

Chapter 1

Introduction: Outline and Theoretical Framework of the Study

Contents

1.1. Dystopia and Young Adult Dystopia: History and Evolution

1.2. Texts Selected for the Study

1.3. Thesis Statement

1.4. Review of Literature

1.5. Methodology

1.6. Arrangement of Chapters

1.1.Dystopia and Young Adult Dystopia: History and Evolution

Dystopia was a discovery of the late nineteenth century. Even though it is not possible to name the first exact dystopian novel, several works from the last quarter of the nineteenth century are considered dystopian by the critics. From the 18th century itself, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift contained dystopian elements. The subgenre further developed through works like Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), *The Time Machine* (1895) and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) by H. G. Wells. Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward* (1888) is also considered as the first dystopian work with a futuristic setting. This novel is about a man who falls asleep and wakes up in the year 2000, to find that America has become a socialist dystopia.

“Dystopia,” the Merriam-Webster Dictionary says, is “an imaginary place which is depressingly wretched and whose people lead a fearful existence.” As Merrill Perlman suggests, the adjectival form of the word was first used by John Stuart Mill, who was, among other things, a philosopher and economist, whose main ideas were tied to liberalism and utilitarianism. In 1868, Mill spoke before the British Parliament on the “Irish question,” whether Ireland should be granted home rule or, at the least, a measure of independence or self-government.

The story of dystopian literature continued in the 20th century English literature through important works like *The Iron Heel* (1908) by Jack London and E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops* (1909). *The Machine Stops* is widely considered as an early prototype

of technological dystopian fiction. Forster is recognized by several critics as one of the founders of dystopian literature. But it became an established genre with the publication of *We* (Russian: Мы) by the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, written between 1920 and 1921. The novel played a crucial role in the emergence of dystopia as a literary genre. Zamyatin's novel is described as the first totalitarian dystopia. *We* was the first novel to use several tropes that became the formula of dystopian fiction. Along with Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, *We* is hailed as the predecessor of dystopian category with a futuristic setting. In the words of Jacob Howland: "*We* is the greatest dystopian novel of the twentieth century, but also one of the least known".

The imagined future world in *We* acted as the earliest prototype for a number of the futuristic societies described in dystopian novels including *1984* and *Brave New World*. In *We*, Zamyatin developed an imaginary future without privacy and where individuality and the emotions and feelings of people are neglected. Zamyatin had to suffer a lot for protesting against the Government of the Soviet Union and was in exile and had to live in different places of Europe. *We* was definitely inspired by the hardships people had to suffer under the communist government of Russia and the Soviet Union and hence the book was banned in the Soviet regions. The novel was first translated into Russian in the 1950s and was published in Russia only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Marxist and communist ideologies especially in the European continent inspired the writing of a masterpiece of the dystopian genre: *Brave New World* (1932) by the British author Aldous Huxley. Also known as the grandson of Thomas Huxley (mentor of the Science Fiction pioneer H.G. Wells), Aldous was inspired by the works of Wells (and

possibly *We* by Zamyatin), as many of the Science Fiction works by Wells are also included into the list of utopian and dystopian literature now. The novel was also a byproduct of Huxley's trip to America, where he was shocked to see the selfish and promiscuous behavior of the youth. Huxley's novel takes place in a distant future where the elite are all cloned people and a totalitarian government controls the society which restricts the equality and freedom of its people and considers normal people as savages. Huxley's final novel *Island* published in 1962 is considered as a utopian work.

Adolph Hitler and his Nazi Party served as the motive for the British author Katharine Burdekin writing the novel *Swastika Night* published in 1937. Imagining an alternate history set in a dystopian world, *Swastika Night* is the wild imagination of a world where the Nazi government won the Second World War and came into power all over the world. This is Burdekin's best known work and she published it under the pseudonym of Murray Constantine. Burdekin's novel is compared to the better known dystopian novel *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) by the American writer Philip K. Dick.

