, NY: New York, NY: Clarion Books.
- Myers, W. D. (1999). *Monster*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Na, A. (2001). *A step from heaven*. Asheville, NC: Front Street.
- Namioka, L. (1999). *Ties that bind, ties that break*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Nix, G. (2001). *Lirael*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Oppel, K. (2004). *Airborn*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Pattou, E. (2003). *East*. New York, NY: Harcourt Children's Books.
- Paulsen, G. (2000). *The beet fields*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

- Peet, M. (2007). *Tamar: A novel of espionage, passion, and betrayal*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
- Plum-Ucci, C. (2000). *The body of Christopher Creed*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Porter, C. (1999). *Imani all mine*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Pratchett, T. (2008). *Nation*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Rapp, A. (2003). *33 snowfish*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
- Rapp, A. (2004). *Under the wolf, under the dog*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
- Rennison, L. (2000). *Angus, thongs, and full frontal snogging: confessions of Georgia Nicolson*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Rosoff, M. (2004). *How I live now*. New York, NY: Wendy Lamb Books.
- Ryan, P. M. (2000). *Esperanza rising*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Saenz, B. A. (2004). *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.
- Sayres, M. N. (2006). *Anahita's woven riddle*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Schmidt, G. D. (2004). *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster boy*. New York, NY: Clarion Books.
- Selznick, B. (2007). *The invention of Hugo Cabret: A novel*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Smelcer, J. (2006). *The trap*. New York, NY: Henry Holt.
- Spinelli, J. (2000). *Stargirl*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Stratton, A. (2004). *Chanda's secrets*. Toronto, ON: Annick Press.
- Stroud, J. (2003). *The amulet of Samarkand: Bartimaeus trilogy, book one*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Tamaki, M. (2008). *Skim*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books.
- Tan, S. (2007). *The arrival*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

- Taylor, M. (2001). *The land*. New York, NY: Putnam.
- Trueman, T. (2000). *Stuck in neutral*. New York, NY: HarperTeen.
- Turner, M. W. (2006). *The king of attolia*. New York, NY: Greenwillow.
- Vaughan, B. K. (2005). *Runaways: Volume 1*. New York, NY: Marvel.
- Voorhees, C. (2008). *The brothers Torres*. New York, NY: Disney-Hyperion.
- Weeks, S. (2004). *So B. It: A novel*. New York, NY: Laura Geringer Books.
- Werlin, N. (2006). *The rules of survival*. New York, NY: Dial Press.
- Westerfeld, S. (2005). *Peeps*. New York, NY: Razorbill.
- Whelan, G. (2000). *Homeless bird*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- White, R. (2000). *Memories of summer*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Williams-Garcia, R. (2001). *Every time a rainbow dies*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
- Wittlinger, E. (1999). *Hard love*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Wolff, V. E. (2001). *True believer*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Wooding, C. (2005). *Poison*. New York, NY: Orchard Books.
- Yang, G. L. (2006). *American born Chinese*. First Second.
- Zusak, M. (2005). *I am the messenger*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Zusak, M. (2006). *The book thief*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Teens' Top 10 Titles:

- Abbott, T. (2006). *Firegirl*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Acito, M. (2004). *How I paid for college: A novel of sex, theft, friendship & musical theater*. Broadway Books.

