

1985

A Study of Moral Reasoning in Young Adult Literature

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Abstract

A moral dimension is often intrinsic to YA literature because it is concerned with the problems of youth. This study examines the moral reasoning of teenage protagonists by applying the theory of Lawrence Kohlberg to the analysis of a sample of twelve books drawn from YASD's "Best of the Best Books--1970-1982" list. The sample was structured to provide comparison between type of book (realistic fiction and fantasy/ science fiction), sex of author, and sex and age of protagonist. Analysis was made by assigning a numerical score corresponding to Kohlberg's six developmental stages to six incidents from each book and statistically comparing the scores.

A STUDY OF MORAL REASONING
IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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Abstract

A STUDY OF MORAL REASONING IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Millie Jensen

A moral dimension is often intrinsic to YA literature because it is concerned with the problems of youth. This study examines the moral reasoning of teenage protagonists by applying the theory of Lawrence Kohlberg to the analysis of a sample of twelve books drawn from YASD's "Best of the Best Books--1970-1982" list. The sample was structured to provide comparison between type of book (realistic fiction and fantasy/science fiction), sex of author, and sex and age of protagonist. Analysis was made by assigning a numerical score corresponding to Kohlberg's six developmental stages to six incidents from each book and statistically comparing the scores.

The protagonists in all of the books were found to be reasoning as Kohlberg's conventional level or above. No significant difference was found in the average stage of protagonists' reasoning between types of books or between books representing the sex or age factors. This study has implications for interpreting the moral content of books and in helping readers to independently analyze and respond to what they read.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

"Young adult literature is the hot new area in publishing today," Judy Gitenstein, editorial director of books for young readers at Bantam Books, asserts.¹ She is committed to bringing out what she calls "straight across" writing, where the reader learns and grows along with the adolescent narrator or main character. This, she feels, is the essence of young adult or YA literature, a special area of publishing which evolved out of the ferment of the sixties. The YA designation is an arbitrary one; the dividing line between it and adult literature growing more blurred as time goes by. In its broadest sense young adult literature is that written primarily for adolescents or read widely by young people ages 12-19.² "Teens want to read about themes that impinge on their lives," says Charlotte Zolotow.³ Adolescents experience life with great intensity, she continues, and capturing that depth is important for authors seeking to communicate with a YA audience. Beverly Horowitz of Pacer Books speaks of

¹Neil Baldwin, "Writing for Young Adults," Publisher's Weekly 116 (October 19, 1984): 16.

²Ann Auten, "All About Adolescent Literature: Pro and Con," Journal of Reading 28 (October 1984): 76.

³Baldwin, p. 17.

publishing books that present varying points of view, demonstrating respect for teens' need to believe they can make choices on their own.⁴ These comments by persons involved with YA publishing point to their perception of the important relationship between YA literature and adolescent development.

Young adult literature has been a battlefield since its growth into a separate genre in the sixties. Because of its attention to problems of young adults and the attempt to deal realistically with once-taboo subjects, it has been a target for criticism and censorship. Patricia Lee Gauch, author of books for children and young adults, comments:

Many parents' groups have demanded morally enhancing value-producing adolescent books, and I have always found it ironic that many times the YA books they attack are the most moral.⁵

In an essay analyzing several so-called "controversial" novels, Maia Pank Mertz emphasizes that books which present ideas do not necessarily advocate them.⁶ She feels that charges of a lack of moral tone need to be addressed:

These charges--which reflect the public's concern that some books used in schools are attacking the moral foundation of our society--need to be carefully considered and explored. For we cannot afford to ignore the criticism of those who can influence the curricula of our schools.⁷

⁴Baldwin, p. 17.

⁵Patricia Lee Gauch, "'Good Stuff' in Adolescent Fiction," Top of the News 40 (Winter 1984): 128.

⁶Maia Pank Mertz, "The New Realism: Traditional Cultural Values in Recent Young-Adult Fiction," Phi Delta Kappan 60 (October 1978): 101-05.

⁷Mertz, p. 101.

Context must be considered in judging a book's morality. Ways to effectively evaluate, discuss, and interpret the moral content of young adult literature are needed.

Although YA literature is "the most debated, and frequently the most underrated and underused genre,"⁸ its role is upheld by many. Because a moral dimension is often intrinsic to YA novels, they can be used to develop critical thinking skills about moral issues. "In focusing on an age-appropriate dilemma, students encounter values and issues with which they identify socially, emotionally, intellectually, and attitudinally."⁹ Jean Karl, vice president and publisher with Atheneum Press, sees young adults as moving into new areas of their lives where they need to find books which will provide them with "literary experiences that will broaden their view of the world."¹⁰ In judging what literary experiences may provide that stimulation, a comment by YA author, Richard Peck, may be helpful:

In reaching for a book, the young are looking for characters they can befriend, characters they can become. They're looking for situations too, situations more stimulating and reassuring than their own lives.¹¹

⁸Gauch, p. 125.

⁹Josephine Stahl-Gemake and O. Paul Wielan. "A Study Guide for Building Moral Reasoning Through Adolescent Literature," Journal of Reading 28 (October 1984): 35.

¹⁰Baldwin, p. 20.

¹¹Richard Peck, "People of the Word," School Library Media Quarterly 10 (Fall 1981): 20.

Only within the last fifteen to twenty years has there been much attention given to the role played by literature in adolescent development. One clue to understanding this relationship may be found in understanding the adolescent's evolving moral conscience. Moral decision-making has been studied by Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates at the Center for Moral Development at Harvard University. Kohlberg divided moral development into six consecutively developed stages. The level of development sets limits on what is comprehended and what is preferred. The application of Kohlberg's theory to young adult literature seems to offer possibilities for the library media specialist in several areas. In his article in Top of the News, Peter Scharf aptly summarizes this potential:

This movement toward a mature adulthood has special meaning in a world of cultural change and conflicting value systems. Only adults who have reflected upon and developed a clear set of inner values can hope to cope with the flux of the last quarter of the twentieth century. In this search for values, books and libraries have a unique task. If libraries can encourage meaningful personal searches among young people, they can play a vital role in the process of moral development. To do this, they must create a climate of openness toward the exploring youth and gear their offerings to the developmental concerns and interests of the emerging adolescent.¹²

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to apply the theory of Lawrence Kohlberg concerning the development of moral reasoning to the analysis of a representative sample of young

¹²Peter Scharf, "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents," Top of the News 33 (Winter 1977): 135.

adult fiction. This theory described the sequence by which individuals develop their moral standards and says that each stage is built on the preceding one, the movement is always upward and the sequence is invariant. The data generated by this study provided information about the moral reasoning portrayed in YA books and how characters fit the developmental sequence.

The study focused on the moral reasoning used by the protagonist(s) of each book. Since, according to Kohlberg's theory, the action itself does not determine the level of moral reasoning, but the protagonists' reasons underlying the action, the motivation of the books' protagonists in making decisions was examined.

Previous research has suggested possible differences in the moral reasoning of protagonists between books of different types and according to the sex of the author, the sex of the protagonist, and the protagonist's age.¹³ This study used these factors as variables in the investigation, and comparisons were made in the average stage of moral reasoning among books.

Examination was of a sample of books which have been shown to be popular with young adults and this fact offered insight into a possible relationship between their popularity and the level of moral reasoning they portrayed. Kohlberg's findings show that an individual prefers and describes as

¹³Bernard A. Rihn, "Kohlberg Level of Moral Reasoning of Protagonists in Newbery Award winning Fiction," Reading Research Quarterly 15, no. 3 (1980): 391, 395.

"best", reasoning one stage above his or her own functioning level. To be believable, a book would be expected to portray movement from one stage to another which is smooth and consistent.

Another aspect of this study was to determine if the stage of moral reasoning displayed by the protagonist in most of the books examined was at least at the conventional level or above it. Higher levels of moral reasoning argue against the criticism sometimes directed at YA novels for a lack of moral tone.

Problem Statement

During this investigation the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the average stage of moral reasoning, based on the Kohlberg scale of moral development, used by the protagonist in each of a selected group of young adult novels?
2. Will there be any significant difference between the average stage of moral reasoning used by the protagonists in books of science fiction or fantasy and books of realistic fiction?
3. Will there be any significant difference between the average stage of moral reasoning used by female protagonists and that used by male protagonists?
4. Will there be any significant difference between the average stage of moral reasoning of protagonists in books written by male authors and books written by female authors?

5. Will there be any significant difference between the average stage of moral reasoning used by protagonists 16 years old or younger and that used by protagonists 17 years old and older?