The best-known work of dystopian fiction is undoubtedly George Orwell's masterpiece, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published in 1949. Orwell's novel came out of the post-WWII movement and was a result of his musings about the nature of the government that emerged out of the devastating conflict. His central character, Winston Smith, helps to ensure that historical documents reflect the current party line; all while being watched by Big Brother and pursued by the Thought Police after an illegal affair. Of all the entries in this subgenre, few have had the impact on the public's vernacular than that of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Russian - American writer Ayn Rand (Alice O'Connor) is a prominent figure in the field of dystopian literature. Her works like *Anthem* (1938), *The Fountainhead* (1943), and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) are widely considered as classics of utopian and dystopian literature. Rand heavily criticized the dictatorship of the Soviet Union and communism and wrote in favour of laissez-faire capitalism. It is to be noted that Rand's two important novels were published well before the publication of George Orwell's Dystopian benchmark *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Several critics point out that there is a striking resemblance between the works of Rand and Zamyatin's *We*, but it is not clear whether Rand read or was influenced by the ideas of Zamyatin's work.

Nineteen Eighty-Four written by the British writer George Orwell (Eric Arthur Blair) is widely recognized as the flag bearer or the most definitive work in dystopian literature. The book was published in 1949 and it was the final literary work written and published during Orwell's lifetime. Orwell's novel was definitely inspired by the aftermath of the Second World War and the governmental systems prevailed in Britain and Europe after the war. The novel introduced several terms and concepts that became part of the popular culture and the dystopian literary tropes. Terms like Big Brother, memory hole, and doublespeak have been constantly used in popular culture, media and in discussions about the dystopian genre and democracy. The phrase 'Big Brother Is Watching You' from the novel fuelled the concept of constant surveillance in the dystopian genre and it is a major literary trope of the genre to this day.

The genre of dystopian literature thrived considerably after the publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Many of these works are considered as classics of literature and masterpieces of the dystopian genre at present. Another interesting fact to consider here is

that the majority of dystopian literature was produced in the English language. The list includes *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by the infamous American writer Ray Bradbury, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by the Nobel Laureate William Golding, British author John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids* (1955), *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) by English author Anthony Burgess, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), and *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* (1974) by Philip K. Dick, *High-Rise* (1975) by J. G. Ballard, Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978), *Neuromancer* (1984) by William Gibson, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) by the twice Booker prize winning Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, and *The Children of Men* (1992) by the English author P. D. James.

American writer Kurt Vonnegut is known for his contributions to the field of science fiction and dystopian literature. His first novel *Player Piano* (1952) itself was dystopian and it was about the problems caused by machines, technology, and automation in a futuristic America. Vonnegut's short story "Harrison Bergeron" published in 1961 is a dystopian satire set in a futuristic America in 2081 where everyone is made equal forcefully with the help of futuristic technology. *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) is the best known novel of Vonnegut and it combines the elements of dystopia, science fiction, and satire to write about the calamities caused by wars.

Ray Bradbury contributed extensively in the field of science fiction and dystopian literature and he is best known for his dystopian masterpiece *Fahrenheit 451*. Bradbury's novel was originally published in the *Galaxy Magazine*, which in turn was developed into a proper work of fiction. Bradbury was inspired by several developments within and outside the United States including the burning of books by the Nazis in Germany,

repression of political ideologies and freedom in the Soviet Union and the suppression of speech freedom and censorship in several countries including the United States.

The story of dystopian literature continues with *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) which is Anthony Burgess's most famous novel and its impact on literary, musical and visual culture has been extensive. It is set in a near-future society that has a youth subculture of extreme violence. The novel is concerned with the conflict between the individual and the state, the punishment of young criminals, and the possibility or otherwise of redemption. This novel was made into a movie by Stanley Kubrick in 1971.

Philip K. Dick is known for his many dystopian stories and paranoid visions of the future. One of his well-known works, *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* was published in 1974. Depicting a United States following a second civil war, internment camps and an authoritarian police rule are the norm, and a popular, genetically engineered talk show host finds himself in new territory when he finds himself missing his identification papers. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* was adapted into a now cult classic and critically acclaimed movie by Ridley Scott in 1982 titled *Blade Runner*. The movie also produced a sequel *Blade Runner 2049* which was released in 2017. Philip K. Dick must be the most prolific dystopian writer as he wrote several brilliant dystopian and science fiction works including *The Minority Report* (1956), *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), and the short story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" (1966) better known as its film adaptation *Total Recall* (1990) by Paul Verhoeven and starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Margaret Atwood rediscovered the subgenre of feminist dystopia with her novel *The Handmaid's Tale* published in 1985. The novel takes place in an imaginary futuristic North America with the name Gilead. It is an extremely patriarchal and theocratic dystopian society which suppresses the rights of women and uses them as handmaidens and for reproduction. The novel was adapted into a film of the same name in 1990 by Volker Schlöndorff and a Hulu (American streaming platform) web series from 2017 to present. The sequel to the novel, *The Testaments* was released in 2019 and it was awarded the Booker Prize for fiction that year. Atwood also wrote a dystopian trilogy unrelated to the universe of *The Handmaid's Tale* called the MaddAddam Trilogy and it consists of the novels *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013).

