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Introducing (Un)defined YA / Series / Romance

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Rather than presenting YA series romance as a unified category, this special issue considers it as a site of continuous negotiation. Anyone who grew up reading *Sweet Valley High*, defined themselves as a Twihard, or is watching the current *Twilight* resurgence via a teen who just stole their beloved "Team Jacob" T-shirt from the back of their closet knows, intimately, what YA series romance is. Defining it, however, is tricky, but perhaps that should not be surprising; after all, the genre is a complex amalgam of three different components—young adult literature, serialization, and popular romance—each of which possesses its own ambiguities and contradictions. For this reason, we use the slashes in the title of this special issue—"YA/Series/Romance"—as typographic markers to highlight how the contradictions amongst the three components contribute to the genre's definitional instability.

In order to reflect this definitional complexity, the scope of this special issue is intentionally broad. Our contributors bring together scholarship on novels, television, and fan fiction to explore YA series romance in diverse and contested forms, including franchise ghostwriting as a form of transitional authorship, the soul-mate trope within Sarah J. Maas's *A Court of Thorns and Roses* series, the generative reclamation of Black joy in Elise Bryant's YA romance novels, adolescence and ideology in Indian and Indian American YA Netflix romances, Nancy Drew's role as agentive girl detective during girl power eras, and, relatedly, fan fiction "smut" as personal pedagogy and literacy practice. In this introduction, I contextualize these articles by briefly outlining how the genre's three core components serve differing cultural functions and how their convergence in YA series romance produces the genre's resistance to fixed definition. I end with an overview of each article and the accompanying suggestion that YA series romance's resistance to definition is ultimately productive, enabling both its enduring appeal and its ongoing ability to adapt.[1]

Component One: Young Adult Literature

The first component, young adult literature, is complicated by the power dynamic through which it is produced. By power dynamic, I refer to the adult–young person binary that results from adults' intentions in writing, publishing, and distributing texts to young people—YA is rarely written and published by young adults themselves—as well as young people's reception of texts and their reading practices. Thus, while Jacqueline Rose famously asserts that the child of children's literature (and, I would suggest, the teen of young adult literature) is the construct of specifically adult needs and desires (1–11), Jack Zipes similarly observes that "There never has been a literature conceived by children for children, a literature that belongs to children, and there never will be" (40).[2]

This dynamic becomes particularly noticeable in the classifications by which we typically define YA: books written for young people, books published for young people, books read by young people, and books distributed to young people. In *Teaching Young Adult Literature*, for example, Mike Cadden et al. define young adult literature as "literature written for and marketed to teenagers" (1), whereas in *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, Alleen Pace Nilsen and Kenneth L. Donelson define it as "anything that readers between the approximate ages of 12 and 18 choose to read (as opposed to what they may be coerced to read for class assignments)" (3). Books *read by* young people (Nilsen and Donelson's primary focus) might include the *Hunger Games* trilogy, *The Great Gatsby*, and online fan fiction, while books *written for* young people (Cadden et al.'s primary focus) might include a *Gossip Girl* novel and a mathematics textbook.[3] Both definitions are well argued and entirely reasonable, but their contrasting focuses also demonstrate the ambiguity involved in defining YA.

The contested historical boundaries of YA further complicate attempts at stable definition. Depending on one's classificatory criteria for defining the genre—as well as one's language, nationality, and reasons for doing so—the history of YA may date to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868–69), Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer* (1942), or—most commonly—S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967), among many other suggested texts. This temporal instability is also affected by the changing nature of both "adolescence" and the "teenager": While adolescence as a distinct developmental stage emerged with G. Stanley Hall's work in 1904, the teenager as a consumer demographic arose in the 1930s and 1940s as what Grace Palladino calls "an attractive new market in the making" (52).[4] Both concepts are themselves complicated by their intersection with additional identities, particularly those related to race, gender, sexuality, and disability. What constitutes the "young adult" of YA literature thus depends on historically contingent understandings of youth and literature that continue to change and evolve.

