

Books & People

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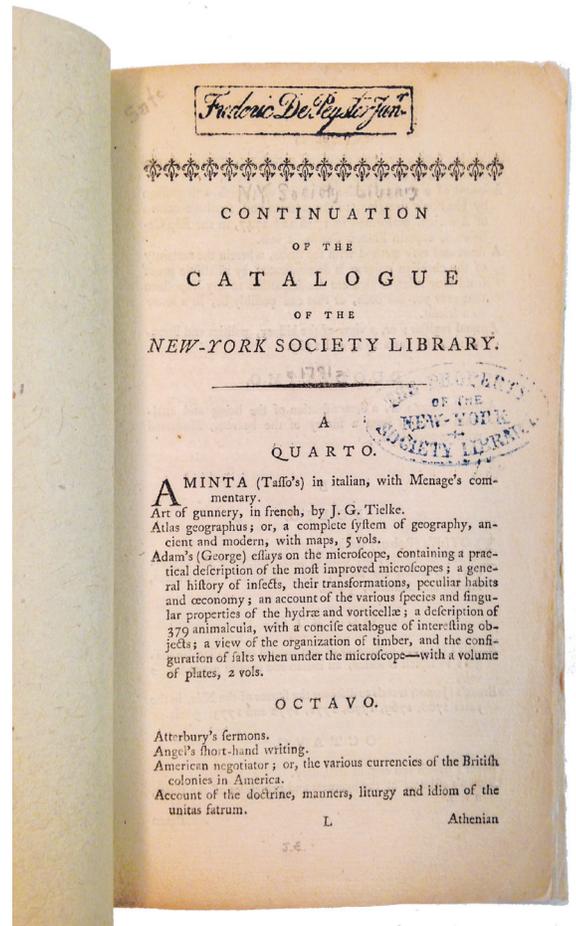
50 Reasons to Love the Library

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Long Live the New Books List!

by Erin Schreiner

The New Books List as we know it was born in 1896. On February 1 of that year, the Library issued the first of hundreds of these pamphlets listing the latest titles to appear on the shelves. As members well know, the tradition is still alive today. At the beginning of the month, members ask “Is this the new one?” when reaching for the unassuming little pamphlet peeking out of the box on the Reference Desk. Many of you probably have a New Books List routine: perhaps you sit down with pencil and pamphlet in the Members’ Room to mark up the titles you want to borrow, then return to the Circulation Desk to bulk up your holds list or browse the Lobby shelves for something that caught your eye. Whatever you do, know that you are part of a long history of Library readers who use a book list to make your way through the stacks.



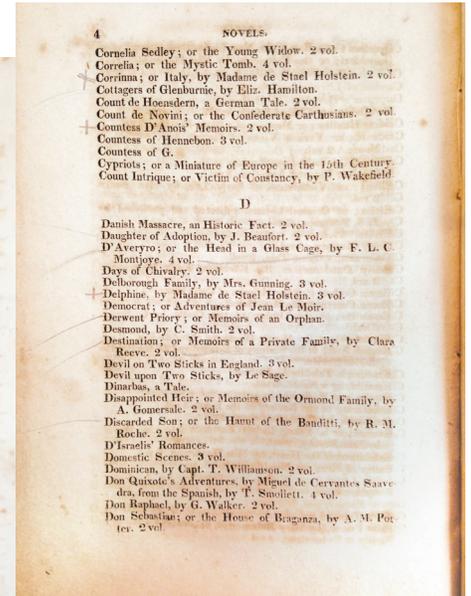
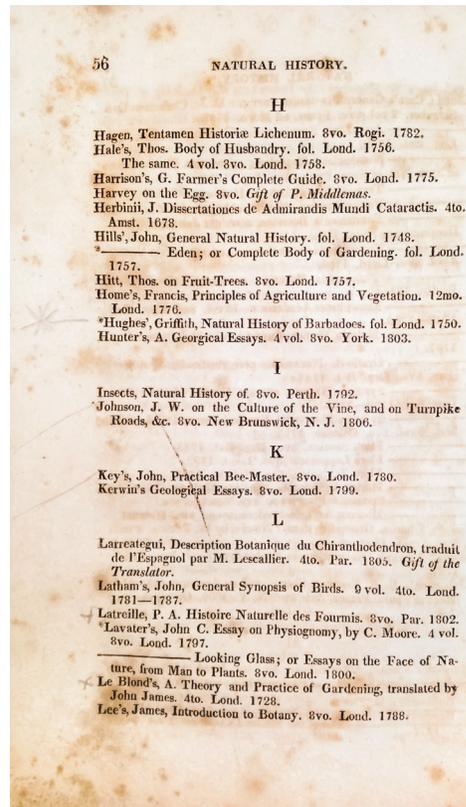
Just how long is that history? The very first such list, simply titled *A Continuation of the Catalog*, appeared in 1791. This was literally a continuation of the 1789 catalog—the first comprehensive record of the collection after the Revolutionary War—with its first page numbered 81 so that it could be bound up after its printed parent’s 80 pages. Working from our oldest book lists, the Library’s archive and *City Readers* (the Library’s new tool for digital research on borrowing activity, membership, and collections) we can start to get a sense of how Library members have put New Books Lists to use, and what happened to our collections when they did.