Another masterpiece in the field of dystopian literature is the novel *The Children of Men* (1992) written by the English author P. D. James. The novel takes place in a near future United Kingdom after 2020 and it discusses the problems of infertility and mass hysteria. In the novel, James presents a dystopia where the population of England and the world is being decreased considerably because of infertility and the government oppresses the protesters against their schemes. Academy award winning Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón adapted the novel into a film with the same title in 2006 and it features Clive Owen, Michael Caine, and Julianne Moore.

Dystopian literature written for the young adult readers was properly introduced during the 1980s. The development of young adult science fiction started and carried on through the works like *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947) by Robert A. Heinlein, *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) by Madeleine L'Engle, and *Ender's Game* (1985) by Orson Scott Card. This

trend lead to the development of young adult dystopian literature including Jill Paton Walsh's 1981 novel *The Green Book*, Robert Westall's 1984 work *Futuretrack 5*, Monica Hughes' Arc One series [*The Devil on My Back* (1984) and *The Dream Catcher* (1986)], Louise Lawrence's 1985 novel *Children of the Dust*, Lois Lowry's path breaking and heavily banned novel *The Giver*, and the 1997 novel *Shade's Children* by Garth Nix.

The subgenre of young adult dystopian fiction received much recognition after the publication of *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. Lowry's novel describes a seemingly utopian futuristic society set in an unspecified place in North America. The plot is about a community where people have to raise adopted children as their own until they come of age and the old people are all sent to old age homes with young people to take care of them. The path cleared by Lowry's novel leads the way for the popularity of young adult dystopian fiction in the twenty first century. As of now, young adult fiction came to the forefront of the dystopian genre. The revolution in bookselling began with the Harry Potter series continued through fantasy series like *Twilight* and the *Percy Jackson* series. But dystopia became the most popular category in young adult literature with the publication of *The Hunger Games* series. The YA dystopian phenomenon is still at large with the prequel of *The Hunger Games* and *Ready Player Two* among others.

Also in the twenty first century, several brilliant works played a significant role in extending the scope of dystopian literature. Two novels of extreme importance in this context are *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by the British writer Kazuo Ishiguro and *The Road* (2006) by the American author Cormac McCarthy. Ishiguro started writing *Never Let Me Go* in 1990. It was originally titled "The Student's Novel." It was shortlisted for the 2005 Booker Prize, for the 2006 Arthur C. Clarke Award and for the 2005 National Book

Critics Circle Award. Time magazine named it the best novel of 2005 and included the novel in its "100 Best English-language novels published since 1923—the beginning of TIME". It also received an ALA Alex Award in 2006. A film adaptation of the novel with the same title directed by Mark Romanek was released in 2010. *The Road* is a post-apocalyptic dystopian novel which details the grueling journey of a father and his young son over a period of several months across a landscape blasted by an unspecified cataclysm that has destroyed industrial civilization and almost all life. The novel was awarded the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Fiction in 2006. The book was adapted into a film of the same name in 2009, directed by John Hillcoat.

Dystopian visions are alive and well through to this day. One last notable book is not a novel, but an anthology of dystopian fiction by John Joseph Adams, *Brave New Worlds*. The volume serves as an excellent primer of short entries in the genre, ranging from Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" all the way to Ken Liu's "The Perfect Match". The book also serves as an excellent political look at the genre, alongside another Adams anthology, *Wastelands*, which looks at the lack of organized government.

An interesting point from a number of these books is that many examine society through the use of another source: a found journal, in which a character notes their observations, or generally views the changes in government or society through the lenses of the past. Science fiction is not about the future; rather, its cultural anxieties and observations are wrapped up in the present and taken to an extreme breaking point. There are thousands of other dystopian novels out there; this is just a short list that takes a broad look over the last century. In doing so, it is interesting to see what forms dystopian

literature takes on: concerns about socialism and collectivism, technology and science, religion and societal acceptance. Often presented as a satirical standpoint of the future, dystopian literature contains works that have a chilling kernel of truth to them, and act as a cautionary tale for astute readers. That must be why the books are always the first things to go. Today, dystopian fiction is predominantly associated with the young adult genre. Young adult dystopian series—*Maze Runner*, *Divergent*, *Ready Player One*, among countless more—dominate the shelves and also gets adapted into movies. How did we reach this point? In big part, it is due to *The Hunger Games*, as the trend that *The Giver* began exploded in popularity among young adults with the publication of Suzanne Collins' series.