Current market realities further complicate assumptions about YA's current audience. Carrie Hintz and Eric Tribunella report that, in 2012, "just over 55 percent of all YA books purchased were for adult readers" (15) for their own reading.[5] By 2017, Cadden et al. observe, "estimates of adults purchasing YA literature had risen to seventy percent of total YA sales" (1). This adult readership majority fundamentally destabilizes the "young adult" designation, suggesting that YA addresses desires and anxieties that transcend age categories even as it maintains the fiction of teenage address. Given these contradictions, Marah Gubar's observation that scholars of children's and YA literature "cheerfully [carry] on with their scholarship on specific texts, types, and eras of children's literature as though

the lack of an overarching definition constituted no real impediment to their work" (210) is both accurate and unsurprising.

Component Two: Serialization

Serialization presents its own definitional challenges. In defining the serial, Roger Hagedorn emphasizes its consumer nature, noting that serials present consumers with independent units of narrative at predictable times. He suggests that episodicity is the defining trait of the serial, functioning "as a textual sign of the serial's material existence as merchandise and, therefore, of the discourse established between the producing industry and the consuming public" (28). When it comes to serialization for younger readers, however, even seemingly straightforward definitions prove unstable. Victor Watson notes that the children's series book is "a sequence of separate narratives mostly about the same characters and usually written by one author" (437). For her work on girls' series fiction, LuElla D'Amico establishes a minimum number of texts necessary to be considered a series, noting, "a series will be defined as any book … that feature[s] the same character or characters for more than three books" (x), thereby potentially distinguishing series from sequels or trilogies.[6] Each of these basic parameters, however, proves surprisingly slippery. Watson's phrase "usually written by one author," for example, acknowledges the ghostwriting practices that have characterized many successful series for young readers, from Stratemeyer Syndicate productions to contemporary franchise fiction. Indeed, within this issue, Melanie Ramdarshan Bold's and Nora Slonimsky's use of the *Sweet Valley* franchise to examine ghostwriting as a form of "in-between" authorship emphasizes the complicated role of the author in such series novels.

The distinction between types of series reveals further definitional instability. Sherrie Inness distinguishes between "series books" and "books in a series," observing that "[s]eries books are more apt to take place in a timeless world where the characters never grow older or only grow older in the most gradual fashion (think *Nancy Drew*); in books in a series, the characters generally age as real people do" (2), as in Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books. Watson provides parallel categories with "successive series," in which "characters show few signs of growing older or changing in any significant way" (533), versus "progressive series," in which "a developing story is told in instalments, each book telling a different part of a sequential narrative, with the characters growing older" (532). Importantly, both Inness and Watson acknowledge the instability of these categories. Inness warns that "a hard and fast distinction between these two types should not be made, since books have a disturbing fashion of stepping over the lines" (2), while Watson notes that this resistance to categorization stems from "an ambiguity of purpose latent in all series fictions: their desire to provide readers with more of the same and simultaneously to tell a new story" (535).

The industrial production methods that have dominated young people's series fiction add another layer of definitional complexity. Catherine Sheldrick Ross observes that dime novel publishers—the forerunners of the twentieth-century series publishers—established methods in which "the writer was just one node in an industrial production line that depended upon Fordist principles of quantity, uniformity, and speed" (196). Edward Stratemeyer perfected these methods within the Stratemeyer Syndicate, becoming known

as "the Henry Ford of children's publishing" as he "speeded up production by the use of ghost writers; he achieved uniformity by controlling the story outlines and retaining editorial control; and he kept unit costs low through large production runs and economies of scale" (201). As Emily Hamilton-Honey observes, "Thanks to Stratemeyer and his complete victory in the juvenile books market, series that were produced from the turn of the twentieth century onward tend to have similar plot structure and even the same 'assembly line' type of syndicate production" (9).

Yet Hamilton-Honey's research also reveals how this twentieth-century model obscures earlier traditions. As she notes, nineteenth-century series books feature single authorship without ghostwriters, open didacticism, characters who may disappear between volumes, and long and slow plots that "do not conform to the [post-Stratemeyer] publishing syndicate standard of short, sweet, and action-packed" (9). The dominance of the Stratemeyer model in defining series books "eliminates many earlier works that were not produced through the same process" (9), revealing how industrial production methods may have retroactively shaped our understanding of what constitutes a series. The serialization component thus brings its own instabilities to YA series romance, including temporal classifications, authorial ambiguity, and the tricky contradiction of providing both repetition and novelty.