In Memoriam: Henry S.F. Cooper Jr.



The Board of Trustees and staff of the New York Society Library mourn the loss of Henry S. F. Cooper Jr. A Library member for much of his life, Henry joined the board in 1971, serving as Secretary 1979-1985 and as Chair 1985-1992. He continued on the board until December 2015, when he was named Trustee Emeritus. In his six years as Board Secretary, Henry wrote informed, eloquent, and idiosyncratic minutes that raised the mechanics of note-taking to an art. Under his Chairmanship, the Library underwent its retrospective conversion, bringing in technology that proved to be, in Henry's words, "the best way of perpetuating an old way of life into a changing future." Perhaps his most valuable contribution was co-writing the anniversary book *The New York Society Library: 250 Years 2004*. Effortlessly, he could pluck a letter, clipping, or anecdote out of the archives, give it a title, add an explanation in italics, and include it as a fascinating—often amusing—nugget of Library history. Henry was tireless on its behalf, and with his death, the Library loses a valued friend. (*Tribute by Jenny Lawrence*)

Long Live the New Books List! continued

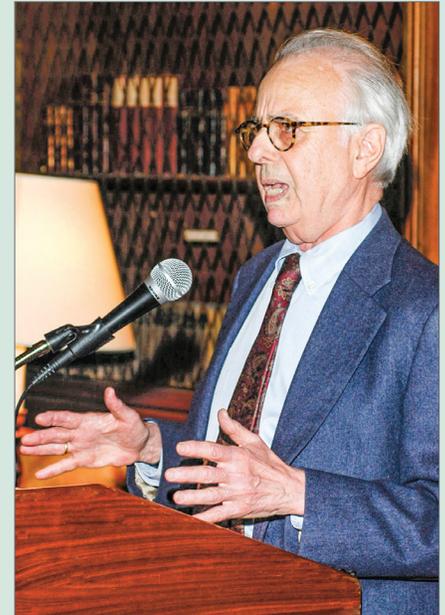


Horticulturalist William Prince Jr.'s annotated 1813 catalog shows how he read fiction as avidly as he did natural history and botany. This book was recently purchased thanks to the Peluso Family Exhibition Books Fund.

Library members have always marked up their book lists. The illustration above shows two pages of William Prince Jr.'s copy of the 1813 catalog. Prince inherited part of his father's nursery in Flushing, NY (the first of its kind in the state), so it's no surprise to see him marking up the Natural History, Botany, and Agriculture section with crosses, dashes, and stars. It might be a surprise, however, to see him running wild with his pencil in the supplemental Novels section (which only appears in some catalogs). Prince signed his name in the book three times and made the same kinds of marginal marks throughout, suggesting that he wasn't sharing the catalog with another annotating reader. The catalog itself thus survives as a record of one reader's aspirational reading habits, and it shows how he made his way through a list of books en route to the shelves. Perhaps you have a few New Books Lists stacked on your desk that look a lot like Prince Jr.'s catalog.

We don't have any annotated copies of the 1791 book list, but these books' lives and our early readers' activities come into focus in *City Readers*. Some titles listed in the 1791 list are still well known to us today—the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the works of Benjamin Franklin first appeared in a catalog that year—and many were and remain popular among our readers. The *Encyclopaedia* circulated 548 times between 1789 and 1805, with 114 of those checkouts taking place in 1791. Readers have continued to borrow editions of Franklin down to the present day.