- Aidinoff, E. (2004). *The garden*. New York, NY: Harper Tempest.
- Anderson, L. H. (2007). *Twisted*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Black, H. (2002). *Tithe: A modern faerie tale*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Bowler, T. (2002). *Storm catchers*. Margaret K. McElderry.
- Brashares, A. (2003). *The second summer of the sisterhood*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Brashares, A. (2004). *Girls in pants: The third summer of the sisterhood*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Bray, L. (2004). *A great and terrible beauty*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Bray, L. (2005). *Rebel angels*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Bray, L. (2007). *The sweet far thing*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Brennan, H. (2003). *Faerie wars*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Brooks, K. (2006). *The road of the dead*. Chicken House.
- Brooks, M. (2003). *True confessions of a heartless girl*. New York, NY: HarperTeen.
- Cabot, M. (2004). *Princess in pink*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cabot, M. (2004). *Teen idol*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cashore, K. (2008). *Graceling*. Harcourt.
- Cast, P. C., & Cast, K. (2008). *Untamed*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Clare, C. (2008). *City of ashes*. Margaret K. McElderry.
- Clare, C. (2007). *City of bones*. Margaret K. McElderry.
- Collins, S. (2008). *The hunger games*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Dessen, S. (2006). *Just listen*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Dessen, S. (2004). *The truth about forever*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Downham, J. (2007). *Before I die*. Oxford, UK: David Fickling Books.

- Duane, D. (2002). *A wizard alone: Young wizards book 6*. Harcourt.
- Elkeles, S. (2006). *How to ruin a summer vacation*. Flux.
- Ferris, J. (2002). *Once upon a marigold*. Harcourt.
- Frank, E. R. (2002). *America*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Fredericks, M. (2003). *The true meaning of cleavage*. New York, NY: Atheneum.
- Funke, C. (2003). *Inkheart*. Chicken House.
- Funke, C. (2002). *The thief lord*. Chicken House.
- Gaiman, N. (2008). *The graveyard book*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Giles, G. (2003). *Dead girls don't write letters*. Roaring Brook.
- Green, J. (2005). *Looking for Alaska*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- Green, J. (2008). *Paper towns*. New York, NY: Dutton.
- Hale, S. (2003). *The goose girl*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Hale, S. (2006). *River secrets*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Hart, J. V. (2005). *Captain Hook: The adventures of a notorious youth*. Laura Geringer Books.
- Hopkins, E. (2008). *Identical*. Margaret K. McElderry.
- Jaffe, M. (2006). *Bad Kitty*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Johnson, A. (2003). *The first part last*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Johnson, M. (2005). *13 little blue envelopes*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Kantor, M. (2005). *If I have a wicked stepmother, where's my prince*. Hyperion.
- Kinney, J. (2007). *Diary of a wimpy kid*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Lockhart, E. (2008). *The disreputable history of Frankie Landau-Banks*. New York, NY: Disney-Hyperion.

- Mackler, C. (2003). *The earth, my butt, and other big round things*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.
- McMann, L. (2008). *Wake*. New York, NY: Simon Pulse.
- Mead, R. (2007). *Vampire academy*. New York, NY: Razorbill.
- Meyer, L. A. (2004). *Curse of the blue tattoo*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Meyer, S. (2005). *Twilight: A novel*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Meyer, S. (2006). *New moon*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Meyer, S. (2007). *Eclipse*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Meyer, S. (2008). *Breaking dawn*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Nix, G. (2003). *Abhorsen*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Paolini, C. (2005). *Eldest*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Paolini, C. (2003). *Eragon*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Patterson, J. (2005). *Maximum ride: The angel experiment*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J. (2006). *Maximum ride: school's out - forever*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J. (2007). *Maximum ride: saving the world and other extreme sports*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Pfeffer, S. B. (2006). *Life as we knew it*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Picoult, J. (2004). *My sister's keeper*. New York, NY: Atria Books.
- Pierce, T. (2003). *Trickster's choice*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Plum-Ucci, C. (2002). *What happened to Lani Garver?* Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Prose, F. (2003). *After*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Rees, C. (2003). *Pirates!* New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Rowling, J. K. (2003). *Harry Potter and the order of the phoenix*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Rowling, J. K. (2005). *Harry Potter and the half-blood prince*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Rowling, J. K. (2007). *Harry Potter and the deathly hallows*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Sonnenblick, J. (2004). *Drums, girls, and dangerous pie*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Westerfeld, S. (2005). *Peeps*. New York, NY: Razorbill.