Hypotheses

This study tested the following hypotheses:

1. The protagonists in a majority of the books analyzed exhibited an average stage of moral reasoning based on the Kohlberg scale of moral development of at least 3.5.

2. There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by the protagonists between books of science fiction and fantasy and books of realistic fiction.

3. There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by male and female protagonists.

4. There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by protagonists between books written by male authors and books written by female authors.

5. There was no significant difference in the average stage of moral reasoning used by protagonists sixteen years old or younger and protagonists seventeen years old and older.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The moral development of young adults is an important concern for library media specialists and teachers.

2. Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development is valid.

3. The Kohlberg theory is applicable to the reasoning used by protagonists in young adult literature.

4. Judgments of the protagonists' moral reasoning can be determined reliably.

5. The Young Adult Services Division's "Best of the Best Books--1970-82" list is representative of those books young adults are reading.

Limitations

The following limitations applied to this investigation:

1. The books examined represent a small sample of the young adult books on the "Best of the Best" list; the list represented only a small sample of popular and worthwhile young adult books from this time period.

2. Books from other time periods and types other than realistic fiction and fantasy and science fiction were not included.

3. The assigning of a stage of moral reasoning was the best judgment of this researcher alone and was influenced by the personal moral values of this researcher.

4. Clear-cut explanations of the motivation of the character were not always provided by the author as confirmed by this quote from the literature:

Determining the levels and stages is always tentative, but some determinations are more valid because they have more clear-cut support from the passage.¹⁴

Definitions of Terms

Young Adult Literature- Literature written primarily for or read widely by young people ages 12-19.

Morality- "A set of cultural rules of social action which have been internalized by the individual." A criterion of internalization is intrinsic motivation--that is, conformity to the rule when it is unlikely that breaking it would be detected or punished.¹⁵

Moral Development- "The increase of such internalization of basic cultural values."¹⁶ (See pp. 13-16 for discussion)

Moral Reasoning (or Moral Judgment)- "The use and interpretation of rules in conflict situations and reasons for moral action."¹⁷ (See pp. 14-16 for discussion)

Moral Dilemma- A conflict between competing claims.¹⁸
(See p. 13 for discussion)

¹⁴John E. Readence, David W. Moore and Sharon Moore, "Kohlberg in the Classroom: Responding to Literature," Journal of Reading 29 (November 1982): 107.

¹⁵Lawrence Kohlberg, "Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology," in Review of Child Development Research ed. Martin L. Hoffman and Lois Wladis Hoffman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964), p. 384.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Brenda Munsey, ed., Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press), pp. 332-35.

Values- The established ideals of life; objects, customs, ways of acting and the like that members of a given society regard as desirable.

Significance of the Study

This investigation was important because it added to the fund of knowledge about the relationship of young adult literature to moral development. Most of the studies reported in the literature have involved literature for children. There seemed to be little systematic examination of young adult literature based on Kohlberg's theories.

The information generated by this study has implications for reader guidance, book selection, interpretation of the content of books and classroom instruction. The most important result of this study was an increased awareness of a different way of looking at young adult literature, and responding in a personal, meaningful and insightful way.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Peter Scharf equates the "unique role of books and libraries in the search for values" with making a connection with the "developmental concerns and interests of the emerging adolescent."¹⁹ In making this connection, there is a need to consider both a system for describing developmental concerns and a system for analyzing values portrayed in books. In an examination of the literature relevant to these concerns several ways of looking at the morality of fictional characters were found:

(1) Mertz in her analysis of traditional values in realistic fiction uses the concept of a "symbolic universe" to represent a society's shared values, beliefs, and models for behavior.²⁰

(2) The Catcher in the Rye is analyzed in an English Journal article by Edwards using precepts from the New

¹⁹Scharf, Peter, "Moral Development and Literature for Adolescents," Top of the News 33 (Winter 1977): 135.

²⁰Maia Pank Mertz, "The New Realism: Traditional Cultural Values in Recent Young-Adult Fiction," Phi Delta Kappan 60 (October 1978): 101-05.

Testament since critics often claim the Bible as their moral base.²¹

(3) Schwartz uses the principles contained in the Humanistic Manifesto II in a discussion of young adult literature dealing with current problems and lifestyles.²²

(4) A system of values analysis based on the research of Milton Rokeach and Ralph K. White was adapted to literary texts in two studies. Beach and Brunetti used this technique with groups of students to compare how maturity and sex affect their view of literary characters.²³ Lester used this technique in analyzing the personal values of different characters in short stories.²⁴ The degree of detail in applying this research technique and its orientation toward literary criticism seemed to suggest that it was not the best method to use for this study.

(5) The research of Lawrence Kohlberg concerning moral development stages is used as a conceptual base for discussing

²¹June Edwards, "Censorship in the Schools: What's Moral About 'The Catcher in the Rye'?" English Journal 72 (April 1983): 39-42.

²²Sheila Schwartz, Using Adolescent Fiction That Deals With Current Problems and Lifestyles to Explore Contemporary Values. (Rutherford, N.J.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 119 199, 1976).

²³Richard Beach and Gerald Brunnetti, "Differences Between High School and University Students in Their Conception of Literary Characters," Research in the Teaching of English 10 (Winter 1976): 259-68.

²⁴Nancy B. Lester, "A System for Analyzing Characters' Values in Literary Texts," Research in the Teaching of English 16 (December 1982): 321-38.

and analyzing literature in a variety of articles and research studies.

This last possibility seemed to be the best for this research study because it is frequently recommended for use in school settings, because it does provide a framework for understanding adolescent development, and because there is a broader base of available literature on the subject to provide a background for this study. "As an educational psychologist, Kohlberg is basically concerned with the possibilities of moral education within the schools, but his theory opens many doors for persons working with children and young adults."²⁵

Since Kohlberg's theory of moral development is basic to this study, an understanding of his research and an explanation of his theory is required. Since the early 1960's Kohlberg and his associates have been conducting a longitudinal research study on the moral development of children. He initially studied the same group of 75 American boys, beginning when they were ten to sixteen years old and ending fifteen years later. At three-year intervals the boys were asked to respond to problem-type stories or situations in which a leading character made a moral decision. For example, one situation described the plight of a husband who stole food in order to save his sick wife from dying. The boys were

²⁵Dorothy Broderick, "Moral Values and Children's Literature," Library Journal 96 (December 15, 1971): 4168.

asked, "Should the husband have done that?"²⁶ From their responses Kohlberg devised a hierarchy of six stages and three levels of moral development. The study was extended to other cultures (Great Britain, Canada, Taiwan, Mexico, Turkey and an aboriginal village in Malaysia)²⁷ where it was found that the stages and their sequence, though not the same rate of development, were similar for all cultures investigated. In a 1968 study, American adolescents were asked to rate responses in order of how good they were and to restate them in their own words. The responses were at each of the six stages. The subjects tended to rank low all responses at stages below their own and to restate responses two or more stages above their own in terms of their own stage.²⁸

Lawrence Kohlberg characterizes his theory as one of cognitive development. His concern is with the thought structures underlying the conceptual growth of individuals. He has focused on universal characteristics in cognitive development and has postulated the following sequence of cognitive developmental stages:

I. Preconventional Level

At this level individuals perceive things as right or wrong, good or bad on the basis of physical or hedonistic

²⁶Sam Leaton Sebasta and William Iverson, Literature for Thursday's Child (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1975), p. 100.

²⁷Broderick, p. 4168.

²⁸Kenneth Hoskisson and Donald S. Biskin, "Analyzing and Discussing Children's Literature Using Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development," The Reading Teacher 33 (November 1979): 143.

consequences (e.g., punishment, reward, exchange of favors). The primary determinants of morality at this level are actual happenings or consequences.

Stage 1: Punishment/obedience

The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness regardless of the human value of those consequences. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to superior power or prestige characterize moral decisions at this stage.

Stage 2: The Marketplace

Right action is interpreted in terms of one's own needs and only occasionally in terms of the needs of others. Human relations consist of making deals where one behavior is performed in exchange for another. Reciprocity, a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," rather than loyalty or gratitude is the basis for moral decisions here.

II. Conventional Level

At this level standards imposed by others (such as family, friends and society) are the basis for moral reasoning. Maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group, or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of direct consequences. Conventional morality is one of conformity and loyalty. The existing social order is maintained, supported, and justified.

Stage 3: Good boy/nice girl

Good behavior is interpreted as that which pleases and is judged to be appropriate by others. There is conformity to stereotypical images of majority behavior. One earns approval by being nice, and nice is defined by others. Individuals at this stage anticipate praise for doing what others expect.

Stage 4: Law and order

Individuals at this stage obey authority in order to maintain the social order. Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the status quo.