Component Three: Popular Romance

When the third component—popular romance—is adapted for younger readers, its emergent definitional instabilities become particularly complex. The Romance Writers of America (RWA) defines romance fiction as containing "Two basic elements… a central love story and an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending" ("About"). Pamela Regis defines the romance novel as "a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines" (*Natural* 14), later replacing "heroine" with "protagonist" for greater gender inclusivity ("What" para. 8). More recently, Jayashree Kamblé et al. define the genre as "English-language novels that are written in various parts of the world, aim at a broad (mass-market) readership, and center around a love plot that holds the promise of a future with a unified emotional life for two or more protagonists" (2). These definitions seem straightforward enough, yet each contains assumptions that become problematic in YA contexts.

The most universally recognized feature of romance—the "happily ever after" (HEA)—becomes complicated in young adult literature. As Regis explains, "Romance novels end happily. Readers insist on it" (9), and An Goris confirms the HEA as "one of the romance novel's defining and distinguishing features" (para. 7). Generally, however, teenage romance must temper the reader's expectations, in that it cannot promise *permanent* happiness without appearing either unrealistic or inappropriately mature. The junior novel (teen romance novels of the 1940s and 1950s) occasionally uses a class ring to suggest near-future marriage, but YA romance of later decades generally avoids implying teen marriage (with notable exceptions).[7] As M. Daphne Kutzer writes regarding series such as Bantam's *Sweet Dreams* and Silhouette's *First Love*,

> Teen romances are also concerned with developing love, but nearly all of them imply that the one, true love is some years in the future and… not necessarily passionate. Teen romances are concerned with the beginnings of the romantic search, not with the final triumph. (91)

Instead, YA series novels are typically better represented by "happy for now" (HFN) endings that acknowledge the provisional nature of young love.

The inclusion of sexually explicit content in romance presents a further definitional challenge. Hannah McCann and Catherine M. Roach assert that "[p]opular romance fiction is about sex, even when it isn't. Sexual pleasure—and, most often, *women's* sexual pleasure—is a fundamental and telling concern of the genre" (411). The teen audience of YA romance, however, complicates the relationship between sex and romance. Roberta Seelinger Trites has argued that "[s]exual potency is a common metaphor for empowerment" (84) in YA literature generally, and that "experiencing sexuality marks a rite of passage that helps [characters in YA novels] define themselves as having left childhood behind" (84).

Within YA *romance*, however, Lydia Kokkola observes a "lack of carnal desire" (174), adding that "when the adolescent characters do become sexually active (thereby claiming adult knowledge for themselves), they are likely to be portrayed as monstrous and/or be punished" (174). Moreover, when it comes to the explicitness of sexual content, Amy Pattee observes that YA romance exists "on a continuum between chastity and sensuality" (*Developing* 169), with content ranging from first kisses to more explicit encounters. It seems that YA romance cannot be defined by any consistent approach to sexuality; instead, it exists in ongoing negotiation with changing social norms surrounding the inclusion—and explicitness—of teen sex.

Temporal Tensions

The three components outlined above—young adult literature (with its power binary and audience ambiguity), serialization (with its production complexities), and romance (with its generic requirements that must be adapted for younger readers)—possess complications that combine into further contradictions within YA series romance. Such contradictions are evident, for example, in how time functions in the genre. The three components operate within multiple temporal frameworks: Young adult literature gestures toward developmental time, in that characters grow and mature—"coming of age" is, after all, a process set within time. Popular romance requires teleological time: Its narratives drive toward the promise of "happily ever after" (or "happy for now" in YA romance). Serialization depends on cyclical time in its need to keep the series going and evade permanent narrative resolution. In YA series romance, these temporalities pull in opposing directions, creating texts that must somehow move forward and stand still simultaneously. Both Nancy Drew and the Wakefield twins, for example, exist in permanent teen beauty, never aging despite their hundreds of adventures across multiple decades of publication.

This temporal stasis can create conflict between the narrative imperatives of popular romance and those of young adult literature. Whereas the RWA is clear that the romance narrative "centers around individuals falling love and struggling to make the relationship work," ("About"), romance within YA is often more a mechanism for character development than its sole focus. From Rosamond Du Jardin's 1950s junior novels demonstrating girls'

maturation through romance to Charlie Spring's personal development within Alice Oseman's *Heartstopper* series, "young adult novels typically situate their stories of romantic love within a greater coming-of-age plot so that growth and maturity is often the result of falling in love" (Pattee *Developing* 169). In Victor Watson's "successive series," however—where characters maintain a static age—one may ask: How do characters develop through romance if they never age? How can love lead to maturity if maturity would end the series?