Westerfeld, S. (2007). *Extras*. New York, NY: Simon Pulse.

Wooding, C. (2005). *Poison*. New York, NY: Orchard Books.

Zephaniah, B. (2004). *The gangsta rap*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Zevin, G. (2005). *Elsewhere*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Bestselling Titles:

Barker, C. (2002). *Abarat*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Barry, D., & Pearson, R. (2004). *Peter and the starcatchers*. New York, NY: Disney Editions.

Barry, D., & Pearson, R. (2006). *Peter and the shadow thieves*. New York, NY: Disney Editions.

Brashares, A. (2001). *The sisterhood of the traveling pants*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

Brashares, A. (2003). *The second summer of the sisterhood*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

Brashares, A. (2005). *Girls in pants: The third summer of the sisterhood*. New York, NY: Delacorte.

- Brashares, A. (2007). *Forever in blue: The fourth summer of the sisterhood*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Cabot, M. (2001). *Princess in the spotlight: The princess diaries, volume II*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cabot, M. (2002). *All-American girl*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cabot, M. (2002). *Princess in love: The princess diaries, volume III*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cabot, M. (2003). *Haunted*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cabot, Meg. (2003). *Princess in waiting: The princess diaries, volume IV*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cabot, M. (2004). *Princess in pink*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Cast, P. C., & Cast, K. (2009). *Hunted: House of night book 5*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Cast, P. C., & Cast, K. (2009). *Tempted: House of night book 6*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Chabon, M. (2002). *Summerland*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Colfer, E. (2001). *Artemis Fowl*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Colfer, E. (2002). *Artemis Fowl: The arctic incident*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Colfer, E. (2003). *Artemis Fowl: The eternity code*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Colfer, E. (2004). *The supernaturalist*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Colfer, E. (2005). *Artemis Fowl: The opal deception*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.

- Colfer, E. (2006). *Artemis Fowl: The lost colony*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Colfer, E. (2008). *Artemis Fowl: The time paradox*. New York, NY: Disney-Hyperion.
- Collins, S. (2009). *Catching fire*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Dessen, S. (2006). *Just listen*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Funke, C. (2008). *Inkdeath*. New York, NY: Chicken House.
- Funke, C. (2003). *Inkheart*. New York, NY: Chicken House.
- Funke, C. (2005). *Inkspell*. New York, NY: Chicken House.
- Funke, C. (2002). *The thief lord*. New York, NY: Chicken House.
- Hiaasen, C. (2002). *Hoot*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Hiaasen, C. (2005). *Flush*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Hornby, N. (2007). *Slam*. New York, NY: Putnam.
- Horowitz, A. (2006). *Ark angel*. New York, NY: Philomel.
- Horowitz, A. (2007). *Snakehead*. New York, NY: Philomel.
- Jacques, B. (2001). *Castaways of the Flying Dutchman*. New York, NY: Philomel.
- Kinney, J. (2007). *Diary of a wimpy kid*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Kinney, J. (2008). *Rodrick rules: Diary of a wimpy kid book 2*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Kinney, J. (2009). *Dog days: Diary of a wimpy kid book 4*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Kinney, J. (2009). *The last straw: Diary of a wimpy kid book 3*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Korman, G. (2008). *One false note: The 39 clues book 2*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Lupica, M. (2004). *Travel team*. New York, NY: Philomel.