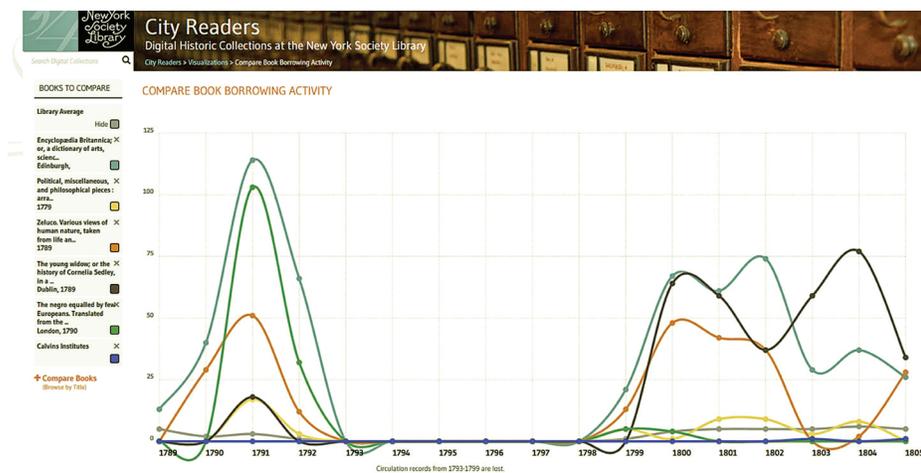
Remembering Jules Cohn



Jules presents the New York City Book Award to author Steven Kellman, spring 2006

The Library fondly remembers Jules Cohn, who passed away in December. Jules served with dedication on the New York City Book Awards jury from 2001 to 2012. He also lent his expertise to the Book Committee, suggesting titles for the collection, and in 2006 expanded on that role as a volunteer with the Acquisitions Department. From a tiny closed-stack desk, Jules energetically and enthusiastically monitored the output of university presses and sent informative memos to staff, recommending hundreds of titles. His findings both with the Book Committee and as a volunteer have enriched our collection. Jules was a constant Library user with strong opinions, a remarkable memory, and a large and restless intellect. His gifts to the Library as a reader and as a friend will not be forgotten.

But many, many books, especially works of popular fiction, disappeared from the collection never to be seen again, and nobody seems to have missed them. John Moore's *Zeluco* was borrowed 51 times in 1791, and William Hayley's *The Young Widow* circulated 18 times, both far exceeding the 3 trips that the average book saw out of the Library that year. All the titles I've mentioned were popular among both men and women and sustained an interest among our readers at least until 1805. (*The Young Widow* saw a big boost in circulation when we got a new copy in 1804.) Some books, like Joseph Lavallee's novel *The Negro Equalled by Few Europeans*, were wildly popular on arrival but rarely saw the light of day after 1792. Calvin's *Institutes* and 32 other books weren't borrowed for a decade but eventually found readers, and 42 lonely titles weren't checked out at all up to 1805.



Graphing visualization tools on *City Readers* allow us to compare borrowing statistics for books at the Library. The light blue line representing the *Encyclopedia Britannica* shows that it was consistently popular with Library readers, while books like Ben Franklin's *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces* wavered over the years.

Anyone in the Acquisitions or Circulation department will tell you that the same things happen with new books today. Some are received with anticipation, only to disappear into obscurity; others need to be replaced within a few years because their popularity has endured; still others go straight to the shelves and wait a spell for that moment of discovery. The most popular books tend to be fiction, but Library readers have always been curious about history, travel, biography, and science, too.

The New Books List has been with us in one form or another for over two centuries now, weaving the thread of continuity from book to book and reader to reader. It tells us a story about books and people we know, and it's one of the things I love about this place. Long live the New Books List!

Staff News

Cheryl Warfield (*right*), is the Library's new Controller. Cheryl joins us from the Association of Learning Disabilities of New York, where she was Director of Finance. She holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Ohio State University and is the Founder and Director of the Manhattan Opera Repertory Ensemble.



University of Chicago alumna **Sharon Kim** resides and works in NYC as a translator for businesses and academics; she joined the Library as a page in November 2015.

Willamae Boling is a graduate of Reed College in Portland, OR, and recently moved to New York. Willamae has worked as a dramaturg and costume designer. She started at the Library as a page in February 2016.

