

PhD thesis concept

Beyond Harry Potter –
Children and Young Adults' Novels
of the 20th and 21st Century

Corinna Kalthoff
Jeannine Linnepe
Catharina Schultz

The thesis discusses the subject "Beyond Harry Potter – Children and Young Adults' Novels of the 20th and 21st Century", more specifically this means the literature produced after 1945. The focus will be on the discussion of questions such as [How is children and young adults' literature defined and by whom? Has this definition changed during the last sixty years? Who are the readers of children and young adults' literature?](#)

In the thesis, literature of the English and German speaking community will be analysed. The selection of the texts that will be the basis of the analysis depends upon the age of the reader which is defined as the age between 8 and 18 years to ensure that the child is old enough to decide for themselves which kind of books they would like to read. [Empirical research and own examples of the authors](#) of the thesis will build up the corpus for the analysis; preferred genres are [Fantasy Novels](#), [Science Fiction Novels](#), [Historical Novels](#), [Adventure Novels](#), [Girls' Novels](#) and [Sports Novels](#). Those categories are a first suggestion, the final selection depends upon the results of the empirical research.

The empirical research is based on two [questionnaires](#) designed for different target groups. The first questionnaire is addressed to [children, adolescents and adults as readers](#). The aim of this survey is to determine what kinds of books are read at the moment and why. Bookstores, libraries and schools form the main target group. The questionnaire will be published on the internet at www.beyondbarrypotter.com in a German and an English version. A second questionnaire will be distributed to authors, publishers, libraries and bookstores at a later date to also capture the intentions of the producers besides the interests of the readers.

The topic of the thesis is based on a marked personal interest in children and young adults' literature in general and the [question of how children and young adults' literature is defined](#) in particular. Our intention is to shift the focus away from the didactic field towards a literary analysis, since children and young adults' literature has largely been relegated to the realm of didactics until now. It is our believe that it is not justified to classify children and young adults' novels as trivial; instead they deserve a literary analysis and interpretation of their own.