III. Postconventional Level

Individuals show clear efforts to define moral values that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups holding those principles. Self-imposed abstract standards form the basis for moral reasoning. Right behavior is defined according to absolutes and ideals. Shared

standards, rights, and duties are deemed worthwhile because of their intrinsic value.

Stage 5: Social contract

Right action is defined in terms of rules critically examined and agreed upon for the sake of the whole society. Correct actions consists of those that do not violate the will or rights of others. The welfare of the majority is at stake here. Social utility, what is good for the group, determines right decisions. Moral decisions result from a legal point of view. This is the official morality of the government of the society.

Stage 6: Universal ethics

Right is defined by a decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles. These principles are abstract and ethical (e.g., "The Golden Rule"), and are universal principles of justice, equality of human rights, and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.

(There is some argument as to whether stage 6 really follows stage 5 or is a variant at the same level.)²⁹

Four qualities of the development of stages of moral reasoning have emerged from the research: (1) The stages are invariant; (2) Subjects cannot comprehend moral reasoning more than one stage beyond their own stage of reasoning; (3) Subjects are attracted to reasoning one level above their predominant level; (4) Movement through the stages takes place when "cognitive disequilibrium" is created.³⁰ Cognitive disequilibrium is created when one thinks about the

²⁹Readence, p. 106. The definition of moral stages is adapted by Readence (pp. 105-06) from Kohlberg's writings. See, for example, Lawrence Kohlberg, "From Is to Ought," Cognitive Development and Epistemology, ed. Theodore Mischel (New York: Academic Press, 1971), pp. 164-65.

³⁰Arlene M. Pillar, "Using Children's Literature to Foster Moral Development," The Reading Teacher 33 (November 1979): 149.

inadequacies of one's reasons and searches for more adequate reasons.³¹

The third and fourth characteristics form the philosophical base for much of the literature connecting Kohlberg's theory and literature. Articles by Biskin and Hoskisson,³² Pillar,³³ and Hoskisson and Biskin³⁴ are all concerned with ways to use guided discussion of moral dilemmas from children's literature to encourage moral development.

The two studies by Hoskisson and Biskin center on discussion procedures and reflective thinking strategy. They feel that situations that encourage children to compare, to categorize, to hypothesize and to make judgments increase the probability that they will acquire an understanding of the events around them.

In discussions of moral dilemmas children can examine the alternatives to the moral judgments made by characters in the story . . . Since school environments are highly structured, material must be provided that allows the freedom of interaction necessary for cognitive growth.³⁵

³¹Ibid.

³²Donald Biskin and Kenneth Hoskisson, "Moral Development Through Children's Literature," Elementary School Journal 75 (December 1974): 156.

³³Pillar, pp. 148-51.

³⁴Hoskisson and Biskin, pp. 141-47.

³⁵Biskin and Hoskisson, p. 156.

Pillar puts emphasis on why a child thinks an action is right or wrong and cautions against imposing adult "right" answers upon the dilemmas.³⁶

An opposing view and a cautionary note are sounded by Arksey.³⁷ She objects to "moral educators" who, exhibiting little awareness of the body of children's literature, force their theory on any available story. The result, she feels, is that the moral education exercise "swamps" the story, and probably the child's enjoyment and learning as well. She argues for the subliminal approach, where the child listens or reads with no predetermined intent except to enjoy a good story.

One of the great gifts of a childhood spent with good books is surely a heightened morality, but each child must open this gift for him-or herself on his or her own terms, in his or her own good time.³⁸

Whether or not one agrees with Arksey's analysis, the connection between children and books must still be facilitated. Gosa,³⁹ Broderick,⁴⁰ and Rihn⁴¹ are all

³⁶Pillar, p. 150.

³⁷Laura Arksey. "Books, Children, and Moral Values: A Subliminal Approach," Top of the News 34 (Summer 1978): 375-86.

³⁸Arksey, p. 385.

³⁹Cheryl Gosa. "Moral Development in Current Fiction for Children and Young Adults," Language Arts 54 (May 1977): 529-36.

⁴⁰Dorothy Broderick, "Moral Values and Children's Literature," Library Journal 96 (December 15, 1971): 4168 and 97 (January 1972): 264-65.

⁴¹Rihn, pp. 377-98.

concerned with the implications of Kohlberg's research for reader guidance.

The major implication of Kohlberg's research for children's literature is that a child prior to age ten-twelve is rarely capable of Stage VI decision-making, and unfortunately children's fiction spanning ages two to roughly sixteen is loaded with moral decisions, the majority of which are resolved by Stage VI values, even if the protagonist is very young. If Kohlberg is right, and there is good reason to believe he is, fiction containing these high level decisions is meaningless for early character development. Children's book editors, not understanding this process, judge and decide to publish fiction which is surely highly moral, but unfortunately beyond the level of their readers.⁴²

Gosa illustrates her views by discussing appropriate and inappropriate moral decisions in ten books, two for each of four age categories. Broderick, writing in the SLJ section of Library Journal, suggests several hypotheses which remain to be tested: (1) Books a child likes best are either at his own level of moral development or the one immediately above; (2) Books rejected by children are operating at a stage more than one above his or her own; (3) If discussion groups containing children from two adjoining levels help children from lower levels move up more rapidly, then the same effect might be gained from books.⁴³ Broderick describes the efforts of the children's literature class (Summer 1971) at the University of Wisconsin's Library School in analyzing the winners of the Newbery Medal, using Kohlberg's stages. Comments are included

⁴²Gosa, p. 530.

⁴³Broderick, January 1972, p. 264.

about several of the books and the levels of moral development they portray.

Rihn also investigated Newbery Award books. In his study judges were trained, either informally or in a performance-based approach, to evaluate the stage and level of moral reasoning used by the protagonist of the book to resolve his or her moral dilemmas. Randomly selected Newbery books, classified by era, author's sex, and protagonist's sex, were then evaluated by the judges. The purpose of the study was to see "whether judgments of the protagonist's moral reasoning could be rendered in a reliable fashion."⁴⁴ The data collected showed very little difference in the evaluations between judges, but considerable difference between books:

Post-1949 books contained dilemmas which were resolved at higher stages of moral reasoning than books written before 1949. Male authors included dilemmas which were resolved at higher moral stages than female authors. Finally, male protagonists resolved all dilemmas⁴⁵ at higher moral stages than female protagonists.

Rihn predicts that it is doubtful that the differences would be duplicated for another sample of books. This study tests this prediction, in respect to the sex-related factors. He also suggests that potential sources of variability need to be identified; and mentions type or class of story and age of protagonist as possibilities.

⁴⁴Rihn, p. 379.

⁴⁵Rihn, p. 377.

In reviewing the literature, the application of Readence, Moore and Moore,⁴⁶ Stahl-Gemake and Wielan,⁴⁷ and Scharf⁴⁸ were found especially appropriate to young adults. Readence, Moore and Moore suggest ways of using Kohlberg's theory to help students independently analyze literature. Practice in assigning levels and stages is gained in class discussions and small group experiences. It is hoped that this practice will aid students in making inferences while reading, and that they can "independently assimilate concepts as they are encountered."⁴⁹ Stahl-Gemake and Wielan provide a generic study guide and activities for a unit on moral reasoning using young adult literature.

Scharf provides some important insights into the relationship of literature and the moral development of adolescents. While age levels are not absolute, the pre-conventional level of moral problem solving (Level one: stages 1 and 2), is typically associated with pre-adolescent children (ages 10-12) and "morally fixated," adults, according to Scharf. Hoskisson and Biskin confirm this appraisal:

Among American middle-class children and adolescents the percentage who are in pre-conventional stages drops from age 10 to 13. A mixture of stages 1, 2, and 3 may be found in 10 year olds . . . but 13 year olds generally use stage 3 reasoning.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Readence, pp. 104-08.

⁴⁷Stahl-Gemake, pp. 34-39.

⁴⁸Scharf, pp. 131-36.

⁴⁹Readence, p. 108.

⁵⁰Hoskisson, p. 143.

The conventional level (Level two: stages 3 and 4) becomes dominant in late pre-adolescence (ages 12-16). At stage three one gains approval by exhibiting behavior which will be approved by others. Social duty and concern with social rules and authority take over in stage four. Scharf comments:

One of the key developmental tasks of early adolescence involves the adolescent anticipating and accepting the legitimate expectations of his social world . . . "What does this society expect of me?"⁵¹

The postconventional level first appears in late adolescence (late high school or early college.) The youth rejects the conventional moral order and seeks to find his own. "This questioning is disturbing to many adults, including librarians, but is a critical step in the adolescent defining for himself an autonomous value base."⁵² Stage six is an affirmation of universal moral values. Much of the world's great literature involves this quest for ultimate meanings.

