

Kylee Schwartz

Birth of the Magic Baby: An Exploration of Motherhood and Pro-Life Sentiments in Young Adult Fiction

A new literary trend is being born in the young adult fiction genre, the female protagonist and her Magic Baby. In this trope, young, white, economically stable female protagonists in relationships have an unplanned pregnancy that culminates in a birth, jeopardizing both the mother's and child's life. The mother prioritizes the child's life and is rewarded with a beautiful, supernaturally gifted baby. The birth, idealized qualities of the Magic Baby, and its relationship to its mother reveal harmful pro-life sentiments of moral obligations to keep the baby despite dangers to the mother's life and health due to the child's future potential, glorifying a life-endangering birth, and the idealization of self-sacrifice in motherhood that ultimately devalues the woman. Through analysis and interpretation under the lens of pro-life and abortion arguments of novels that contain the Magic Baby, "Breaking Dawn", "A Court of Silver Flames", and "The Scarlet Letter", in conjuncture with peer-reviewed research papers based on teen pregnancy portrayals and stereotypes in young adult fiction, and how stories influence people, exhibits how these extremely popular novels set a disturbing precedent influencing young women through the portrayal of expectations, and valued qualities of motherhood, leading to the illusion of choice as societal expectations have been dictated and must be met. Thus, the "Magic Baby" model for a perfect mother comes at the expense of real women.

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