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SUMMARY

**Between childhood and adulthood... Changes of Polish Young People Prose in the 21st Century**

Doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of prof. dr hab. Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel

My dissertation aims to describe the specificity of the category of writing defined as young adult fiction. The subject matter of the works discussed, being one of the key features characterising this type of literary texts is of special interest to me. The study of literature for young adults was extended with the context of research into the book market, based on which one can discern how this category of fiction functions in the reading and publishing space. This provides a kind of introduction to the perspective of literary studies focusing on literary texts.

The research methodology adopted in this study is based on the assumption literary writing for teenagers need to be embedded in appropriate references and cultural contexts. Literature for young adults, just like literary texts for the youngest readers, absorbs and represents current cultural trends. This lets us treat literature as one of the cultural products and consider it in terms of cultural problems, by referring it to non-literary categories; therefore, when reading literary works, I take into account various cultural discourses that broaden their interpretation. In my analyses and interpretations, I refer to psychology, sociology, pedagogy or cultural anthropology in order to deepen my considerations and capture the specificity of books addressed to young readers.

The work essentially consists of four chapters, although it can be divided into three parts. The first one is an introduction to the problems of narrative fiction for young adults from the perspective of literary studies, which I begin with defining the subject matter of my research. Looking over the classic definitions of "literature for children and young adults", I isolate works for teenagers and specify the meaning of this concept. Then, I describe the general features that distinguish youth literature from other literature in general, illustrating it with literary examples. I must point out that I am focusing here on novels for teenagers because prose fiction is currently the dominant literary form among adolescent readers. I close this part of the study with a discussion of the Polish publishing market for books for young adults, which is constantly developing. Here, I analyse statistical data illustrating trends in the number of publications, present the most important publishing series and describe selected phenomena of literary life.

The second chapter is devoted to the category of a teenage reader. I begin by specifying what the term "young adult" means from the perspective of different disciplines. This is important for determining who exactly the addressee of the discussed branch of literature is. After the definitions, I characterise the course of the adolescence period, indicating the developmental changes that take place in a young person. I devote a special place to the youth identity crisis because at that time significant changes occur in the psychological and social spheres. In the following, I discuss the most important problems that arise in the lives of young people during the process of puberty. I mention here, among other things, the discomfort caused by the slow pace of biological adolescence, as well as the risk of addictions which disrupt adolescent development. I illustrate the issues discussed with examples of novels to show that literature for young people really corresponds to their reality and dilemmas. The description of a teenage reader ends with a description of their reading experience, which I make based on the available research results, but also the basis of the results of the survey. I present the level of reading activity measured by the number of books read during the year, describe the groups of readers and indicate the reading preferences of contemporary teenagers.

The third part of my work consists of the last two chapters: “Anthropological and psychological image of adolescence in the literature for young adults” and “Teenager and family in the literature for young adults” where I present analyses and interpretations of selected novels for young people. In the first chapter, I discuss the image of adolescence that emerges from the latest Polish fiction for young adults. Here, I discuss how unusual circumstances, borderline situations provoke teenage characters to reach mental maturity. I also consider it important to look at the novel's plots in terms of describing how young people experience aggression and violence, showing how the authors expose the mechanisms of these phenomena. In the literary image of adolescence, I noted how prose fiction for young adults shows the issue of creating close relationships and engaging in sexual activity. I have described how first love is portrayed in contemporary novels addressed to teenagers, and what areas of sexuality the authors talk about.

In the last chapter, I take a sociological perspective on the storyline of books that are addressed to teenagers. What interests me here, above all, is the general picture of the family in which the teenager grows up. In a separate subchapter, I focus on the figure of the father which until now has often remained in the shadows. The context of the analysis of the latest novels for young adults has allowed me to demonstrate what patterns are being promoted among potential readers. In this way, I was able to establish the socialising potential of the discussed literary texts.