Different YA romance series attempt solutions to this temporal bind. Progressive series (which allow characters to age) may eventually lose their young adult status, shifting to a new genre (as is the case with many nineteenth-century narratives), or resort to implausible plot devices to extend adolescence. The Stratemeyer Syndicate model chooses the stasis of Watson's successive series, but arguably at the cost of character development. Contemporary YA romance series sometimes split the difference through spin-offs and companion series that explore different life stages while maintaining the original's perpetual youth, such as when the Wakefield twins go to college in the *Sweet Valley University* series, or when they appear as adults in *Sweet Valley Confidential*. Still, many of these solutions struggle to resolve the key tension between YA's need for maturation, serialization's need for continuation, and popular romance's drive toward closure, suggesting that temporal contradictions may be somewhat inherent to the genre.

Cultural Legitimacy Tensions

Equally significant tensions emerge in relation to the cultural value and legitimacy of YA series romance. YA, for example, has historically been stigmatized as inferior literature, particularly within literary studies and education. Hintz and Tribunella explain that some critics dismiss YA as "less complex, less literary, and less serious" (16), noting how "the very popularity of teen fiction can be used to dismiss it as pulp for the masses" (16). Indeed, such dismissal of YA is obvious from early academic criticism of it; English education professor Richard Alm, writing in 1955 about the junior novel, asserts,

> most novelists present a sugar-puff story of what adolescents should do and should believe rather than what adolescents may or will do and believe…. Their stories are artificial, often distorted, sometimes completely false representations of adolescence. Instead of art, they produce artifice. (317)

Seventy years later—despite massive growth in YA sales—stigma persists; YA is rarely taught in high schools, for example, even though high school students represent the assumed readership age of YA, and YA is used to promote literacy skills. Instead, Sarah K. Herz and Donald R. Gallo observe that "YAL, like some stock character actor, is typecast by many teachers as being inferior reading and lacking the necessary qualities of great works of literature. Many teachers equate YAL with boxed sets of controlled vocabulary reading books… with no literary qualities" (12).

The commercial success of combining YA with serialization led to the further denigration of YA's cultural status, particularly in the eyes of librarians. Hamilton-Honey explains that, following the rise of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, librarians read publishers' profit motives as evidence "that publishers were willing to peddle any kind of books the

public would buy, whether they were 'proper' and 'best' or not" ("Guardians" 769–770). Librarians positioned themselves as guardians against the contaminating influence of this commercial fiction. Indeed, Leonard Marcus notes that "the shadow cast by this publishing phenomenon proved long enough to darken the reception of series fiction of unassailable literary merit" (124), explaining how Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series was praised but "somehow always managed to fall short of the required number of librarians' votes" (124) required for the Newbery Medal, suggesting that series form alone could disqualify YA texts from literary recognition.

Stigmatization of YA series intensified during the late-twentieth-century shift in young people's book distribution from libraries to commercial outlets. As Joel Taxel documents, when federal funding for libraries decreased in the 1970s, thereby removing librarians' authority and purchasing power over texts for teens, publishers had to find new markets "in special children's bookstores, chain bookstores, discount stores, supermarkets, drug stores, and school book clubs" (154). The resulting texts—particularly 1980s and 1990s YA series romance—functioned "less as traditional literary creations than as products of marketing research" (160), making them ripe for both scholarly and librarian condemnation.

The romance component adds another layer of stigma. Focusing on *Sweet Valley High*, Pattee observes, "The series' similarity—in content and tone—to the stand-alone popular romance novels that were its competitors underscores Pascal's novels' adherence to the generic romance traditions critics argue are ideologically conservative" (*Reading* 4). Moreover, she points out that "[w]hile the 'Sweet Valley High' novels published during this conservative ascendency may not have been created as tools of propaganda, the novels did reflect the ideology of what was, at the time of their publication, the 'ruling' class" (4). Because of their conservatism, *Sweet Valley High* and similar 1980s-1990s YA series were often vilified as dangerous texts, with critics of the time using a feminist lens to indicate patriarchal power and damaging gender norms within the texts (Allen 174). In the 1981 special double issue on preteen and teen romance series novels of the influential *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, for example, the editors viewed such texts as "brainwashers," declaring, "we must challenge patriarchal values and controls whenever and wherever we can. The new romances are trivial trash ("About Romance Series" 3).