Stephen Ostrowski joined the Library this February as a page. He is an avid painter, writer, and skateboarder.

Liam Delaney, previously a page, is now a Circulation Assistant.

In the Conservation Studio

The Library was sorry to bid farewell to our longtime Book Conservator, George Muñoz, in December. We're pleased, however, to welcome our new Conservator, **Christina Amato**. Christina was previously Book Conservator at the New York Academy of Medicine. She has also spent time at the Folger Shakespeare Library and our sister library the Boston Athenaeum.



Special Events: Young Adult Author Panel

The Library offered a Young Adult Author Panel on November 8. An audience of teens and friends enjoyed discussion among authors Paul Acampora, Valynne Maetani, and Rebecca Stead, with moderator Jennifer Hubert Swan.



Top left: The panelists and moderator with Richard Peck (*center*) Right from top: Valynne Maetani; Rebecca Stead; Paul Acampora

THIS PROGRAM WAS GENEROUSLY FUNDED BY RICHARD PECK.

50 Reasons to Love the Library *by Lorrie Bodger*

I'm a writer. I need quiet. But in 2011, the lady in the apartment above mine began to practice scales on her grand piano at full volume every day precisely during my writing hours. After two weeks of torture I joined the Library: the Hornblower Room—better known to writers as the “fifth-floor writers’ room”—saved my sanity.

New members often join the Library with specific purposes in mind: writers need a place to work; families use the Children’s Library; scholars require the Library’s research resources; readers want access to the latest bestsellers. Yet even long-standing members aren’t always aware of the dozens and dozens of *other* delights of the Library. Here are twenty-three of them. Please go to www.nysoclib.org/50reasons to read the other twenty-seven.

1. Open Stacks

The NYSL houses most of its impressive collection of books in open stacks that you may browse to your heart’s content. Discover every book your favorite author has written, explore a topic that fascinates you, stumble upon a shelf of just about anything. The open stacks are full of surprises.



2. The Members’ Room

Consider this your own private club, complete with couches and armchairs, small desks and lamps, huge windows, and a handsome fireplace. Silent reading and study prevail (no laptops allowed here), and you can catch up on current newspapers, magazines, and literary journals as well.



3. Parties!

There’s an annual June party for new members—and now the NYSL hosts a December party for new members who joined after June and missed that party. (And the December guests will be invited to the next June party too.)



4. NYSOCLIB.ORG

The website is your gateway to taking full advantage of all the Library has to offer. For example: Go to the **Home** page, click on the **Marginalia** tab—and bingo! Book recommendations, upcoming events, and the always-interesting blog.

5. Long Hours

In January 2015 the Library hours were extended significantly: Monday and Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM; Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM; weekends from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. And that includes the entire summer.



6. The Whitridge Room

A singular room, in the best sort of way. When it’s not in use for events or meetings, you can read comfortably on the couch or armchairs or work on your computer at the big table. If the Members’ Room is a large living room, the Whitridge Room is a small parlor.

7. Online Catalog

Once you try it, you’ll wonder how you lived without it. The amazing OC will lead you to whatever books you need or want—search by title, author, subject, or even keyword.

8. Readers’ Advisory

Mia D’Avanza, Head of Circulation, says, “We have a uniquely engaged Library staff. We get to know the tastes of our members and we learn what they like to read.” Need a book recommendation? Ask a staffer.

9. Internet Access

Bring your computer and get online throughout the Library. There are only two exceptions: the Reference Room on the first floor and the Members’ Room on the second floor.

10. Audiobooks

The NYSL has lots of them. The newest acquisitions are near the Circulation Desk; the older ones are in Stack 9.

11. E-Books

The NYSL offers abundant e-books for free downloading through the 3M Cloud Library. Classics, best-sellers, fiction, nonfiction—get the app and get portable. There’s an instruction sheet at the Circ Desk and a pdf guide online. (Having trouble installing the app? Ask for help at the Circ Desk.)

12. The Hornblower Room

This hushed fifth-floor oasis is a haven for anyone who wants to concentrate on writing, research, or even homework—in the company of (unintrusive) others. The room was completely refurbished in 2010 with Aeron chairs, handsome tables, good lighting, and plenty of outlets for computers.