Three types of literature significant for young adults are identified by Scharf: (1) The literature of social expectations--significant in attaining conventional moral orientations; (2) The literature of social revolt--significant in rejection of conventional moral thought; (3) The literature

⁵¹Scharf, p. 133.

⁵²Scharf, p. 134.

of affirmation--significant in the acceptance of postconventional moral principles.⁵³

This review of the related literature reveals a sizable body of information concerning the relationship of literature to the moral development of children and young adults. Kohlberg's theories have been applied to guided discussions of moral dilemmas in the classroom, to independent reading and analysis of literature and to selection of materials appropriate to the developmental interests of differing age groups.

The literature does support the idea that Kohlberg's theory of moral development provides one means of evaluation, discussion and interpretation of the moral content of books for young adults. It also seems to suggest that additional research studies such as this are warranted.

⁵³Scharf, p. 133.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Each year the Young Adult Services Division of the American Library Association selects a list of recommended books for young adults called "Best Books for Young Adults." Periodically, a "Best of the Best Books" list is selected, representing those books that continue to be read by, enjoyed by, and relevant to today's teenagers. These are books of proven appeal and worth to young adult readers. This research study used the "Best of the Best Books--1970-82",⁵⁴ which is the most recent best of the best list, as the population from which twelve books were selected for analysis. The books were selected to balance the sample according to the variables of type of book, sex of author, sex of protagonist and age of protagonist.

The sample was structured so that there were six books of realistic fiction, three of which were written by men and three by women, and representing protagonists of varying age and sex. Six books of fantasy or science fiction were used

⁵⁴"Best of the Best Books 1970-82," Booklist (October 15, 1983): 351-354. Copies of the list in annotated brochure format are available from the Young Adult Services Division, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

for the other half of the sample and the same criteria were met.

The decision to use these book categories was made in order to compare types of fiction that would provide a clear contrast and not be overlapping. Realistic fiction seemed to be a natural choice for this analysis because of its concern with the problems of young adults. It has been an important part of YA literature since the inception of the genre. Science fiction and fantasy are contrasting in that they deal with imaginary worlds. Judy Gitenstein of Bantam Books attests to their popularity with young adults.

Problem oriented novels will always be with us, but I believe fantasy and science fiction are the next wave. Kids need escapism, too.⁵⁵

Science fiction and fantasy were considered together to provide enough books to fit the sample. The limitation to two types of literature was necessary because the size of the sample being used would not allow sufficient numbers of books in each category if more categories were included.

Pre-examination of potential selections indicated that not all books would lend themselves to the identification of moral reasoning. Books which were published in 1982 were considered first, and selection of books was made by going back through the years of publication to complete the sample. Appendix A contains a list of books arranged by the year of publication. Those considered, but not used, are also listed with an explanation of why they were not used.

⁵⁵ Baldwin, p. 16.

The approach used to analyze the twelve books was based on the study by Rihn, but with several important differences. Instead of using judges, the evaluation was the judgment of this researcher, and a different scoring procedure was used. The number of examples of moral reasoning found in each book varied but six examples which were felt to be representative were selected from each book.

A numerical score from 1-6 corresponding with Kohlberg's six stages of moral reasoning was assigned to each example. The scoring scale allows for the possibility of a "second best guess" or the presence of another possible stage. For example, a score of 3 indicated the choice of stage 3 as the stage of reasoning used by the protagonist and a score of 3.5 indicated a preference for stage 3, but the possibility that it might be 4, or that elements of stage 4 are present in the decision. Where nonconsecutive stages were present the score was given as an average of those stages. Possible scores were 1.0; 1.5; 2.0; 2.5; 3.0; 3.5; 4.0; 4.5; 5.0; 5.5; 6.0.

The scoring system was a departure from the methodology of Rihn, who used a four digit-score representing both level and stage. His recommendations suggested dropping the indication of level as it was "only an alias for stage and is a less precise measure."⁵⁶ His three digit system seemed to this researcher, to present problems in giving "second guesses" disproportionate weight in some instances.

⁵⁶Rihn, p. 395.

As each book was evaluated, brief comments about each dilemma, and the score for each were recorded on a data sheet for that book. Evaluation sheets are included in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

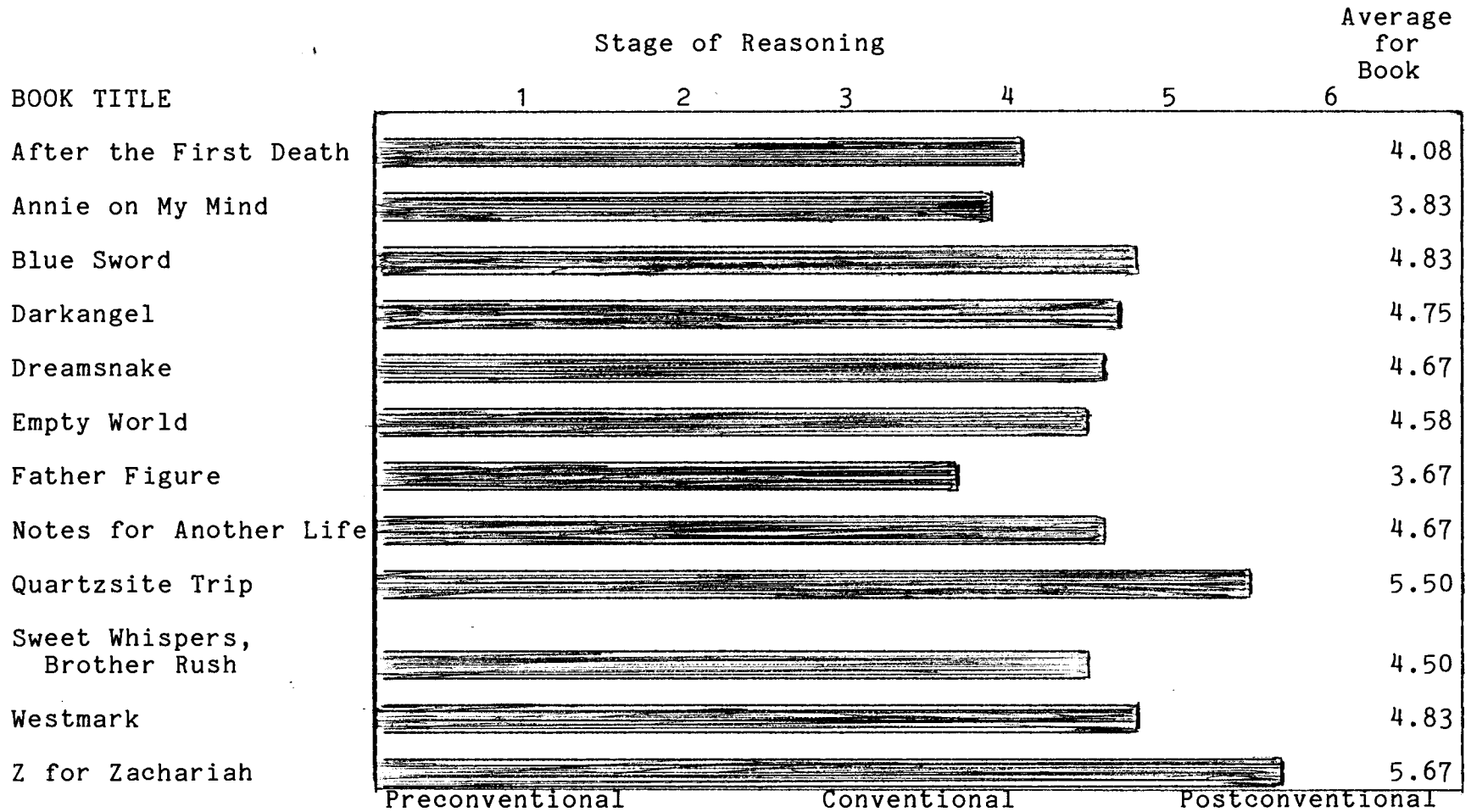
The results of this study are indicated by the average stage of reasoning calculated for each book and for each variable and by comparing these means in several ways. It should be emphasized that these averages represent the moral reasoning of the teenage protagonists of the books and do not represent the moral reasoning of all the characters in each book. The averages also do not represent all of the reasoning of the protagonists, but the average of the six examples chosen by this researcher from each book. Included on the book evaluation sheets found in Appendix B are descriptions and comments relating to the six incidents chosen to be representative of the action and thrust of the book.