Both positive and negative scholarly views on YA series romance continue to exist simultaneously. While many are now more open to the positive possibilities of the texts, the stigmas—particularly those that stem from each of the genre's component parts—remain heavily in play. The genre's cultural status continues to be denigrated by those who focus on its commercialism, its sometimes-formulaic production, or its romance narratives, yet those features also enable its popularity and accessibility, particularly with reluctant young readers. These contradictions suggest that YA series romance exists in an enduring state of cultural mediation, too popular to ignore, but too commercially tainted and romantically focused for many people to fully embrace. The tensions and contradictions surrounding its cultural status, then, like its temporal tensions, thus contribute to the challenge of defining what, exactly, constitutes YA series romance.

The Potential of Definitional Instability

As the articles in this special issue demonstrate, the definitional instability of YA series romance allows it to grow and change. Rather than viewing the genre's contradictions as failures or limitations, the contributors to this volume reveal how YA series romance's inability to assert a fixed definition allows it to function simultaneously as commercial product *and* site of resistance, as conservative reinforcement *and* progressive possibility. Through examinations of diverse aspects spanning from ghostwriting to soul mates to Black joy to Netflix narrative devices to girl power to fan fiction, these articles illuminate how YA series romance creates spaces for negotiation, representation, and transformation *because* its boundaries remain contested.

Our first article reveals how the methods that undermine traditional notions of authorship within much YA series romance paradoxically create spaces for different kinds of collaborative creative expression. Melanie Ramdarshan Bold and Nora Slonimsky's "'Leading dual lives, even literarily': Voice, Visibility, and Ghostwriting in the *Sweet Valley* Franchise" explores ghostwriting as a form of "in-between" authorship. By interviewing former *Sweet Valley* ghostwriters, they reveal the collaboration and constraint of ghostwriting, distinguishing between the authorial voice, reflecting the authors' own identities, and the narratological voice of the series. Indeed, the standardization of voice within the texts can lead to the perpetuation of "a predominantly white, middle-class, and heteronormative perspective" (18). Using the concept of transitional authorship to refer to networked contributions from multiple actors, Bold and Slonimsky emphasize the collaborative complexity that underlies the production of YA series romance such as *Sweet Valley*.

Moving from production to content, the second article, Jessica Caravaggio's "Together Forever: Heterodestiny and the Soulmate Trope in Sarah J. Maas's *A Court of Thorns and Roses* Series," examines the ACOTAR series (2015–2021), scholarship, and fans' online reception. Caravaggio reveals how the series' supernatural soul-mate trope problematizes consent by denying characters the chance to choose their own partners, while also limiting queer possibilities through its "romanticized biological imperative towards heterosexuality and reproduction" (5). As Caravaggio demonstrates, the soul-mate trope emerges as an overreach of authoritative discourse, which itself can limit readers' ability to explore their feelings about sexuality and relationships, even as the genre promises such exploration.

Important questions regarding representation and resistance emerge within the third article, Christian M. Hines's "Main Character Energy: Black Girls Getting the Love They Deserve in Elise Bryant's Young Adult Novels." In analyzing three of Bryant's YA series texts, *Happily Ever Afters*, *One True Loves*, and *Reggie and Delilah's Year of Falling*, Hines argues for the radical potential of Black YA romance to disrupt the white gaze that has historically dominated both young adult and romance literatures. Through her use of Black Feminist Thought as a key framework for her argument, Hines reveals the ways in which Bryant's novels provide crucial reclamation of Black joy, demonstrating Black girls' self-love within societies that attempt to dictate what constitutes "acceptable" forms of Blackness.

The fourth article reveals how the intersection of cultural traditions within YA series romance creates additional possibilities for transformation. In "'I'd really, really like a boyfriend': A Narratological Examination of Adolescence, Ideology, and Subjectivity in Indian and Indian American YA Netflix Romances," Tharini Viswanath and Nithya Sivashankar examine how Indian and diasporic YA romance television shows such as Netflix's *Never Have I Ever* and *Mismatched* use love triangles, Bollywood elements, and other narrative devices to convey ideologies relating to both adolescence and romance. Their analysis reveals how

such narrative devices present love and romance as a framework through which characters may discuss topics (such as grief or female sexuality) that are often considered taboo in various Indian and diasporic communities.