To conclude, dystopian fiction has become an established genre in the fields of Literature and Movies. The popularity and relevance of this genre can be proved through two latest works: *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline which has been adapted into a movie of the same name by Steven Spielberg in 2018. (The only Science fiction film directed by Spielberg within the last 10 years) and *The Testaments* (2019), the sequel of *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Margaret Atwood won that year's Man Booker Prize for writing this novel.

1.2. Texts Selected for the Study

The proposed study concentrates on two novel trilogies: *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth. The texts thus undertaken have constant intertextual references, at the same time similar themes run through the varied texts, as a binding force to connote a dystopic vision. The study endeavours to showcase

multiple projections of dystopic vision through essentially different yet similar select novels spanning the entire twentieth century. Emerging from different cultural locations, the texts in view do not represent a homogenous world view. But throughout all the novels what is evident is the desire within the characters to make sense of the contemporary world. Each text represents a distinct dystopian theme and is regarded as crucial to understand the multiple dystopic visions. The differing themes of these texts are essential to showcase the flexible generic tradition of dystopian fiction. A brief description of the texts is as follows:

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy follows the story of the young Katniss Everdeen who takes part in the dystopian battle royale in a post-apocalyptic nation. Suzanne Collins derived inspiration for *The Hunger Games* when she was channel surfing on television. She has stated that a reality show on one channel and the invasion of Iraq on another channel began to blur together "in this very unsettling way." This is how she came up with the idea for the book. Collins also drew inspiration from the Greek myth of Theseus, which was the foundation for the story. Katniss was envisioned as a futuristic Theseus in the world of Panem. The Roman gladiatorial games were the inspiration behind the Hunger Games. Collins also drew from her own life for elements of the story. For instance, the sense of loss that she felt when her father was drafted for the Vietnam War was echoed in the protagonist, Katniss, who lost her father when she was 11 years old. As a post-apocalyptic dystopian novel, *The Hunger Games* captures several intriguing themes including oppression and societal inequality.

The Hunger Games is the first in a trilogy set in the Hunger Games universe. It has been followed by two sequels, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*, published in 2009 and

2010, respectively. The sequels have been well received by both critics and readers, with *Catching Fire* becoming a New York Times bestseller, and *Mockingjay* topping every single one of the bestseller lists in the US after its publication. Part of the reason for its fame is the riveting themes that it captures, all of which are central to the post-apocalyptic and dystopian nature of the novel. Some of the themes that can be gleaned from the novel include the theme of oppression, inequality, appearances, celebrity culture, as well as violence.

Divergent trilogy by Veronica Roth tells the story of a post-apocalyptic dystopia; the plot unfolds in post-war Chicago, where all of the people, after reaching 16 years old, must join one of the five strata in order to find their life niche for the rest of their lives. *The Divergent series* features 16-year-old heroine Beatrice (Tris) Prior, who does not fit easily into a single faction designated for citizens when they reach the age of 16. The factions are not separated by class or race but by values or virtues: Dauntless (boldness), Abnegation (selflessness), Amity (peacefulness), Candor (honesty), and Erudite (intellectuality). Tris, who is living secretly as a “divergent” (someone who fits into more than one group), decides to leave the faction in which she was reared (Abnegation) for Dauntless.

The series follows Tris’s exploration of her identity and her relationship with the character Tobias (Four) Eaton, the leader of her new faction. Roth had clearly hit her stride at the right moment—the niche market for dystopian novels was blossoming, and her offerings came on the heels of the popular *Twilight* and *The Hunger Games* young-adult series. Roth’s fan base grew quickly, and when *Allegiant* came out in 2013, it became the most-preordered book ever issued by HarperCollins. The trilogy was a huge

commercial success, with more than 30 million copies sold by 2015. *Divergent* has been praised for its original, fast-paced plot, its readability, and its powerful message of discovering one's identity in the midst of conformity. Set in futuristic, dystopian Chicago, *Divergent* tells the story of a society in which citizens live in factions and devote their lives to cultivating one of five virtues: honesty, intelligence, peacemaking, selflessness, or bravery. Because she does not comfortably fit into any one category, Tris leaves her family behind to join a faction different than the one she grew up in, relaying themes about belonging, personal choices, and values.