Five hypotheses were tested by this study. The first hypothesis was: (1) The protagonists in a majority of the books analyzed exhibited an average stage of moral reasoning based on the Kohlberg Scale of moral development of at least 3.5. All of the books analyzed received a numerical score, representing the average stage of reasoning of the protagonist(s), above 3.5. This hypothesis was accepted.

Table 1 displays the average stage of reasoning for each book. All of the means are at the conventional level or

Table 1

Average Stage of Reasoning For Each Book



above. The mean of the sample is 4.63. Only two books have means below stage 4 and two have means above stage 5.

Table 2
Percentage of Sample According to Stage of Reasoning

Stage	Number of Books	%
3.0 - 3.4	0	0
3.5 - 3.9	2	16.67
4.0 - 4.4	1	8.33
4.5 - 4.9	7	58.33
5.0 - 5.4	0	0
5.5 - 6.0	2	16.67

Table 2 shows the average stage of reasoning for each book as represented by a percentage of the sample. The largest percentage of books, 58.33%, falls in the 4.5 - 4.9 division. Those books falling between 3.0 and 4.9, the conventional level, make up 83.33% of the sample. No books fall between 5.0 and 5.4. Two-thirds of the books have means between 4.0 and 4.9.

The variation of reasoning stages between incidents within books is shown in Table 3. Books with higher means tend to show less variability, but this is not true in all cases. The progression from lower to higher reasoning is characteristic of many of the books. In averaging first incidents a mean of 3.92 is obtained, compared to 5.63, which is the mean for all last incidents.

The other hypotheses tested related to a comparison of the relationship of stage of moral reasoning to the factors of

type of book, sex of author, sex of protagonist and age of protagonist. Table 4 summarizes the data for those variables

Table 3
Variability of Incidents Within Books

Book Title	Scores	Type*	Mean	S.D.
After the First Death	4,5,5,4,3,5,3.5,4	R	4.08	.74
Annie On My Mind	2,1,5,3,6,4.5,6	R	3.83	1.97
Blue Sword	4,4,5,5,6,5	F/SF	4.83	.75
Darkangel	2.5,5,5,5,6	F/SF	4.75	1.17
Dreamsnake	5,2.5,6,4.5,5,5	F/SF	4.67	1.17
Empty World	4,5,5,5,2.5,6	F/SF	4.58	1.20
Father Figure	4.5,3.5,2,4,6	R	3.67	1.54
Notes for Another Life	4,5,6,2,5.6,5.5	R	4.67	1.47
Quartzsite Trip	6,6,6,5,4,6	R	5.5	.84
Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush	4.5,6,2,6,2.5,6	R	4.5	1.84
Westmark	2,5,5,5,6,6	F/SF	4.83	1.47
Z. for Zachariah	5,6,5,6,6,6	F/SF	5.67	.52

* R = Realistic Fiction; F/SF = Fantasy or Science Fiction

by comparing the value of the t statistic, which was calculated from the mean of the scores for each set of factors, to the values obtained from a t table.

The second hypothesis tested was: (2) There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by protagonists between books of science fiction and fantasy and books of realistic fiction. A value for t of 2.228 would represent a significant difference in the means at the .05 level of significance. In comparing books of fantasy/science fiction and realistic fiction $t = 1.616$. This was not a significant difference at

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation and t Statistics for Variable Factors

Variable	N=	Mean	S.D.	t Statistic	df
Book Type:					
Fantasy/Science Fiction	6	4.89	.39	1.616	10
Realistic Fiction	6	4.38	.67		10
Author's Sex					
Male	6	4.72	.78	.511	10
Female	6	4.54	.37		
Protagonist's Sex					
Female -	9	4.74	.49	.677	13
Male	6	4.51	.87		
Protagonist's Age					
16 or under	5	4.66	.72	.339	11
17 or over	8	4.54	.58		

the .05 level of significance and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis three was: (3) There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by male and female protagonists. A value for t of 2.160 would represent a significant difference at the .05 level of significance. In comparing the means for female protagonists with those of male protagonist, $t = 0.677$. This was not a significant difference and the null hypothesis was accepted.

The next hypothesis was: (4) There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by protagonists between books written by male authors and books written by female authors.

In comparing the mean scores for books written by male authors with those written by female authors, $t = 0.511$, whereas to be significant at the .05 level it would need to be 2.228. The null hypothesis was accepted.

The last hypothesis was: (5) There was no significant difference at the .05 level of significance in the average stage of moral reasoning used by protagonists sixteen years old or younger and protagonists 17 years old or older. Again the null hypothesis was accepted. The difference in the means of scores grouped according to the age factor yielded a t value of only 0.339, far short of the t value of 2.201 required to be considered significant at the .05 level of significance.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to apply the Kohlberg theory of moral development to the analysis of a representative sample of twelve young adult books drawn from YASD's "Best of the Best Books--1970-1982" list. The sample was structured so that the relationship of moral reasoning to four variable factors, type of book, sex of author, sex of protagonist and age of protagonist, could be tested.

Analysis was made by selecting six examples from each book to illustrate the moral reasoning of the teenage protagonists and assigning a numerical score to them corresponding to Kohlberg's six developmental stages of moral reasoning. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each variable as well as for each book. Comparisons were made of the average stage of moral reasoning according to the Kohlberg scale among books and among variables. A t test was used to test the statistical significance of the difference between the means of each variable.

The means of all of the books were at the conventional level or above. No significant difference was found between books representing any of the four variable factors.

Conclusions

The data collected in this research study suggested that high levels of moral reasoning as measured by Kohlberg's scale are prevalent in books which are being read and considered worthwhile for YA audiences. These findings lend support to the postulate that protagonists in a majority of YA books of the type examined exhibit moral reasoning at or above Kohlberg's conventional level a majority of the time.

The findings concerning average stage of protagonists' reasoning are for a selected group of young adult novels and cannot be generalized to the whole population of YA books. The books on the YASD list are selected by librarians, who, because of the nature of their role as selectors and evaluators of books may be functioning at high levels of cognitive thinking and moral reasoning. The list may, therefore, include books with characters who are functioning at higher levels of moral reasoning than are generally found in the whole population of YA books.

'Sex' factors do not seem to be significantly related to moral development. The suggestion that men may write books that portray higher stages of moral development or that male protagonists reason at higher stages was not supported by this study. The greater available number of books written by women and portraying female protagonists increased this researcher's awareness of the need for books with male protagonists for young adults. Four of the six books of fantasy and science fiction had female protagonists. This predominance of female

protagonists in areas often thought to appeal especially to a male audience, is interesting.

The comparison of moral development between the types of books, while yielding no statistically significant differences, does provide the basis for some insights. In doing the evaluation of the books in this study, it was found that the fantasy/science fiction books offered clearer choices between what is right or wrong (in books of fantasy, good or evil). Moral decisions were usually in the form of actions taken. In realistic fiction, moral development often took the form of the development of attitudes and interpersonal relationships. In several of the books (Father Figure, Notes for Another Life, Annie on my Mind, and to some extent, Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush) the action of the story revolves around the resolution of inner conflicts. Personal psychological "baggage" resulting from previous hurts and other circumstances, often beyond the control of the protagonist, is the stimulus for action. Since Kohlberg's theory is one of cognitive development, awareness on the part of the protagonists of their perception of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of an action was considered and an average score was calculated which combined different stages represented in that situation. It was difficult, however, to know how to weight each factor.

The level of moral reasoning does not seem to be affected by the age of the protagonist in the representative sample of books used for this study; however, age was inferred rather

than specifically stated in five of the books. Only two protagonists, Tree(14) in Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush and Wren(13) in Notes for Another Life were younger than 16. They exhibited reasoning levels similar to older protagonists.

Although not a part of the study, a comparison of the stage of reasoning of first incidents with last incidents showed that most books analyzed portray an increase in stage of reasoning. This was consistent with the developmental nature of Kohlberg's theory. In The Quartzsite Trip the contrast was not between beginning and ending reasoning but between the characters of Deeter and Margaret who emerge slowly, as the book unfolds, as those teenage characters whom the author wished by the nature of the story to hold up to the reader as his "heroes".

In the conduct of this research study, personal experience confirmed the value of using Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning to interpret literature and assimilate concepts. In several instances relationships became clear in the assigning of stages of reasoning that had not been obvious to this researcher in the reading of the book. One example of this was the parallels which can be drawn between the characters of Ben and Miro in After the First Death. An awareness of the possibilities of this approach for analyzing and interpreting authors' deeper meanings is possibly the most valuable result of this research study.