13. Databases and Other Electronic Resources

On the website's Home page, right below the Search function, you'll see a small line of type: 3M E-books | JSTOR | Project MUSE | OED | All Electronic Resources. Clicking on any of these headings (especially the last one) takes you to complete information about the many databases and other electronic resources available to all members. Art, biographies, book reviews, newspapers, scholarly journals—a world of reference at your fingertips.

14. Comfort Stations

The restrooms in the Library are very, very nice: super-clean, bright, well-supplied, and private. If you're spending any time at all in the Library, you'll appreciate them in a big way.

15. Nooks and Crannies

Tucked away among the open stacks are small desks, with lamps, where you can hide out if you don't feel like using one of the more conventional rooms.

16. Online and Telephone Renewals

Not quite finished reading that 853-page historical novel? You can renew a book at the Circulation Desk or by phone, but you can also renew on the website: Log in, go to My Tab, and open Current Checkouts. See that Renew heading on the left? Check the box beside your book and, if no one else is waiting for it, you'll be able to renew it right there.

17. The Four Thousand

Steve McGuirl, Head of Acquisitions, says, "The Library is not a museum—it's a growing collection." He should know: he oversees the addition of 4,000 books (or titles, in library-speak) to the NYSL every year.



18. Books by Mail

If you can't get to the Library, the NYSL has a mail service for you. Open a postage account and the Library will send you the books you want. For details, ask at the Circ Desk about the Books by Mail Policy or read about it online.

19. The Front Doors

They're automatic. Give them a little push (or pull) and they glide open with no help from you. Very useful when your arms are full of books. And the short flight of stairs between the street-level doors and the Library proper is equipped with a Handi-Lift, making the NYSL fully accessible to all.

20. Book Funds

Since 2008, generous members have established fourteen new book funds—so the NYSL has been able to expand its collections in many areas: performing arts, contemporary fiction, fine arts, ancient culture, mysteries, poetry, and more.

21. What's New?

Want to know what new books have been acquired? Pick up a New Books leaflet from the display at the Circ Desk, or view the list on the website.

22. Raising Readers

The Children's Library is so varied (9,500 titles!) and has so many events, activities, and services for kids and families that it's in a category all its own. Coming soon: 50 Reasons to Love the Children's Library. Look for it in a future edition of *Books & People*.

23. The Little Table in the Lobby

It's over by the reference desk, at the foot of the stairs: a sort of mini-exhibit of books relevant to something newsworthy, seasonal, or quirky, chosen by staff. That little table is one of my favorite Library perks. It represents what I love most about the NYSL: resources, discovery, sharing, and welcome.

Lorrie Bodger, author of more than thirty nonfiction books, also edits, teaches, and writes fiction.

See www.nysoclib.org/50reasons for more.

The December New Members Party

Members who joined since the June 2015 New Members Party were welcomed to the Library at a reception on December 7.



Left to right: Top: Ann E. Lydecker Bunge and Carol J. Binkowski; Mark DeLucas and Cristina daSilva Apel; Joanne Larkin and Walter Prendiville
Middle: Lorrie Bodger, David Evans, and Norman S. Poser; Dorothy and Ken Moger with Georgette Moger-Petrasko Bottom: Cheryl Warfield, Gerald Marzorati, Cristina daSilva Apel, Toby Miller, Elizabeth Millard Whitman, Hamilton Bunge, and Ann E. Lydecker Bunge; Walter Prendiville and Rufino Mendoza

A Special Donor Reception

Those who gave \$1,000 or more in 2015 were invited to a special reception on January 25. Andrew Delbanco, Columbia professor and author, shared remarks about Herman Melville's New York. Archival materials about Melville were displayed.



Top: Andrew Delbanco; a book Melville borrowed and his Library share Bottom: Fleur Fairman and Timothy N. Wallach; Phyllis Schefer and Ned Schefer; Miriam Farmakis looks at the display of rare materials

What We Read in 2015: Staff Book Recommendations

My favorite book last year was actually an advance reader's copy of a debut novel that I'm now happy to say is published, in our collection, and available for checkout. Julia Claiborne Johnson's *Be Frank with Me* (Lobby Fiction) is an absolute page turner: a funny, sweet, heartbreaking (at times), special novel about a reclusive writer and her eccentric, gifted son. I've been waiting to recommend it for months.

