



# Popular Appeal: Books and Films in Contemporary Youth Culture

*Lesley Hawkes*

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## **Popular Appeal: Books and Films in Contemporary Youth Culture** Lesley Hawkes

Now is an opportune moment to consider the shifts in youth and popular culture that are signalled by texts that are being read and viewed by young people. In a world seemingly compromised by climate change, political and religious upheavals and economic irresponsibility, and at a time of fundamental social change, young people are devouring fictional texts that focus on the edges of identity, the points of transition and rupture, and the assumption of new and hybrid identities. This book draws on a range of international texts to address these issues, and to examine the ways in which key popular genres in the contemporary market for young people are being re-defined and re-positioned in the light of urgent questions about the environment, identity, one's place in the world, and the fragile nature of the world itself. The key questions are: what are the shifts and changes in youth culture that are identified by the market and by what young people read and view? How do these texts negotiate the addressing of significant questions relating to the world today? Why are these texts so popular with young people? What are the most popular genres in contemporary best-sellers and films? Do these texts have a global appeal, and, if so, why? These over-arching themes and ideas are presented as a collection of inter-related essays exploring a rich variety of forms and styles from graphic novels to urban realism, from fantasy to dystopian writing, from epic narratives to television musicals. The subjects and themes discussed here reveal the quite remarkable diversity of issues that arise in youth fiction and the variety of fictional forms in which they are explored. Once seen as not as important as adult fiction, this book clearly demonstrates that youth fiction (and the popular appeal of this fiction) is complex, durable and far-reaching in its scope.

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