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### Too Dark?

Murder, rape, sex, gangs, and violence-these are just some of the topics that Young Adult literature authors are writing about in today's most awarded books. Some may be offended and outraged that books that your kids are reading have this insensitive print. Others may be able to relate to everything that these novels have to say. You have been in similar positions, fighting the same fights, just trying to survive. The real question is when is too dark? When is the detail too graphic? Meghan Cox Gurdon's editorial "Darkness Too Visible" criticizes authors like Sherman Alexie and his books like *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. Alexie responded with "Why the Best Kids Books are Written in Blood" article which opposed Gordon's argument.

each author spoke on the topic of the propriety of dark themes in young adult literature. Even though some parents want to protect their kids, the real world still is happening all around them.

Structure of an argument is important to making your argument affective and obvious. The way they structured their argument was very different. Gurdon and Alexie both used emotional intensity, but wrote it in different ways. Gurdon wrote hers with a chronological order to it, adding more intensity as the article went on. She wrote, "Pathologies that went undescribed in print 40 years ago, that were still only sparingly outlined a generation ago, are now spelled out in stomach-clenching detail" (Gurdon par. 3). Later she would compare two authors and how one was more grotesque than the other (Gurden par. 16-17). Then there is Alexie with an abundant amount of emotional intensity with his comparisons. Alexie says that students that he has talked to at alternative schools have a tougher time graduating than those at a private school:

Recently, I was the surprise commencement speaker at the promotion ceremony for a Seattle alternative high school. I spoke to sixty students, who'd come from sixteen different districts, and had survived depression, attempted suicide, gang warfare, sexual and physical abuse, absentee parents, poverty, racism, and learning disabilities in order to graduate. (Alexie par. 1)

He focuses on comparing the high school that have had it rough to students in private schools that come from privileged families and communities.

Both write about whether Young Adult literature is taking away a kids innocents. Gurdon is defending the parents the have teenage children they could be reading these horrible books. Alexie is writing from the perspective of a teenager that has been through all the rough and terrible experiences that YAL authors write about. Gurdon tries to get the parents disgusted and sickened by what these novels have inside them. She writes, " Entertainment does not merely gratify taste, after all, but creates it" (Gurdon par. 5). Gurdon take the side that these crude books shouldn't take away a child's happiness, moral development and tenderness of heart (Gurdon par. 5). On the other hand there is a much different view. Alexie counters with, " Does Ms. Gurdon honestly believe that a sexually explicit YA novel might somehow traumatize a teen mother? Does she believe that a YA novel about murder and rape will somehow shock a teenager whose life has been damaged by murder and rape" (Alexie par. 7)? Alexie talks about how people tried to protect him from his own experiences but they were too late because he had already been through it all (Alexie par. 9-10).

They use Rhetorical Features in different ways. Gurdon is using comparison of what she thinks are good versus bad books. Alexie compares good kids that go to private schooling to the public or alternative schooled kids that have been is the worst situations and have not been protected by their elders. "This is an old dialectic - purity vs. despoliation, virtue vs. smut - but

for families with teenagers, it is also everlastingly new” (Gurdon par. 6) is what she used in her article. Gurdon would go on and paint certain books and authors in a bad light. The more emotional grabbing features comes from Alexie. He would use repetition in describing his own childhood experiences, “... They wanted to protect me from sex when I had already been raped. They wanted to protect me from evil though a future serial killer had already abused me..” (Alexie par. 9). This style of writing was throughout his whole paper.

Parents can try to protect their children, but sometimes it's not a shield they need but a sword. These novels give them those weapon. These novels poison their minds. These novels are too dark. These novels give kids power. These novels can cause harm and hurt innocent teens. These novels can stop the hurting and bleeding of the survivors.

## Works Cited

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