Along with other young adult dystopian works like *The Maze Runner*, *Delirium*, *Matched*, and *Legend*, *The Hunger Games* trilogy and the *Divergent* trilogy restructured the formula and demand of young adult literature. The trend connected well and continued through YA dystopian and science fiction novels like *Ready Player One*, *Red Rising*, *The Fifth Wave*, and *The 100*. Though there has been a trend in the past with novels exploring a dystopian future, there has been a marked increase in the popularity of these novels as a response to deep-seated anxieties felt by young adults who are watching a new, complex, ambiguous world unfurl. Another prominent reason is one reflected by other genres — namely, the anxieties felt by current technological progress, and the kind of powers and abilities granted by technology, including a heightened sense of control, of strength, and of surveillance over a population. With teenagers and young adults waking up to a bleak, confusing world, dystopian literature provides a glimmer of hope while still cementing the kind of effort and sacrifice that is required to ensure such changes take place. Thanks to the popularity of these novels and the cinematic technology that is

available today, many film adaptations have gained popularity, further cementing the place of dystopian novels at the top of YA fiction.

1.3.Thesis Statement

Young Adult Fiction can be considered one of the most relevant and popular literary types at present. The subgenre of dystopian literature stands at the top of this list. Why is it so important today? It plays a crucial part in teenage lives and also in school libraries. The imaginative storylines combined with the exploration of emotions that feature in our everyday lives has meant that young adult literature operates as a fantastic tool to discover the complex, and occasionally daunting, world that we live in. Experiencing these complexities of life vicariously through literature is a safe way for the reader to gain knowledge of new experiences that could play a pivotal role later on in their lives. It also invites readers to empathize with individuals who are different from themselves. By engaging with young adult literature they become exposed to characters that they may not have come across in real life. Readers can identify similarities between themselves and characters which gives the reader comfort to know that they are not alone in their situation. Young adult fiction can also tackle political themes and actively invite the reader to determine between right and wrong. After the popularity of novels such as Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*, we frequently see plots where the main objective is to rally against oppression and triumph over adversity. This work of research aspires to investigate the significance and impact of young adult dystopian fiction within society.

Even though dystopian fiction is considered as a subgenre of science fiction, scientific elements are less incorporated in these works as compared to hard science

fiction novels. Dystopian science fiction comes under the category of social science fiction, a branch of science fiction which gives more importance to the society and socio-cultural aspects rather than the elements of advanced science and technology. The proposed study focuses on the development of young adult dystopian science fiction as a popular literary genre, its relevance in society and popular culture and the public reception of the contemporary young adult dystopian fiction. Young adult fiction usually focuses on the reader's interests. As the majority of young adult fiction readers are teenagers and kids, these works concentrate on aspects like adventure, action and fantasy. Most people go after these works for the sake of enjoyment and entertainment. Harry Potter and Percy Jackson are good examples of this trend. When the theme of dystopia combines with young adult fiction, a new breed of literature is produced: One which entertains us and socially committed at the same time.

As *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* are dystopian in nature, the theme is universal and applicable to any society in the world. Even though both authors (Suzanne Collins and Veronica Roth) are American, the scope of these novels is not confined to the United States. Class difference is a major theme in *The Hunger Games*. The problem of class difference is more complicated in India and the third world nations than in America. Problems caused by totalitarian governments, misuse of power by the ruling class, dehumanization and the neglect of ordinary people are some of the relevant problems reflected in these novels. These novels also try to predict the future of human civilization. The relevance of dystopian fiction rests in the fact that these works are written with a social commitment. Through this research, the researcher plans to explore the influence of *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* trilogies on popular culture and how these works

were received by the reading public. This work also tries to have a look at how the interests of readers have changed over the past decade after the era of Harry Potter.

