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Fantasy and the Drive to Read

When I look back on my experience as a young reader I remember there were many books that I read. I was an active kid during my early school years and loved to play outside. If I wasn't running around with my friends, I was playing video games or watching movies. I always had something to do. During that time though I would still get sucked into books that made me stay cooped up in my room reading for days. People and especially children often don't think that reading can be as engaging as watching a television show. Introducing fantasy books into a classroom would give students an opportunity to broaden their vocabulary in a fun and healthy way.

My annotated bibliography will focus on chapter eight of *Adolescents in the Search For Meaning: Tapping the Powerful Resource of Story* by Mary Warner. Chapter eight has ideas that highlight the reasons some fantasy books can have a possible influence on children in the "Why give this book to teens?" section. (Warner, 242) Examples showcase the ways in which fantasy books can translate into real world experiences and concepts.

Oftentimes a student just needs to be introduced to one book in order to change their outlook on reading and literature. I remember when I was in third grade and I had first interacted with the *Harry Potter* series. Before then I had liked reading, and though I knew it would be a challenging read I took up the task and passed the reading

comprehension tests until the fifth book. When I failed the test I remember thinking back on the story I had read and realized that though I had been able to follow the story and have fun with the characters, I wasn't able to grasp the "why." But I think that the beauty of fantasy is that the "why" isn't so important, it's the journey to find out what is going on with the basic plot that can make young readers fall in love with reading.

1. *Children of Blood and Bone* (Adeyemi, Tomi. *Children of Blood and Bone*.

Fischer FJB, 2018.) I did not read this book. The summary was based on <https://childrensbooksireland.ie/our-recommendations/children-blood-and-bone#:~:text=In%20a%20world%20where%20magic,oppressing%20the%20lands%20of%20Or%C3%AFsha.>

This is a story of adventure where the main characters try to revive the magic throughout the land. The king had killed the majority of the maji and uses his son to hunt down the main character. In the end the main protagonists achieve their goal of restoring magic throughout their lands.

This book is valuable because it is a recent young adult fantasy novel that covers topics of oppression. Students might find the themes of overcoming oppression helpful in their everyday lives. One of the exeter qualities of a good book is telling it from multiple perspectives and the book apparently does a good job of doing so.

2. *The Alchemist* (Coelho, Paulo. *Alchemist*. THORSONS, 2022.) Read in 2011.

Summary based on <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/the-chemist/summary/>

This is a story of a journey following Santiago. First he is a shepherd, but his dreams of treasure lead him on an adventure through Africa. In the end, the treasure was beneath the tree he napped under.

This story is important in many ways, but one of the most important reasons this book holds value is the many situations and kinds of situations Santiago gets put in. The main protagonist perseveres through tough challenges. In the end, his tenacity is what stuck with me through the years.

3. *Artemis Fowl* (Colfer, E. (2006). *The Lost Colony* / #5 *Artemis Fowl* series.

Hyperion.) I did not read this book. Summary is based on

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/37586.The_Lost_Colony).

In this book the main characters are trying to save a demon island from limbo. A time spell is not holding up well causing a problem of whether or not the humans will discover fairies. In the end they convert energy used from an explosion into a way to bring the island back to Earth.

This book is valuable because it engages the mind of a young reader in various ways. The different scientific reasoning coupled with magic give science a fantastical feel. The topics of revenge and heroism will be sure to pull in readers.

4. *Hunger Games* (Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic, 2011.) Read in 2012.

Katniss Everdeen, the main protagonist, volunteers to take her sister's place in a death match. During her time in District 12 she is in poverty like most of the other districts, but her district is the most impoverished. She eventually wins with the son of the baker in her district.

One of the reasons this book is valuable is because it displays themes of survival. Katniss is always fighting for her right to live, from her time in District 12 to her

in the Hunger Games she powers through it all. Students may be able to relate to Katniss growing up with very little.

5. *Stardust* (Gaiman, Neil. *Stardust*. Headline, 2021.) Read in 2019.

This is a story of a more developed, yet almost played out romantic adventure. The main character goes on an adventure to retrieve the star they viewed drop from the sky. The main protagonist meets many strange characters along the way and goes through a tremendous amount of character development.

This story is valuable because it turns into a relatively stereotypical fantasy story, but with a more intricate plot. The main protagonist represents the innocent embarking on a journey archetype well, turning into a more mature character near the end. The main character also represents the lover archetype.

6. *Eragon* (Paolini, C. (2003). *Eragon*. Laurel-Leaf.) Read in 2023.

Eragon is a farm boy who suddenly is entrusted with great responsibility before he becomes a man. The main protagonist is forced to become a hero, and though he welcomes the role, it comes with its perils. Being the first book of the series, the ending leaves me as a reader craving more.

In this book, the main character is the host to many archetypes. The main one being the Lover. Eragon spends his time appealing to Brom and other characters, constantly putting others first. The main protagonist is easy to relate to, making the book a fun read that can allow for me to be more in tune with the characters.

7. *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Scholastic, 1994.) I did not read this book. Summary based on

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/100915.The_Lion_the_Witch_and_the_Wardrobe

When Lucy finds a magical wardrobe in the professor's home, she tells her siblings about it and they all go inside. After being made aware of the situation they decide to join the fight against the evil witch. In the end the children succeed in restoring peace.

This book is important because it shows an escape from the world. There are many young adults who wish they could escape into a world like Narnia and become heroes. This book shows themes that would allow for young adults to better appreciate the world around them.

8. *Percy Jackson and the Last Olympian* (Riordan, Rick. *Percy Jackson and the Last Olympian*. Puffin Books, 2009.) Read in 2010. Summary based on

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4556058-the-last-olympian?ref=nav_sb_ss_5_13

With the looming pressure of Kronos coming to take over the world, the main protagonists have to figure out how to fight him and his army. There is a massive battle that decides the future of the gods that Percy is entangled in. In the end the two main protagonists finally start to acknowledge the feelings they have for each other.

This book is valuable because it has many of the exeter qualities of a good young adult novel. The most outstanding of the eight characteristics being the fourth characteristic, "YA literature is fast paced, containing narrative hook, secrecy, surprise, and tension." It also is valuable because it brings up Greek mythology, which can end up being some people's focus of study.

9. *Divergent* (Roth, Veronica. *Divergent*. HarperCollins, 2014.) Read in 2016.

Summary based on

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13335037-divergent?ref=nav_sb_ss_1_9

The main character lives in a dystopian society that has systems in place to determine what they are or how the person lives their lives. Surprisingly the main character ends up being more than just what society tells them they are. The ending of the series is a real shock as the main protagonist is shot and killed.

This book is valuable because it promotes individuality. There are often times when parent or teachers will group students and children into specific groups that the young adults don't or can't identify with, but Tris shows that we can make our own path. I think this book fits best with characteristic five of the honor list book characteristics because of the analytical possibilities surrounding the dystopian society and its rules.

10. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Rowling, J. K., & GrandPré, M. (2003). *Harry Potter and the prisoner of azkaban*. Large Print Press.) Read in 2023.

In this book Harry Potter is 13 years old and he has to deal with dementors patrolling his school because of Sirius Black. We get to learn about the iconic patronus spell that allows the user to harness their happiness as a weapon. Sadly Sirius is killed by Beatrix.

This book is the most important of the series because it is the first book in which Harry becomes a teen. It is also valuable because of the connections that could be made between depression and dementors. When I had read this as a young adult I hadn't understood the importance of a patronus, but the book did make me sit and think

of different positive things. I had the possibility of being my patronus, which is a great activity for young readers.

Works Cited

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