Recommendations

A limitation of this study was its subjectivity. If it were to be replicated, the inclusion of additional persons to evaluate books or a panel to select incidents from each book for evaluation would be recommended. It was the feeling of this researcher that the selection of the six examples from each book provided a greater problem in regard to objectivity than did the assigning of the stages of moral reasoning.

Future research could consider larger samples of books and books of other types, structuring these so that emphasis is placed on analyzing and understanding each type of literature, rather than testing for differences in moral reasoning between types. Looking at the stages of moral reasoning in biographies might be interesting.

More exploration of the age factor in children's books would be valuable, as well as that focusing on the relationship of stage of moral reasoning to popularity.

The implications of this study for interpreting the moral content of books and the relationship of this to book censorship would be interesting to explore. One of the problems in book censorship is that censors often miss the ideas a book portrays by focusing on language or action. A study applying Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning to challenged books could be significant. The idea that books do not necessarily advocate the actions and language they contain could be illustrated by an evaluation of The Quartzsite Trip.

The stage 2 and 3 moral reasoning of most of the students on the trip is not upheld by the outcome of the story.

This study will have impact on the future interpretation and assimilation of what this researcher reads. It could also provide background for developing units of study in connection with English classroom teachers in analysis and interpretation of literature and for helping students to independently analyze and respond to what they read.

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Bridgers, Sue Ellen. Notes for Another Life. New York: Knopf, 1981.

Cristopher, John. Empty World. New York: Dutton, 1978.

Cormier, Robert. After the First Death. New York: Pantheon, 1979.

Garden, Nancy. Annie On My Mind. New York: Farrar, 1982.

Hamilton, Virginia. Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush. New York: Philomel, 1982.

Hogan, William. The Quartzsite Trip. New York: Atheneum, 1980.

McIntyre, Vonda. Dreamsnake. Boston: Houghton, 1978.

McKinley, Robin. The Blue Sword. New York: Greenwillow, 1982.

O'Brien, Richard. Z for Zachariah. New York: Atheneum, 1975.

Peck, Richard. Father Figure. New York: Viking, 1978.

Pierce, Meredith Ann. The Darkangel. New York: Tom Doherty Associates; dist. by Little, Brown and Co., 1982.

APPENDIX A. Books Analyzed or Considered by Copyright Date.

c.1982

Garden, Nancy. Annie on My Mind

Hamilton, Virginia. Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush

McKinley, Robin. Blue Sword

*Oneal, Zibby. A Formal Feeling

Pierce, Meridith Ann. The Darkangel

c.1981

Alexander, Lloyd. Westmark

Bridgers, Sue Ellen. Notes for Another Life

c.1980

*Arrick, Fran. Tunnel Vision

Hogan, William. The Quartzsite Trip

c.1979

Cormier, Robert. After the First Death

c.1978

Christopher, John. Empty World

**Levenkron, Steven. The Best Little Girl in the World

Peck, Richard. Father Figure

McIntyre, Vonda. Dreamsnake

c.1975

O'Brien, Richard. Z for Zachariah

* Since Anthony, the protagonist of Tunnel Vision has already committed suicide, the reasons for his action are in question.

Tunnel Vision was considered but not used.

**These books were initially chosen for this study, but not enough incidents were found where the motivation could be established. Both protagonists seemed to be carried along by psychological pressures they could neither understand or explain.

APPENDIX B
BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title After the First Death Book Type Realistic Fiction
 Author Cormier, Robert Sex of Author M
 Protagonist(s): Name Kate Sex F Age (?) 17+
 Name Ben and Miro Sex M Age 16

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
<u>Kate</u>		
pp. 62, 74 p. 183 p. 95	Kate's role in comforting the children on the bus and keeping them quiet spans several stages. It channeled her energy and kept her from her own thoughts and from panic (stage 2), was felt to be her responsibility (stage 4), and showed a stage 6 willingness to offer her life that one of the children might be spared.	average 4
pp. 157-60	Kate's attempt to escape by backing the bus off the bridge is motivated by the welfare of the group and the universal value of human life.	5.5
p. 218	As her only hope, Kate tries to reach the terrorist, Miro, by "using words like a prostitute uses her body," (stage 2). She convinces him that Artkin was his father and in his resulting anguish her attempt becomes a genuine desire to bring him comfort and solace and a recognition of his human worth and vulnerability. (stage 6)	average 4
<u>Ben</u>		
pp. 189-96	Ben accepts the role thrust on him as a messenger resolutely and bravely, with a desire to do his best and not to let his father down. I see a combination of stage 3-pleasing others, and stage 4-doing one's duty.	3.5

Miro

pp. 114-15 Miro hopes to win the approval of the 3.5
pp. 130-31 terrorist leader, Artkin, who he worships,
and establish himself in this assignment
by performing his first killing. The
terrorists, seeking freedom for their
homeland, claim not to regard life as
precious-even their own. There is an
innocence, albeit an an innocence which
is evil according to Kate, in his
dedication to his leader and the
terrorist group. I see his motivation
as being like Ben's, a desire to please
and a dedication to a social order, in
this case the terrorist group.

Ben and Miro

p. 207 Ben feels anguish and regret ("It was 4
p. 219 beyond terror or horror or pain." p. 207)
for what he feels to be a betrayal of
his father and the giving information to
the terrorists. Miro feels similar
anguish (p. 219) in his conviction that
he had betrayed Artkin and is
responsible for his death by reaching
for Kate instead of warning him of the
approaching soldiers.

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Annie On My Mind Book Type Realistic FictionAuthor Garden, Nancy Sex of Author FProtagonist(s): Name Liza Sex F Age 17

Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 120-21	Liza is scared of the growing feeling between her and Annie and the strength of it. Annie convinces her to "let happen what will happen without thinking so much about it." At this level right or wrong is perceived on the basis of physical or hedonistic consequences.	2
pp. 145-63	Liza has the key to the home of two vacationing teachers so that she can feed their cat. She and Annie use the house secretly as a meeting place, spending whole days there and becoming intimate there. Their own needs are used to justify this in their own minds at the time although they question it later.	1.5
p. 188	Liza lies to her mother when she questions her. She is acting at stage 3. She avoids her mother's disapproval by saying what her mother wants to hear.	3
p. 191	Liza's desire to tell her Dad the truth, even if she is prevented by the situation, and her remorse over the lie to her mother uphold the author's portrayal of the value of truth and being true to one's self as an universal principles.	6
p. 211	At the trustee's hearing Liza wants to defend Ms. Stevenson and Ms. Widmer, teachers who are being accused of influencing her behavior, by declaring that what she and Annie did they did on their own, but she is silent. The action would be stage 4 (she conforms to	average 4.5

avoid censure by legitimate authorities) but the recognition of her guilt gives it elements of 5.

pp. 233-4

Liza decides to contact Annie after allowing herself time to think through the events that led to the disclosure of their relationship. She recalls Ms. Widmer's admonition to not punish herself for people's ignorant reactions. She arranges to meet Annie and affirms her homosexuality in her statement of love for Annie. The basis of her decision is to avoid self-condemnation rather than society's condemnation. It is a decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principle.

6

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Blue Sword Book Type Fantasy
 Author McKinley, Robin Sex of Author F
 Protagonist(s): Name Harry Crewe Sex F Age (?) 17+
 Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 2-11	Harry, a penniless blueblood, is adapting to her new life in Istan, the last outpost of the Homelander empire, as well as her energetic spirit could. She is expected to do little but attend dinner parties and balls and although she is appreciative of the hospitality of Sir Charles and Lady Amelia, who have taken her in, she has to fight against restlessness and boredom.	4
pp. 55-68	When Corlath, the king of the ancient empire of Damar, kidnaps Harry and carries her into the mountains, which have held a strange appeal for her, she accepts her fate with aplomb and dignity.	4
p. 137 pp. 165-78	Harry becomes a "damalur-sol"-woman hero and brings hope to the Damarians as they prepare to face the Northerners who are marching toward the main mountain pass. She receives the legendary blue sword which only a woman can carry into battle and becomes a rallying point for the people she has learned to respect.	5
pp. 203-4	Corlath will not consider the possibility of the Northerners coming through the small northwestern passage. He considers this a problem for the Homelanders only and was hurt by the refusal of the Homeland to form an alliance with him. Harry leaves the army encampment at night and goes to Jack Dedham, the commander of the fort at Ihstan. Harry feels that this possibility cannot be ignored for the sake of both the Damarians and the	5

Homeland. She considers herself a deserter, but does what she feels she must.

pp. 239-43

After an initial encounter with the "demon hordes" of the North at the northwestern passage, Harry and the small force that follows her face annihilation. Harry summons supernatural forces in a symbolic confrontation of good and evil.

