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### Catholicism in YA Literature: A Theological Perspective

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#### Document Type

Article

#### Publication Date

6-2010

#### Journal Title or Book Title

The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children's Literature

#### Volume

14

#### Issue

2

#### Version

Publisher's PDF

#### Publisher's Statement

This PDF was created from the web version's HTML full text using the Chrome web browser. The Looking Glass is an open access journal and can be found at



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## Abstract

Though modern children's literature owes a clear debt to religious tradition, the majority of literature written for young readers today avoids discussion of religion. Texts invested in explicitly religious exploration are often a product of religious or non-mainstream presses—and are quite often proselytic, resulting in a binary distinction of children's and young adult literature as either secular (religiously neutral [1]) or religious (overtly proselytizing). Scholars have long been troubled by this reductive but powerful divide. As Graeme Wend-Walker notes in his 2009 MLA presentation "The Inexplicable Moon and the Postsecular Moment: Turkish and American Experiences of the Moon Landing in Two Picture Books": It has not been in the least uncommon, for example, to hear critics speaking as if the religious were a category utterly apart, and as if any seeming interstices were merely accidental appearances, phantoms to be quickly evaporated under the bright light of reason, or artificial spaces produced and colonized only by propagandizing Christians with pseudoscientific agendas. Jane Yolen and Gary Schmidt point out that what results in mainstream children's and young adult literature is a noticeable dearth of texts in which "the religious experience is handled as a serious and significant element of the child's life" (Schmidt 25).

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## Recommended Citation

Schmidt, Katherine G. Ph.D. and Miskec, Jennifer, "Catholicism in YA Literature: A Theological Perspective" (2010). *Faculty Works: Theology and Religious Studies*. 3.

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