1.4.Review of Literature

The corpus of literature produced on and about Utopia, along with Dystopia has been quite varied and interesting. Scholarly engagement with the subject is evident through a survey of an array of literature; an acknowledgement of which is crucial before undertaking the research work. There is a whole volley of literature produced on topics related to utopia and dystopia, connected to the field of literature, films and popular culture. The study undertaken is an attempt to contribute towards the growing debates on dystopian fiction and young adult literature. The study examines the dystopic vision in the contemporary YA fiction through a detailed analysis of the six texts undertaken for the study. These texts have been examined by various writers through different perspectives. This work locates these texts within the tradition of dystopian fiction and showcases the high popularity of the subgenre. The work does not delve deep into the study of dystopian literary traditions; instead it focuses on a stylistic and quantitative analysis on how young adult dystopian fiction influences popular culture through a detailed study of the texts at hand. The following are some of the most relevant works relating to the subject:

One of the books specifically concentrating on my research area is the work *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults* edited by Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry. This volume examines a variety of utopian writing for children from the 18th century to the present day, defining and exploring this new genre in the field of

children's literature. The original essays discuss thematic conventions and present detailed case studies of individual works. All address the pedagogical implications of work that challenges children to grapple with questions of perfect or wildly imperfect social organizations and their own autonomy. The book includes interviews with creative writers and the first bibliography of utopian fiction for children. In this volume, there are fourteen essays concerning texts as utopian/dystopian, ranging from Sarah Fielding's *The Governess or Little Female Academy* (1749) to Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), so we see immediately that this is not just for science fiction readers but is especially for scholars of children's literature. It is an amalgamation of offerings; the editors deliberately have invited not just critics of utopian literature but writers as well, including brief pieces by children's and young adult fiction writers James Gurney, Katherine Paterson, and Monica Hughes.

The essay collection *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad, and Carrie Hintz is a more recent work which provides an insight into the critical and theoretical aspects of contemporary young adult dystopian literature. From the jaded, wired teenagers of M.T. Anderson's *Feed* to the spirited young rebels of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy, the protagonists of Young Adult dystopias are introducing a new generation of readers to the pleasures and challenges of dystopian imaginings. As the dark universes of YA dystopias continue to flood the market, this book offers a critical evaluation of the literary and political potentials of this widespread publishing phenomenon. With its capacity to frighten and warn, dystopian writing powerfully engages with our pressing global concerns: liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction and looming

catastrophe, questions of identity and justice, and the increasingly fragile boundaries between technology and the self. When directed at young readers, these dystopian warnings are distilled into exciting adventures with gripping plots and accessible messages that may have the potential to motivate a generation on the cusp of adulthood. This collection enacts a lively debate about the goals and efficacy of young adult dystopias, with three major areas of contention: do these texts reinscribe an old didacticism or offer an exciting new frontier in children's literature? Do their political critiques represent conservative or radical ideologies? And finally, are these novels high-minded attempts to educate the young or simply bids to cash in on a formula for commercial success? This collection represents a prismatic and evolving understanding of the genre, illuminating its relevance to children's and young adult literature and our wider culture.

Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction is an edited collection by Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet, and Amy L. Montz. Responding to the increasingly powerful presence of dystopian literature for young adults, this volume focuses on novels featuring a female protagonist who contends with societal and governmental threats at the same time that she is navigating the treacherous waters of young adulthood. The contributors relate the liminal nature of the female protagonist to liminality as a unifying feature of dystopian literature, literature for and about young women, and cultural expectations of adolescent womanhood. Divided into three sections, the collection investigates cultural assumptions and expectations of adolescent women, considers the various means of resistance and rebellion made available to and explored by female protagonists, and examines how the adolescent female protagonist is situated

with respect to the groups and environments that surround her. In a series of thought-provoking essays on a wide range of writers that includes Libba Bray, Scott Westerfeld, Tahereh Mafi, Veronica Roth, Marissa Meyer, Ally Condie, and Suzanne Collins, the collection makes a convincing case for how this rebellious figure interrogates the competing constructions of adolescent womanhood in late-twentieth- and early twenty-first-century culture.

New Perspectives on Dystopian Fiction in Literature and Other Media is a recent work that provides an international perspective on the overlapping of dystopian fiction and popular culture. This collection of essays edited by Saija Isomaa, Jyrki Korpua, and Jouni Teittinen examines various forms of dystopian fiction in literature, television, and digital games. It frames the timely trend of dystopian fiction as a thematic field that accommodates several genres from societal dystopia to apocalyptic narratives and climate fiction, many of them examining the hazards of science and technology to human societies and the ecosystem. These are genres of the Anthropocene par excellence, capturing the dilemmas of the human condition in the current, increasingly precarious epoch. The essays offer new interpretations of classical and contemporary works, including the canonised prose of Orwell, Atwood and Cormac McCarthy, modern pop culture classics like *Battlestar Galactica*, *Fallout* and *The Hunger Games*, and the work of Johanna Sinisalo, a pioneer of Finnish speculative fiction. From Thomas Pynchon to Richard Adams' *Watership Down*, the volume's multifaceted approach offers fresh perspectives to those already familiar with existing research, but it is no less accessible for newcomers to the ever-expanding field of dystopian studies.