6

pp. 250-56

A landslide wipes out the Northern forces and Harry prepares to return to Corlath and accept his judgment. Her concern is for those who have accompanied her. She discourages them from returning with her and makes clear that they are not to be held responsible for her act of desertion. They insist on returning with her.

5

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title The Darkangel Book Type Fantasy
 Author Pierce, Meredith Ann Sex of Author F
 Protagonist(s): Name Aeriel Sex F Age (?) 17+
 Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
p. 33 p. 39-42	Aeriel sets out to avenge her mistress who has been taken by the "vampyre" (called the darkangel) to be his bride. She is motivated by a desire for vengance, a sense of duty and the avoidance of physical consequences. She will not be kept as a servant in the household and would rather die than face the slave markets of Orm. (stage 1 and stage 4)	average 2.5
pp. 66-67 pp. 72-74	As a captive of the "vampyre", Aeriel cares for the wraiths, thirteen pitiful creatures, once the "vampyre's" beautiful young brides. She spins for them with a magic spindle which spins from the heart. At first she spins duty, then patience and finally love.	5
pp. 105-112	The wraiths ask Aeriel to help them steal back their souls by killing the "vampyre." She insists that she cannot kill him, but is determined to find a way to save the wraiths. Aided by the durarough and his knowledge of legend and magic. Aeriel sets out to find the legend and magic, Aeriel sets out to find the "chalice-hoof" of the star horse which the durarough needs to work his magic.	5
p. 76 p. 201 p. 204.	Aeriel feeds the gargoyles, fierce hideous creatures which guard the castle. She later tames and releases them, saying simply, "The gargoyles suffer. I shall free them."	5

- pp. 218-22 Aeriel confronts the darkangel (who
pp. 233-34 has chosen her to be his fourteenth bride) 5
 bravely for the sake of the wraiths, but
 she cannot complete the plan by killing
 him. She wishes to save him from the
 witch as she has saved the wraiths from
 him.
- pp. 237-38 In order for the darkangel to live, 6
 he must have a heart of flesh. Aeriel
 whose feelings toward him have
 progressed from awe, to pity, to love,
 freely gives him her own heart. She
 does this sacrificially, expecting not
 to live herself, but in true fairy tale
 fashion, it completes his transformation
 back to human form.

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Dreamsnake Book Type Science Fiction
 Author McIntyre, Vonda Sex of Author F
 Protagonist(s): Name Snake Sex F Age (?) 17+
 Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 24-25	Snake leaves the settlement of the boy, Staviv, where her dreamsnake was killed, because she feels crippled as a healer and cannot face their guilt. She accepts responsibility for their deed in that she did not understand them soon enough. She will not allow Arevin to accompany her because she anticipates punishment or banishment and does not want him to suffer her fate.	5
p. 57	Snakes decides to use the cobra, Mist to release Jesse from her great pain since she has no hope of recovery and Jesse requests it. Kohlberg discusses mercy killing in an article in <u>Psychology Today</u> ("The Child as a Moral Philosopher," <u>Psychology Today</u> 2 (Sept. 1968): 28-29) and describes it as a combination of stage 2 and stage 3, based on the reasoning that the value of human life is seen in terms of the satisfaction of the need of its possessor and the empathy of others toward the possessor.	2.5
pp. 166-174	As payment for saving the life of the mayor of Mountainside, Snake convinces him to allow her to adopt Melissa, a young girl with a disfiguring facial scar who had been abused sexually and psychologically by her guardian. The action seems based on the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of individual persons.	6

- pp. 206-09 Snake travels to the city, Center, to seek help from Jesse's kin, and also to carry Jesse's message to them. Snake's motivation is partly obligation, but also the welfare of society. 4.5
- pp. 232-33 Disregarding her personal safety, Snake goes in quest of dreamsnakes at the broken dome. She has learned about their presence there from the "crazy" who attacked her and is addicted to their venom as a pleasure drug. She is motivated by a desire to atone for her mistake and by society's need for the snake's benefit to the healing arts. 5
- p. 300 In her escape from North, he falls and Snake goes to him, by reflex, to see if he is injured. It shows a combination of duty, as a healer, to help anyone in need and recognition that even if his intent has been evil, he has worth as a human being. 5

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Empty World Book Type Science Fiction
 Author Christopher, John Sex of Author M
 Protagonist(s): Name Niel Sex M Age (?) 17
 Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
p. 29	The Plague has decimated Niel's village. He walks in the countryside and enters a farmhouse. After receiving no answer to his knock, he makes a bundle of what he wants and leaves money on the table weighted down with a potato. He doubts if anyone will collect it but feels it to be the proper thing to do. He is seeking to maintain the social order.	4
p. 39	Despite an urge to "avoid contact, crawl back into his hole and wait for death," he investigates what sounds like a human cry and discovers 6 year old Tommy and his 2 year old sister. He takes them home and cares for them until they, too, fall victim to the Plague.	5
pp. 66, 71	In his strange encounter with Clive, Niel is shocked at Clive's lack of interest in other survivors. After being robbed of his mother's ring, Niel feels mostly pity for Clive and the "sick, frantic greed" that seems to drive him. By rejecting Clive's values Niel is upholding values that are aimed at the good of the society and do not violate the rights of others.	5
p. 103	Niel discovers fresh footprints and tries to find their origin. Although Billie tries to elude him, Niel persists and is welcomed by her companion, Lucy. Niel argues that you can't isolate yourself. You have to trust and take chances. He proposes that they combine forces and eventually move to a permanent location in the country where they can begin to grow their own food.	5

pp. 116-125 Persistent conflict develops between average
Niel and Billie. At first Niel puts 2.5
up with her criticisms and insults out
of fear that Lucy might side with her
and abandon him (stage 3).

As the attraction between him and
Lucy deepens into love, his inability
to tolerate, what are to him Billie's
annoying mannerisms, increases. He is
prevented from snapping at her only when
Lucy is present (stage 2).

pp. 133-4 Billie, who has made an unsuccessful 6
attempt on Niel's life while they are
shopping together, returns to find
herself locked out of the house. Niel
and Lucy plan to ignore her pleas for
mercy and slip away at night to pursue
their dreams together. Niel decides
that no matter what the risk, she is
human and alone in an empty world and
they must let her in.

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Father Figure Book Type Realistic FictionAuthor Peck, Richard Sex of Author MProtagonist(s): Name Jim Atwater Sex M Age 17

Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 27-34	The night before their mother's funeral Jim's 8 year old brother, Byron, wakes him embarrassed because he has wet his bed. Jim's sensitivity and caring is representative of the responsibility he feels for his brother and his respect for Byron's feelings.	4.5
pp. 71-2	Byron is hospitalized after an encounter with a gang who take his billfold. Jim confronts the headmaster of Byron's school when he comes to the hospital to visit. Jim takes satisfaction in an outburst of sarcasm and in making the headmaster "stew". Jim is motivated by anger at the headmaster's concern with whether the accident occurred on school property. His action is a mixture of concern for the welfare of Byron (stage 5) and personal pleasure. (stage 2)	average 3.5
pp. 110-13	The boys are sent to spend the summer with their father in Florida. The first night there Jim awakens to hear voices. His father is comforting Byron who had been pacing the floor with pain from his broken collarbone. Jim flies into a rage upon learning that Byron often did this at night. Jim didn't know this and directs angry words at his father accusing him of trying to win back Byron's affection with a few aspirin after leaving 8 years earlier. Jim feels guilt, anger and jealousy and his preoccupation with his own feelings rather than concern for Byron is shown as he ignores Byron's pleas to stop his tirade.	4

- pp. 121-26 Jim works out a truce with his Dad to get through the summer. Jim is given the opportunity to set the guidelines, focusing only on the present and he abides by them. 4
- pp. 150-7 "I know you're out to spite your Daddy, not me. That's your burden, not mine," responds Marietta (a young woman who has been a special friend to the boys as well as their father). Jim has come to her with the news that his older sister has had a baby making his father a grandfather and obviously too old for any relationship with someone as young and attractive as she. Marietta handles Jim deftly and compassionately but makes him see how ungrateful and spiteful he is being. 2
- pp. 188-90 Byron, who has thrived during the summer, wants to stay with his father instead of returning to his grandmother's home in the fall. He won't stay, however, unless Jim says it is okay. Jim, who is beginning to deal with his feelings and make amends with his father, wrestles with this and in the end gives his blessing, knowing it will be best for Byron. 6