- Lupica, M. (2006). *Heat*. New York, NY: Philomel.
- Lupica, M. (2006). *Miracle on 49th street*. New York, NY: Philomel.
- Meyer, C. (2000). *Royal diaries: Anastasia*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Meyer, S. (2006). *New moon*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Meyer, S. (2007). *Eclipse*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Meyer, S. (2008). *Breaking dawn*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Nimmo, J. (2004). *Charlie Bone and the invisible boy*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Nimmo, J. (2005). *Charlie Bone and the castle of mirrors*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Noel, A. (2009). *Shadowland: The immortals #3*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Paolini, C. (2003). *Eragon*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Paolini, C. (2005). *Eldest*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Paolini, C. (2008). *Brisingr*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Patterson, J. (2005). *Maximum ride: The angel experiment*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J. (2006). *Maximum ride: school's out - forever*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J. (2007). *Maximum ride: Saving the world and other extreme sports*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J. (2008). *Maximum ride: The final warning*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J. (2009). *Max*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J., & Charbonnet, G. (2009). *Witch & wizard*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J., & Ledwidge, M. (2008). *The dangerous days of Daniel X*. New York, NY: Little Brown.
- Patterson, J., & Rust, N. (2009). *Daniel X: Watch the skies*. New York, NY: Little Brown.

- Peek, R. (2001). *A year down yonder*. New York, NY: Dial Press.
- Peretti, F. (2001). *The veritas project: Hangman's curse*. Nashville, TN: Tommy Nelson.
- Pierce, T. (2003). *Trickster's choice*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Pullman, P. (2000). *The amber spyglass*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Riordan, Rick. (2007). *The titan's curse: Percy Jackson and the olympians book 3*. New York, NY: Hyperion / Miramax.
- Riordan, R. (2008). *The battle of the labyrinth: Percy Jackson and the olympians book 4*. New York, NY: Disney-Hyperion.
- Riordan, Rick. (2008). *The maze of bones: The 39 clues book 1*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Riordan, Rick. (2009). *The last olympian: Percy Jackson and the olympians Book 5*. New York, NY: Disney-Hyperion.
- Rowling, J. K. (2000). *Harry Potter and the goblet of fire*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Rowling, J. K. (2003). *Harry Potter and the order of the phoenix*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Rowling, J. K. (2005). *Harry Potter and the half-blood prince*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Rowling, J. K. (2007). *Harry Potter and the deathly hallows*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Sachar, L. (2006). *Small steps*. New York, NY: Delacorte.
- Sage, A. (2005). *Magyk: Septimus Heap, book one*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Sage, A. (2007). *Physik: Septimus Heap, book three*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Selznick, B. (2007). *The invention of Hugo Cabret: A novel*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

- Snicket, L. (2000). *The miserable mill: A series of unfortunate svents, book 4*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2000). *The wide window: A series of unfortunate svents, book 3*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2001). *The ersatz elevator: A series of unfortunate svents, book 6*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2001). *The hostile hospital: A series of unfortunate svents, book 8*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2001). *The vile village: A series of unfortunate svents, book 7*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2002). *The carnivorous carnival: A series of unfortunate svents, book 9*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2003). *The slippery slope: A series of unfortunate svents, book 10*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2004). *The grim grotto: A series of unfortunate svents, book 11*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2005). *The penultimate peril: A series of unfortunate svents, book 12*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Snicket, L. (2006). *The end: A series of unfortunate svents, book 13*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Spinelli, J. (2000). *Stargirl*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Stewart, P. (2004). *Beyond the deepwoods: The edge chronicles book 1*. Oxford, UK: David Fickling Books.

Stroud, J. (2004). *The golem's eye: Bartimaeus trilogy, book 2*. New York, NY: Hyperion
/ Miramax.

Taylor, G. P. (2003). *Shadowmancer*. New York, NY: Putnam.