Thematic Guide to Young Adult Literature by Alice L. Trupe is a resource for librarians, teachers, and teens and it identifies some of the best fiction for young readers available today. The volume is organized into 32 chapters dealing with such themes as addiction, dating, friendship, poverty, sexual identity, religion, and war. Each chapter offers a critical introduction to three to eight novels and concludes with a list of additional reading recommendations. Each of the 32 chapters is devoted to a theme of special significance to young adults, and provides brief critical discussions of several related literary works. Chapters close with lists of fiction for further reading. An appendix group lists works according to additional themes, and a selected bibliography cites relevant critical studies.

Critical Foundations in Young Adult Literature: Challenging Genres by Antero Garcia is based on classroom experiences with both college and high school students; Garcia offers a theory-based approach to challenging and transforming youth engagement with young adult literature. Taking a critical approach, *Young Adult Literature: Challenging Genres* offers educators, youth librarians, and students a set of strategies for unpacking, challenging, and transforming the assumptions of some of the genre's most popular titles. Pushing the genre forward, Antero Garcia builds on his experiences as a former high school teacher to offer strategies for integrating Young Adult literature in a contemporary critical pedagogy through the use of participatory media.

Critical Insights: The Hunger Games Trilogy is an anthology of critical essays edited by Lana Whited and there are a variety of topics that can be discussed from *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and this title present fourteen strong essays that have not been discussed in other Hunger Games-themed critical anthologies already published. The

work provides an in-depth critical discussion of Suzanne Collins' trilogy. Essays in this volume analyze the importance of *The Hunger Games*' success on young adult readers, compare the world of Panem to other notable dystopias, and closely examine the relationships between Katniss, Peeta, and Gale. Reading only through the Critical Contexts section of the work, a person would gain a sense of how the three novels have been appraised by book critics, a deep familiarity with the series' literary lineage, an understanding of the two predominant strands of dystopian fiction and how they appear in Collins' series, and an illustration of how Reader-Response Criticism applies to *Mockingjay*. The volume comprises of essays that are as diverse as their authors including topics on gender, fear, psychology, Roman allusions, and civic engagement in the classroom.

Approaching the Hunger Games Trilogy: A Literary and Cultural Analysis is a critical work on *The Hunger Games* trilogy by the late Tom Henthorne who was an associate professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at Pace University and director of the American Studies program. This book addresses Suzanne Collins's work from a number of literary and cultural perspectives in an effort to better understand both its significance and its appeal. It takes an interdisciplinary approach to the *Hunger Games* trilogy, drawing from literary studies, psychology, gender studies, media studies, philosophy, and cultural studies. An analytical rather than evaluative work, it dispenses with extended theoretical discussions and academic jargon. Assuming that readers are familiar with the entire trilogy, the book also avoids plot summary and character analysis, instead focusing on the significance of the story and its characters. It includes a biographical essay, glossaries, questions for further study, and an extensive bibliography.

The Girl Who Was on Fire: Your Favorite Authors on Suzanne Collins' Hunger Games Trilogy edited by Leah Wilson is a collection of thirteen essays by various young-adult fiction authors discussing varying aspects of The Hunger Games trilogy. In *The Girl Who Was on Fire*, thirteen YA authors take you back to Panem with moving, dark, and funny pieces on Katniss, the Games, Gale and Peeta, reality TV, survival, and more. From the trilogy's darker themes of violence and social control to fashion and weaponry, the collection's exploration of the Hunger Games reveals exactly how rich, and how perilous, protagonist Katniss' world really is. The book offers even more to think about for teen readers already engrossed by the Hunger Games. Contributors who wrote in the book are Jennifer Lynn Barnes, Mary Borsellino, Sarah Rees Brennan, Terri Clark, Bree Despain, Adrienne Kress, Sarah Darer Littman, Cara Lockwood, Elizabeth M. Rees, Carrie Ryan, Ned Vizzini, Lili Wilkinson, Blythe Woolston, Diana Peterfreund, Brent Hartinger, and Jackson Pearce.