The genre's capacity to serve multiple functions simultaneously becomes in Andrea Braithwaite's "You Go, Girl! Nancy Drew in the Girl Power Era," tracing the classic girl detective's adaptation to postfeminist sensibilities. Through analysis of the *Nancy Drew Files* (1986–1997) and the *Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys Super Mystery* series (1988–1998), Braithwaite demonstrates how introducing multiple romantic interests and sexual confidence to Nancy's character reveals the genre's flexibility in negotiating feminist empowerment and romance conventions. The series maintain Nancy's autonomy and agency while adapting to what Braithwaite identifies as the shifting terrain of postfeminist popular culture, illustrating how YA series romance can preserve core character identities while also evolving to meet changing cultural expectations.

Finally, when the official boundaries of YA series romance prove too constraining, readers themselves become creators, as Amber Moore and Kaye Hare explore in "Romance, Eroticism, and Intimacy in a Nancy Drew Fanfiction: Cross-Reading Personal Pedagogies and Literacies." Their feminist collaborative analysis of erotic Nancy Drew fan fiction involves historicizing their shared embodiments of the texts, analyzing fan fiction "smut," and reflecting on it as intimate writing. In exploring how their readings inform their work as literacy researchers and postsecondary educators, they demonstrate how collaborative cross-reading creates space to examine Nancy Drew fan fiction (and, by extension, fan fiction generally) as a personal literacy practice that both destabilizes certainties and foregrounds embodiment and relationality. When placed in conversation with the other articles in this volume, Moore's and Hare's work reveals how the definitional instability of YA series romance extends beyond commercial production to encompass reader-generated content that challenges and expands the boundaries of the genre.

Collectively, the diverse methodological approaches and textual examples in these articles demonstrate the degree to which YA series romance exists as an adaptive cultural form: one whose definitional instability enables it to respond to changing social anxieties surrounding youth, desire, and narrative pleasure while continuing to provide readers with both familiarity and transformation. Its core components may possess their own definitional ambiguities, and their convergence within the genre may generate contradictions (particularly in terms of temporal and cultural tensions), but as the slashes in the special issue's title—YA / Series / Romance—indicate, these contradictions are not divisions to be overcome, but productive tensions to be sustained. They remind us that the genre's power and longevity may, in fact, lie in its refusal to become any one thing—in its insistence on remaining productively *un*defined.

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[1] The scope of my introduction is limited primarily to American texts, and I exclude other traditions solely because of space considerations.

[2] I refer to children's literature scholarship because it typically encompasses YA within its purview, as both categories navigate similar theoretical concerns surrounding the adult/child power dynamic and questions of agency and voice.

[3] Cadden et al. further clarify their classificatory focus by positioning YA as separate from "adolescent literature," which they define as "the broader category of all literature

about the stage of maturation from childhood into adulthood, a definition that includes texts from *Romeo and Juliet* to the latest teen dystopia" (3), and by acknowledging the power of publishers in creating additional marketing categories such as middle grade or new adult texts.

[4] Although most of Hall's theories are now discredited, Michael Cart notes that they "were enormously influential in their time, particularly among educators and a growing population of youth workers" (4). Subsequent key psychologists (including Robert J. Havighurst, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg) followed throughout the twentieth century, entrenching adolescence within developmental psychology.

[5] More specifically, Hintz and Tribunella quote a 2012 Bowker Market Research report. As they summarize,

> only 16 percent of YA book purchases were made by consumers under the age of 18, and a full 49 percent of purchases were made by those aged 30 and over. Of the 84 percent of [YA books] purchased by consumers 18 and over, 68.25 percent of purchases were for the adult's own reading, which means that just over 55 percent of all YA books purchased were for adult readers. (15)

[6] In her study of girls' series books in the United States, Carolyn Carpan similarly defines "the number of books in a series" as "anywhere from three to 300" (xii).

[7] As Sara K. Day explains, some recent YA novels "feature a sort of twenty-first-century marriage plot" (157), which is presented as "the logical and desirable culmination of adolescence. Even when characters do not officially become engaged or married, many texts for adolescent audiences maintain a rhetoric of the permanence of first love, suggesting or asserting that the romances they present will—and should—last forever" (157).

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