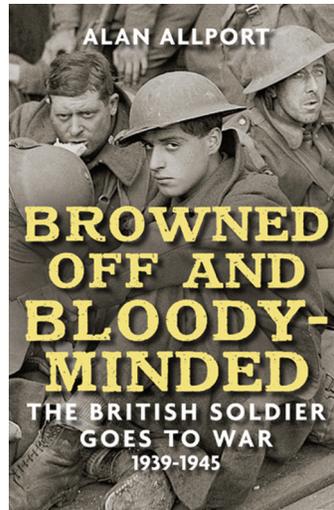
—Carolyn Waters,
Head Librarian

It's everything but the thunder of the guns in Alan Allport's *Browned-Off and Bloody-Minded: The British Soldier Goes to War 1939-1945* (940.5342 A). The cover bloke's expression sums it up: Hate it here, but if needs must. The mixed motives and even more mixed results of Britain's war-time transition make for gripping, surprising narrative, with Africa, Italy, Burma, and the men who went there evoked in corporeal detail. Bonus 2015 book: Every American should read Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me* (Lobby Nonfiction).

—Sara Holliday,
Events Coordinator

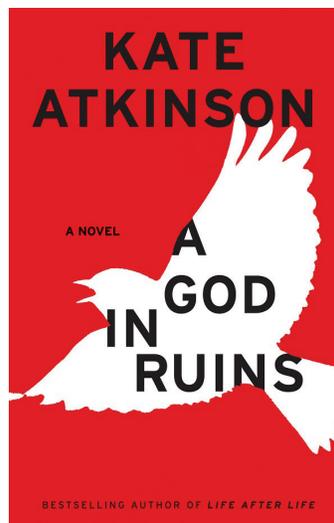
A piece in the New York Review of Books piqued my interest in Carl Safina's *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* (591.5 S). Safina isn't in the same league as other nonfiction writers I've read this year (Dave Hickey, Julian Bell, Oliver Sacks) but his stories about elephants, wolves, dolphins, whales, and chimps have stuck with me, and even changed the way I think about what it means to be a human kind of animal.

—Erin Schreiner,
Special Collections Librarian



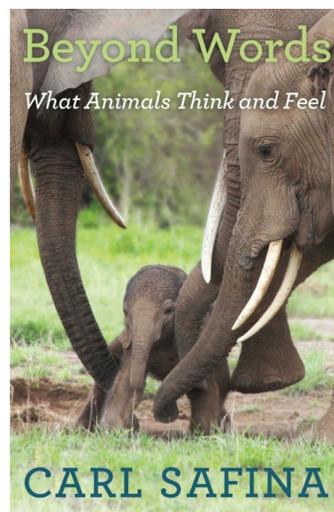
The Authentic Death of Hendry Jones by Charles Neider (F N) was a welcome discovery in 2015. This first-rate literary western from 1956 provided inspiration for Brando's *One-Eyed Jacks* and Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*, and invites comparison to Oakley Hall's *Warlock*, John Williams' *Butcher's Crossing*, even Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*. I finished 2015 reading Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (F R). Its lofty reputation and my admiration for Rhys's earlier books was a lot to live up to, but it is unforgettable.

—Steven McGuirl,
Head of Acquisitions



Kate Atkinson's *A God in Ruins* (Lobby Fiction) is an unapologetically old-fashioned novel. It has everything—heroic protagonist, lush descriptions, thrilling action scenes, and fine supporting characters. It is simultaneously larger than life and exquisitely focused on the details that compose our memories and make us who we are. Atkinson is not afraid to portray grand emotions, but her humor and clarity of style preclude sentimentality. Easily the most satisfying novel I read in 2015.

—Diane Srebnick,
Development Assistant

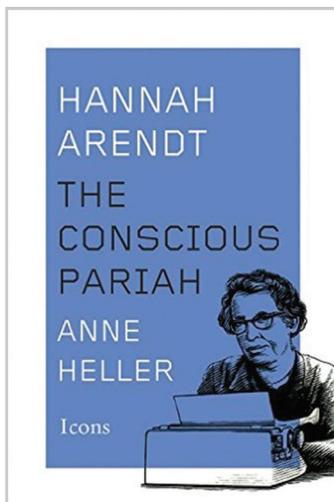


A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara (Lobby Fiction) is unlike most recent literary fiction. Its appeals to emotion aren't subtle, but trenchant and dramatic. It does not cloak itself in ironies. Instead it dares to delve deep into the emotional lives of the men it depicts. It is both intimate in detail and operatic in scope. It is alternately sad and hopeful, but always deeply moving. By its conclusion, I felt changed for having known these men.

