

Public Abstract

First Name:Dawn

Middle Name:Melissa

Last Name:Castagno-Dysart

Adviser's First Name:Carol

Adviser's Last Name:Gilles

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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Title:Gender Roles and Stereotypes Revealed in Recent Best-Selling Adolescent Literature: A Content Analysis

This content analysis explores the gender roles and stereotypes in the top three best-selling adolescent books over the past ten years (2004-2014). The research was gathered on the books: *Twilight* (Meyer, 2005), *Divergent* (Roth, 2012), and *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) through book synopsis, book notes, and methodological notes. Because a transaction takes place between the reader and text when one reads and books are an important mode of transmitting social and cultural norms, it is during reading that these cultural norms can be transmitted. In this study a typological analysis using aspects of Heine et al.'s (1999) *Characteristics to Consider when Examining Children's Books for Positive Gender Role Models* and open analysis were used and revealed major and minor themes in regard to both gender roles and stereotypes, as well as progressive gender roles. Findings reveal the major themes being lack of autonomy, damsel in distress, and conventional female stereotypes (a focus on physical/outward appearance, mama bear (compelled to protect young), and female being passive/submissive). The minor themes being cares for others (the characters putting others wants/needs/feelings before their own wants/needs/feelings), value of romance (the female needing the love of a man to be happy and a boyfriend/husband equals female worth), and traditional male stereotypes (the male behaving in an aggressive/assertive manner, controlling and strong). Teachers, media specialist/librarians, and parents need to take care when choosing books to read to children and make sure to include books that have strong female characters, as well as encourage children to think critically about the gender roles and stereotypes they may encounter in the books they read.