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# The necessity of young adult fiction

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**This is not a book** that we would be usually reviewing for *Information Research*, though we present books about reading and library work with children and young adult literature. Some of these issues are present in 'The necessity of young adult fiction' as well, though mainly it explores the content and treatment of controversial ideas in the young adult fiction and their influence on readers, be they young or adult. The book is written from a literary scholar perspective, but includes some interesting ideas for reading and library researchers.

The author mainly concentrates on the recent books in the category of young adult fiction that have been published over the last decades and include some most popular titles, including the Harry Potter series. The first chapter emphasizes the role of the books and reading during this problematic period of life when young human beings meet with so many difficulties and complexities. The author picks the cases of the texts that explore how the books and stories presented in them help to cope with these complexities, get adjusted to them and learn to accept different perspectives (avoid the dangers of a single story) and embrace the variety and vastness of the world.

The second chapter introduces the texts that deal with the consequences of man-made catastrophes that change environment, human beings, and their ways of life. The concept of monstrosity is investigated not so much in terms of deviation from norms, but mainly as distorted relations between all kinds of entities when some can be treated as commodities or tools of control of others. The third chapter continues these investigations from the perspective of isolation and breaking the walls, be they between generations, cultures or nations.

Chapter four is devoted to the series of Harry Potter books, namely, to their nature as global texts appealing to young people (and sometimes mature adults) providing them with pleasure and

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danger of reading. The case of reading these books with Abu Dhabi students brings to the fore the role of books and reading, the controversy of historical and contemporary features that the readers have to cope with while reading, the cosmopolitan reading as a tool of questioning local rules and allegiances, means to wrestle with one's fears and developing imagination. This chapter would also be of interest to school and public librarians in finding the ways how to recommend reading text to their users.

As I come from a region and social strata that appreciates and values reading to a great degree, I was quite surprised to read that 'young adult fiction in general terms is often thought to have emerged with S.E. Hinton's novel *The Outsiders*, published in 1967' (p. 2). I have read loads of books that I can characterize as young adults fiction published long before that depicting similar problems and using similar creative means as the ones addressed in this text, authored by Selma Lagerlöf, Erich Kästner, Astrid Lindgren, Louisa May Alcott, Jules Verne, not to speak of Dickens or Mark Twain and many others. I may be missing some specific scholarly reference, as from some overview of relevant studies it seems that there is a difference between 'young adult literature', 'young adult fiction', and 'young adult books'. Whichever the case, I still think that a narrow Americanised definition of the young adult fiction impoverishes it significantly even from the perspective of American literature.

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