Taylor, G. P. (2004). *Wormwood*. New York, NY: Putnam

Appendix B: Titles Appearing on Multiple Lists

Title / Author	Award-Winners	Teens' 10	Best-sellers
<i>Girls in Pants: The Third Summer of the Sisterhood</i> / A. Brashares		✓	✓
<i>The Second Summer of the Sisterhood</i> / A. Brashares		✓	✓
<i>The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants</i> / A. Brashares	✓		✓
<i>True Confessions of a Heartless Girl</i> / M. Brooks	✓	✓	
<i>Princess in Pink</i> / M. Cabot		✓	✓
<i>The Hunger Games</i> / S. Collins	✓	✓	
<i>Just Listen</i> / S. Dessen		✓	✓
<i>Before I Die</i> / J. Downham	✓	✓	
<i>America</i> / E. R. Frank	✓	✓	
<i>Inkheart</i> / C. Funke		✓	✓
<i>The Thief Lord</i> / C. Funke		✓	✓
<i>Looking for Alaska</i> / J. Green	✓	✓	
<i>The First Part Last</i> / A. Johnson	✓	✓	
<i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i> / J. Kinney		✓	✓
<i>The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks</i> / E. Lockhart	✓	✓	
<i>The Earth, my Butt, and Other Big Round Things</i> / C. Mackler	✓	✓	
<i>Breaking Dawn</i> / S. Meyer		✓	✓
<i>Eclipse</i> / S. Meyer		✓	✓
<i>New Moon</i> / S. Meyer		✓	✓
<i>Twilight</i> / S. Meyer	✓	✓	
<i>Eragon</i> / C. Paolini		✓	✓
<i>Eldest</i> / C. Paolini		✓	✓
<i>Maximum Ride: Saving the World and Other Extreme Sports</i> / J. Patterson		✓	✓
<i>Maximum Ride: School's Out Forever</i> / J. Patterson		✓	✓
<i>Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment</i> / J. Patterson		✓	✓
<i>Trickster's Choice</i> / T. Pierce		✓	✓
<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i> / J. K. Rowling		✓	✓
<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i> / J. K. Rowling		✓	✓
<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i> / J. K. Rowling		✓	✓
<i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</i> / B. Selznick	✓		✓
<i>Stargirl</i> / J. Spinelli	✓		✓
<i>Peeps</i> / S. Westerfeld	✓	✓	
<i>Poison</i> / C. Wooding	✓	✓	

Appendix C: Coding Instrument with Sample Data and Code List

Award-Winning Books		Genre	Setting	Protagonist Gender	Protagonist Race	Protagonist Nationality	Protagonist Religion	Protagonist Family Status	Protagonist SES	Protagonist Sexual Orientation	Protagonist Disability?	Author Gender	Author Race	Author Nationality
American Born Chinese	5	1	0	6	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
Angus, Thongs, and Full Frontal Snogging:	7		1	6	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	7	2	
Before I Die	9	1	1	6	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	7	2	
Catalyst	9	1	1	6	7	4	1	1	0	0	1	7	7	
Chanda's Secrets	9	2	1	2	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	1	
Feed	11	3	0	6	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	7	
Forgotten Fire	6	1	0	5	6	1	2	2	0	0	0	6	7	
Girl with a Pearl Earring	6	2	1	6	5	0	0	0	0	1	7	7		
Hope was Here	9	0	1	6	7	0	3	0	0	0	1	7	7	
I am the Messenger	8	1	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	7	0	
Imani All Mine	9	2	1	2	7	0	1	0	0	1	2	7		
Inexcusable	9	1	0	6	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	7	7	
Jellicoe Road	9	0	1	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	7	0	
One Whole and Perfect Day	9	1	1	6	0	0	1	1	0		1	7	0	
Postcards from No Man's Land	6	2	0	6	2	0		1	2	0	0	7	2	
Saving Francesca	9	1	1	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	7	0	
Skim	5	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	
The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing 1	6	3	0	2	7	0	4	0	0	0	0	7	7	
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-	9	2	0	6	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	2	
The House of the Scorpion	11	3	0	3	6	0	2	0	0	0	1	7	7	
The Hunger Games	0	3	1	6	6	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	7	
The Lightkeeper's Daughter	9	0	1	6	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	1	
Ties that Bind, Ties that Break	6	2	1	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	7	
True Confessions of a Heartless Girl	9	0	1	6	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	7	1	

