

## Young Adult Literature: A sparkling Genre

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### Abstract:

*Young adult literature is the sparkling genre of the literature, which attracts readers as well as increases their curiosity and zest for reading it again. Everyone wants to write for teens. It is easy and interesting thing for authors to write for teenagers. The character portrayal in their stories indirectly communicate with teens. It is a fiction written for, published for, or marketed to adolescents and young adults. Young adult literature is the expandable version of children's literature. Literature for young adults is always changing and progressive. As per the changing themes, the readers are also continuously changing.*

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**T**he middle Era is the bursting of young adult literature. Everyone wants to write for teens as it is sparkling genre, at the same time, writing young adult fiction is funny and easy thing. It is also economically beneficial for writers. The trends and formats in young adult literature are always changing. It is noticed by the young adult authors and automatically it encourages them to write better for teens. These presentations of characters in their stories indirectly communicate with teens or teen world. A good story telling is the important feature of young adult literature. It increases the curiosity of the readers to turn the pages eagerly. Many young adult classic books got the award for their emotional impact and influence on subsequent works.

The present research paper based on the study of Young Adult Literature. Though this term is familiar to all, it has still long lasting impact on the readers.

Young-adult literature or young adult fiction is also recognized as juvenile fiction. Most often, it is abbreviated as YA. So many other names are also given for such a mind-confusing genre of the literature form. These are children, teens, adolescents etc. It is a fiction written for, published for, or marketed to adolescents and young adults.

Young adult literature is the expandable version of children's literature.

It is very difficult to define the term young-adult. Many scholars and researchers define the term in multiple ways. Still there is confusion about this genre and age group of it. Regarding the young adult fiction's definition, Wikipedia defines it as:

*Young adult fiction, whether in the form of novels or short stories, has distinct attributes that distinguish it from the other age categories of fiction: adult fiction, middle grade fiction and children's fiction. The vast majority of YA stories portray an adolescent as the protagonist, rather than an adult or a child. (Web article)*

Another way to think of YA fiction is in terms of central characters with this approach, "YA fiction simply means any book whose protagonist is a teenager or adolescence."

### Expansion of Young Adult Literature:

From olden mythology to present work of fiction or drama, men and women in their teen years have become the protagonist of adventure. In ancient times, telling the tales of adolescence stories was most likely as old as human history. Even Shakespeare, the world-famous-dramatist took two adolescent lovers in his famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* (1597). Therefore, it is not new that teenagers were the protagonist but it was not noticed only that young adult literature is a separate genre. Adolescent protagonist tells the story and in every novel, the plot changes like the problems change. In these different plots, teens face so many problems and

surmount them. As the teenage problems differed in every decade, the stories, which exposed those problems, also underwent a change.

From that time, inspired by adolescent's stories, writers write novels that mesmerized readers for decades. The novels like *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *Heidi*, *Little Woman*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *Rebecca of the sunny-Brook Farm* found the great results in young adult field.

It is necessary to go back to find the beginning of young adult literature. Young adult novels started out as soft fiction in 1700s and 1800s. Literature written directly for young adults has been published with fair regularity since Mark Twain wrote. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Like Louisa May Alcott's *Little Woman* (1868), and many of her other works, contemporary young adult literature has focused on the issues of growing into adulthood and coming of age. The development of this genre as a variety of literature is available in the market for young readers with latest facts of their age group.

The history of young adult literature is tied to the history of how childhood and young adulthood are imagined. On this Michael Cart expresses his opinion:

*Beginning in the 1920's was the first time when it became clear that the young were a separate generation. (Web article)*

Even though variety of novels published in the category of young adult, the roots of young adult fiction came into existence after the Second World War. During the years between 1940s and 1950s, many social changes occurred in United States and this change noticed that teenagers represent a separate stage of life, both childhood and adulthood. In this way the roots went deeper when teenagers were given their own distinction as a social importance. Several series of books for young adults began to be published by the publishing house Grosset and Dunlop. *The Cherry Ames Series* published from 1943 to 1968, *Chronicles the adventures of a mystery - Solving nurse*, while the *Vicki Barr* series published from 1947 to 1964, follows the adventurous act of a detective on a ship. Both these series produce on their prior, the *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys* book. But unfortunately,

it is targeted to mature audiences. The novel *Heidi* (1881) by Johana Spyri is a Swiss novel about a teenage girl. Her grandfather takes her care in the Swiss Alps. It is a children's book and book for those who love and like children. *Black Beauty* (1877) by Anna Sewell is an imaginary novel about a talking horse. It is an animal autobiography and very popular among children. It is a magical idea to write about talking animals. It is the only one bestselling book ever written in Swiss literature.

Maya Angelou's *I know why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) is a coming of age story.

It is the story of Maya of her childhood to teenage motherhood.