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Notes For
 Book Title Another Life Book Type Realistic Fiction
 Author Bridgers, Sue Ellen Sex of Author F
 Protagonist(s): Name Wren Sex F Age 13
 Name Kevin Sex M Age 16

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
p. 30	Wren and her brother, Kevin, live with their grandparents because their father is receiving treatment at the state mental hospital and their mother is pursuing a career. When their mother visits with news she is moving to Chicago, Wren covers her hurt with an unspoken commitment not to be a bother. She decides she will let her mother go and not cry or try to think up ploys to make her take them with her.	4
p. 127	Wren responds with true acceptance and an understanding of Kevin's situation when he drops his load of guilt on her concerning the visit with their father where Kevin tells him of the planned divorce.	5
p. 153	Wren's reflections during the Father's Day service at church reveals her decision to love her father in spite of the rejection, denial and indifference she feels as a result of his condition.	6
p. 199	Kevin, unable to cope with the feeling of rejection that follows the breakup with his girl friend as well as his mother's hesitation to take him with her to Chicago, attempts suicide. In counseling with his minister, his motive is revealed as the desire to hurt his mother and girl friend.	2
p. 202	After the suicide, Kevin is invited to live with his mother in Chicago. He says no. He realizes that it would not work out and that he has an identity of his own and separate from her.	5.5

pp. 234-236

Kevin, who has earlier had difficulty coping with his feelings about his father, gently feeds him lunch and helps him shower. He feels a "long-forbidden sense of oneness" with him and declares his love.

5.5

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title The Quartzsite Trip Book Type Realistic FictionAuthor Hogan, William Sex of Author MProtagonist(s): Name Deeter Moss Sex M Age 18Name Margaret Ball Sex F Age 18

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
p. 290	After a sudden, extremely rare, desert rainstorm Deeter stops at a rain-filled pond curious about something that looked like fish. It was a primitive life form, tadpole shrimp, that had hatched out since the rain, would mature, mate, lay new eggs and die in less than 12 hours. The eggs would await the next rain which might not occur for a hundred years. This cycle had been going on since the ocean receded. Deeter, stunned by the miracle of birth, life and death in the desert, stays behind the others to watch the shrimp. This shows a stage 6 awareness of the miracle of life.	6
pp. 242-46	When the students go to swim at the pool of an eccentric desert recluse named Hubcap Willie, Deeter and the groups leader, Jack, enjoy Willie's hospitality and listen to his stories while the others swim. Deeter's attitude shows respect for Willie's ingenuity and uniqueness.	6
p. 185, 210	Deeter's individuality and curiosity are evident in his questions about, and appreciation for his surroundings. In contrast to most of the other students, his actions are based on their intrinsic value rather than on conformity to majority behavior.	6
p. 160, 169 175	Margaret Ball helps Mary Albright, who seem unable to cope with lack of preparation for her "period", and purchases supplies for her when some of the kids start to tease. Margaret shows	5

no resentment when Mary, who is always saying "I'll be your friend for life," doesn't speak to her again.

- pp. 185-87 Margaret, who is assistant editor of the yearbook, but does all the work, accepts responsibility without complaint. After cleaning up Horace Clay's mess on the bus, she comments that it is fun to be a Candy Striper because people are so appreciative. 4
- pp. 187, 278 Margaret wants to be a lawyer and is unusually knowledgeable about baseball for a girl. She makes her own decisions and makes no apologies for her lack of conformity to the group. She acts on the basis of self-chosen ethical principles. 6

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Sweet Whispers,
Brother Rush Book Type Realistic Fiction
 Author Hamilton, Virginia Sex of Author F
 Protagonist(s): Name Tree Sex F Age 14
 Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 36-40, 45	Tree is responsible for caring for her 17 yr. old retarded brother, Dabney, as their mother is living away from home because of her job. When he has his bad days she has to do most every thing for him and "always has to have him on her mind, else something had could happen." Her caring is motivated by her love for Dab and her respect for his individual worth, as well as by a sense of duty.	4.5
pp. 83-84	Tree reads to Dab a story he loves to hear about a boy that is lost and knows his grandpa will find him if he waits. After reading the story Tree tells the meaning. The boy knows he will be found because of love. This story makes them feel close because they also are sure of their mother's love. "Love is a gift no one can take from you."	6
p. 96	When Tree learns her mother has a car and a "man friend" that she knew nothing about, and will not get to see, she becomes very angry and spiteful and confronts her mother with knowledge of their past that the ghost, Brother Rush, has revealed to her. Her motive is spite and revenge.	2
p. 148 p. 158	There is red tape and delay in getting Dab admitted to the hospital when he is critically ill. Tree is self-conscious and admires Silversmith, her mother's "friend", and his quiet composure. She thinks she would like to be like that someday-not caring if	6

others are looking at you. Silversmith speaks about not letting other people's reaction to the color of your skin change the way you feel about yourself.

pp. 182-86

Tree decides to run away from home after Dab's death. She blames her mother for his death and is angry at her refusal to borrow to finance a fancy funeral and new clothes to bury him in.

2.5

p. 202

At Dab's funeral Tree insists upon a viewing of the body. She realizes that Dab is gone. "Once dead, you were no longer yourself," she discovers. She is grateful he had "left this weak suffering form behind."

6

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Westmark Book Type Fantasy
 Author Alexander, Lloyd Sex of Author M
 Protagonist(s): Name Theo Sex M Age (?)-16
 Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 12-13	Theo strikes the officer in charge when Anton, to whom he is apprenticed, resists the attempt of the soldiers to destroy his printing press. He acts in the heat of anger and does not think of consequences. His own needs are the prime determinate of his action.	2
pp. 48-70	Theo befriends the waif, Mickle. He is touched because she is hungry and teaches her to read. He is worried about her nightmares and concerned for her welfare.	5
pp. 76-80	Theo's conscience "smarted" because he had suggested the scheme in which Mickle was the oracle priestess. He objects to Count La Bombas's schemes which hoax gullible people and leaves the Count because he feels it to be the right and honorable thing to do. He wants to ask Mickle to come with him but feels that since he is a wanted fugitive it would be a risk to her.	5
p. 108	Theo insists on going to Nier-keeping in spite of personal danger when he learns that Mickle and Musket are jailed there. He feels he must help them because they are his friends.	
pp. 136-7	Theo doesn't want to carry a pistol and in the rescue attempt at Nierkeeping resists shooting. In discussing this with Florian, Theo refers to Florian's own statement that all men are brothers.	6

pp. 171-176

Theo saves the life of the evil Chief Minister Cabbarus who plotted the overthrow of the kingdom and pleads for his exile rather than execution for his crimes. Theo wants no death on his conscience, even that of Cabbarus.

6

BOOK EVALUATION SHEET

Book Title Z for Zachariah Book Type Science FictionAuthor O'Brien, Robert C. Sex of Author MProtagonist(s): Name Ann Burden Sex F Age 16

Name _____ Sex _____ Age _____

<u>Page Number</u>	<u>Description-Comments</u>	<u>Score</u>
pp. 46-130	Ann's concern for helping the stranger who has come into her valley wearing a radiation proof suit, and then bathed in a contaminated stream, overcomes her fear of him and she shows unselfish devotion in nursing him through his critical illness. Her reasons include a desire for human companionship and a dream of a future for the valley.	5
p. 120	Ann prays for Mr. Loomis to live through the night. Even though he may be a murderer (which he has revealed in delirium), she does not want him to die.	6
p. 183	She arranges to bring him food after she no longer lives in the house, saying, "I could not let him starve, no matter what he has done." Repeatedly she states that she could not shoot him, This indicates her belief in the sacredness of human life as a universal principle.	
p. 237		
p. 228	Ann has a recurring dream of a school room with children waiting for someone who can teach them to read. The dream gives her hope that there is a place where she might fit into a society and use her talents and dedication.	5
p. 159 pp. 175-6	Mr. Loomis increasingly controls Ann's life without tenderness or respect. When he forces his physical attention on her she says he looked at her in the same way as he had looked at the <u>The Farm Mechanic</u> . She moves out of the house after he visits her room at night. The decision involves respect for the dignity of herself as an individual person.	6

p. 246

Ann decides to leave the valley, leaving behind all she has worked for, because she says, "I don't want to live with you hunting me as if I were an animal and I will never agree to be your prisoner." She places a higher value on her freedom in an uncertain world than on the physical comfort of the valley.

6

pp. 236-
248

Ann waits for Mr. Loomis to come, even though she knows he has killed before and may kill her, because she feels she cannot leave the valley without talking with him one last time. She seems motivated by a sense of justice. She has taken the suit but is leaving him with everything in the valley and promises to tell others about him if she finds other people.

6