—Patrick Rayner,
Acquisitions Assistant/
Circulation Assistant

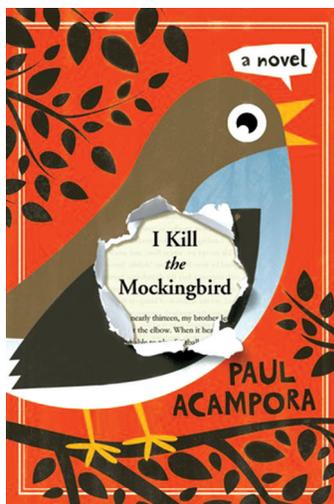
With incredible clarity and elegance, Anne Heller's *Hannah Arendt: A Life in Dark Times* (Lobby Nonfiction) and Agota Kristof's *The Notebook* (F K) limn the struggle for a sense of place. Faced with a disavowing world, Arendt illuminated "the kinds of thinking, judging, and acting" essential for a "diverse and moral human race." In *The Notebook*, twin boys systematically expose each other to cruelty, seeking immunity. The loneliness of both enterprises is deeply moving; the familiarity of their worlds is deeply troubling.

—Sharon Kim,
Circulation Page



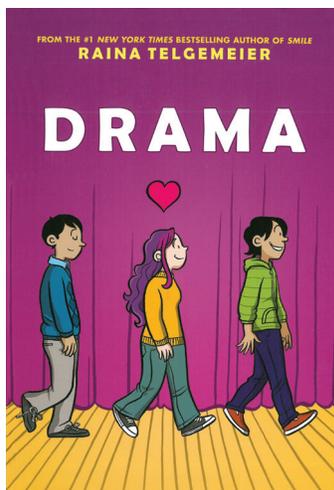
The Arab of the Future: A Childhood in the Middle East, 1978 – 1984 is the memoir of cartoonist Riad Sattouf, the doted-upon son of a Syrian father and French mother. Brightly colored and funny, the book's childlike tone pays equal mind to the young boy's wonder at hearing the 4 AM call to prayer for the first time, to receiving his first toy gun, to his earliest memory of picking up a pen and learning to draw.

—Katie Fricas,
Events Assistant/Circulation Assistant



A combination of food history and linguistics, Dan Jurafsky's *The Language of Food: a Linguist Reads the Menu* (641.3 J) is a scientific analysis, a history lesson and a culinary discussion in one. Engaging his linguistics and computer science backgrounds, the author investigates the way language has evolved around food, and how food has evolved around language. Your dinner party conversation will not be the same after this read.

—Peri Pignetti,
Catalog Librarian



Young Adult

2015 was tough for readers who hold a special place in their hearts for Scout, Jem, and Dill, not to mention Atticus Finch. I avoided that fray and instead found a spectacular read in *I Kill the Mockingbird* by Paul Acampora (YA-MS A), in which three best friends use subversive methods to promote their favorite novel (guess which?), with unexpected consequences. The characters are strong and likable, the plot is tight—don't miss this uplifting, clever, and humorous story.

—Randi Levy,
Head of the Children's Library

Much of my 2015 was spent developing our new Young Adult-High School collection. The best new book I discovered during my research is *Dime* by E.R. Frank (YA-HS F), a gritty story of a young girl fighting for her life as she attempts to escape from the sex-trafficking world. Through countless references to children's literature, this hard but hopeful tale is highly recommended for anyone who wants to revel in the power that reading holds for all.

—Susan Vincent Molinaro,
Children's Librarian

Graphic novels are my favorite thing to read, and this year did not disappoint when it came to newly published finds. My favorite of 2015 was *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier (YA-MS T). This graphic tale follows Callie, who loves theater, as she navigates school, crushes, and friendships. The art is a perfect match for the humor that saturates this well-told and fun middle grade story. I highly recommend it for all ages!

—Danielle Gregori,
Children's Librarian



53 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10075
www.nysoclib.org

T. 212.288.6900
F. 212.744.5832

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One More Picture



Katharine Holabird (center, in turquoise), celebrates her picture books *Angelina Ballerina* and *Twinkle* in November 2015.