In the years 1950s and 1960s, young adult fiction is originated as modern classification of it. In the 1960s, Young adult literature produces realistic fiction, real stories by real people. This period is known as the landmark of novel of this genre. S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* was published in 1967. It focused on a teen group, which is not yet represented in fiction works. It did not romanticize teenager or did not have happy tone which was common in other young adult books written by adults, but it is something different which shows the truer and darker side of adolescent life because it was written by a young adult, about young adults and for young adults. From that point, onwards young adult literature grew faster with lots of new difficult subjects.

1960s became the era of concentration of the generation under 30 and the emergence of adolescence research began. It is also recognized the existence of adolescent literature. This is the reason that others accepted S.E.Hinton, who was the only teenager at that time who initiated the adolescent's literature genre. S.E.Hinton's *The Outsiders* offered a mature contemporary realism direct to adolescents. It focuses on culture and serious themes in young adults. It gives the way for other authors to write more frankly about teenager's problems.

1970s was the embryonic period for young adult. It twisted from longestablished children's stories to young adult. Publishers began to focus on YA literature as distinct from children's literature or adult books. Nimon and Foster in their book *The Adolescent Novel: Australian Perspective* quoted:

1970s to the mid-1980s has been described as the "golden age" of YAL, when a highly intelligent and demanding literature was written for young people that spoke to them with particular directness (11).

Majority writers focused on writing on young adult literature in 1980s. Writers write for teenagers and try to bring new ideas in their works and give diverse topics to readers. It represents a changing decade for young adult publishing with a new genre 'fiction'. Young adult novels in 80s create an impact of separate reading zone. 1990s starts little bit like 80s but afterwards 90s prove to be the era of huge range of different things and bold presentation. It includes gritty subjects. It also developed the new genre fantasy and mystery. The new issues presented in young adult literature during 1990s like the portrayal of bold characters, bold dialogues by using obscene words, use of alcohol, thoughts of intercourse, bold fashionable clothes, using of drugs, teen pregnancy etc. David Lubar in his book *The History of Young Adult Novels* refers:

*The nineties bring us a huge diversity and bold experimentation. Characters get drunk, use bad language, and contemplate intercourse, just like Holden Caulfield, but authors bravely use their whole first names. (Web article)*

Most of the young adult novels in 1980s to 1990s are based on teenage problem with teen voice. Generally, it never ends happily. All these are based on real problems. Young Adult Literature is keeping in youth with teen culture and showing the things happening in the lives of teens and as a social being. Authors and publishers crossed the traditional way and age limit of teenage 'problem novel'. The availability of internet gives opportunity to communicate with each other without disturbance of their parents and elders.

Then suddenly in the late 1990s, a British author J.K Rowling published *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1998). This gave unbelievable success in young adult literature field. It covered all the publishing area with this farreaching effect. Rowling rules the world by this creation and rapidly became multimillionaire. 'Harry Potter' is a fantasy literature. From that moment, fantasy genre expanded impressively in young adult field. Authors like Cornelia Funke and Kathryn Lasky got the

benefits of this prospering teen fantasy genre. It is also the beginning of paranormal novels with paranormal creatures, horror stories, abnormalities etc.

Young adult literature is always in search of something new which increases the curiosity of teenagers. Varieties of young adult include science fiction, fantasy, paranormal, mystery and contemporary favourites. Writers invent new subjects and readers are ready to wander in the new realm of literary world. There are also nonfiction varieties in the genre of young adult literature. It is called as Memoir. This is the person's observation in the form of biographies, autobiographies, diaries, notes, letters and journals. It is written in first person point of view. *A walk in the Wood* by Bryson Bill and *Mamma's Girl* by Veronica Chambers are the best examples of biography.

Modern YA literatures added the topics such as threatening the weaker people, wrong eating habits, hostility towards other races etc. It also defines the teen's struggle for finding themselves. Stevens Richards in his book *Erik Erikson: an Introduction* says:

*The problem of adolescence is one of role confusion- a reluctance to commit which may haunt a person into his mature years. Given the right conditions-and Erikson believes these are essentially having enough space and time, a psychological moratorium, when a person can freely experiment and explore what may emerge is a firm sense of identity, an emotional and deep awareness of who he or she is.(49)*

Young adult literature is the sparkling genre of the literature, which attracts readers as well as increases their curiosity and zest for reading it again. It has a bright future and catchy market in the field of literature and it also plays a vital role in the publishing area.

Young adult literature is always changing its diversity and place in market, which attracts teenagers to purchase and read it. Young adult literature is the centre to all types of literature, which determines the positive attitude of teenagers. It discloses their own world, realistic approach, imagination and fantasy. This helps them to judge their own inner self by experiencing their outer

world. Their personal experiences and literature helps them to know the world.

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