



Learning Curves: Body Image and Female Sexuality in Young Adult Literature (Scarecrow Studies in Young Adult Literature)

Beth Younger

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Adolescence is a time of growth, change, and confusion for young women. During this transition from childhood to adulthood, sex and gender roles become more important. Meanwhile, depictions of females—from the hyper-sexualized girls of music videos to the chaste repression of Purity Balls—send mixed messages to young women about their bodies and their sexuality. Over the last several decades, authors of young adult novels have been challenged to reflect this concern in their work and have responded with varying degrees of success.

In *Learning Curves: Body Image and Female Sexuality in Young Adult Literature*, Beth Younger examines how cultural assumptions and social constraints are reinforced and complicated through common representations of young women. Each chapter analyzes a recurrent theme in the history of young adult literature, including issues of body image, pregnancy, abortion, lesbianism, and romance. By examining selected novels for their sexual content, situating them within their social and historical context, and analyzing their discursive qualities, the author reveals the multitude of complex ways that society depicts teenagers and their sexualities and offers a critique of patriarchal culture that gives value to the female experience.

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