Fan Phenomena: The Hunger Games edited by Nicola Balkind charts the success of *The Hunger Games series* through the increasingly vocal online communities that drive the young adult book market. Essays here consider the fashion that the series has created and how the costumes, memorabilia, merchandising, and branding have become an ever bigger part of the fandom experience. Issues explored include debates over the movie stars' race and size, which tap into greater issues within the fan community and popular culture in general and the current argument that has divided fans and critics: whether or not the third book, *Mockingjay*, should be split into two films.

Divergent Thinking: YA Authors on Veronica Roth's Divergent Trilogy edited by Leah Wilson is a collection of essays that critically analyse *Divergent Trilogy* through

different theoretical frameworks. In *Divergent Thinking*, YA authors explore even more of Tris and Tobias' world, including what *Divergent*'s factions have in common with one of psychology's most prominent personality models, the biology of fear: where it comes from and how Tris and the other Dauntless are able to overcome it, full-page maps locating all five faction headquarters and other series landmarks in today's Chicago, based on clues from the books, why we love identity shorthand like factions to Tris' trouble with honesty to the importance of choice, family, and being brave through a dozen smart, surprising, mind-expanding essays on all three books.

The Divergent Companion: The Unauthorized Guide is a book by Lois H. Gresh which takes fans deeper into the post-apocalyptic *Divergent* world created by Veronica Roth: a dystopian Chicago in which society is split into five factions; each with its own core value to uphold. At the age of sixteen, like every other citizen, Beatrice Prior must choose to which faction she will devote her life with devastating consequences. The *Divergent Companion* includes fascinating background facts, a revealing biography of the author, and amazing insights into the trilogy's major themes and features. The book also explains the concept of Utopia in the modern context and also includes a chapter on authoritarian rule and prejudices which are the hard and fast elements common in dystopian works.

1.5.Methodology

This work of research to explore the influence of *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* trilogies on popular culture and how these works were received by the reading public. This work also tries to have a look at how the interests of readers (especially in America) have changed over the past decade after the era of *Harry Potter*. The proposed study

focuses on the development of young adult dystopian science fiction as a popular literary genre, its relevance in society and popular culture and the public reception of the contemporary young adult dystopian fiction. This research work also aims to analyse the influence of young adult dystopian fiction on the reading public and to examine the reader's interests in the source materials (The Hunger Games and Divergent trilogies) with the help of reception theory and reader response criticism.

This work of research focuses on the close reading of The Hunger Games trilogy and Divergent trilogy and the analysis of scholarly articles, online content, books, journals and magazines concerned with young adult dystopian fiction in general and the selected works in particular. My plan is to apply reception theory and reader response criticism for analyzing the reader's interests and to find out the influence of young adult dystopian fiction on popular culture. This research work comes under the framework of cultural studies. Through this research, the researcher is trying to find out the relevance of these young adult dystopian science fiction novels in our society and the reason behind their immense popularity. Whether it is the marketing techniques or the quality of literature or the entertaining aspects, these novels surely have influenced our societies and popular culture in a great manner. I do also expect to prove that young adult literature (including dystopian fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and crime fiction) is the most popular literary genre at present.

1.6. Arrangement of Chapters

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The chapters and their contents are as follows:

Chapter 1- Introduction: The “Introduction” includes a description of the emergence of the dystopian fiction in the twentieth century. A historical perspective is provided to understand the development of the genre of the dystopia. After which a brief glance at the novels undertaken for the study is included. The introduction includes the thesis statement, review of literature, methodology and a brief outline of the chapters.

Chapter 2 - An Overview of Young Adult Dystopian Fiction in the 21st Century

The second chapter is about the history and development of young adult literature and how it was separated from the umbrella term of children’s literature. Earlier works for young adults especially belonging to the genres of science fiction and fantasy are specially mentioned in this chapter. In this chapter, I have also included a discussion of the earlier books popular among the young adults which cemented the foundation of the subgenre much stronger than before. These YA works include *The Outsiders*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Chocolate War*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, and *Howl’s Moving Castle*. There are also special sections on the milestones of young adult fantasy, science fiction, and dystopian fiction. These works are *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Earthsea Cycle*, *His Dark Materials*, Harry Potter, *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Ender's Game*, and *The Giver* and several other. The chapter also includes descriptions of important YA dystopian novels in the 21st century. Here, there is also a

tribute to a less known young adult and children's science fiction and fantasy writer Monica Hughes who wrote futuristic young adult dystopian novels before Lois Lowry.

Chapter 3 - The Hunger Games Trilogy and Popular Culture

The third chapter focuses on the primary texts The Hunger Games trilogy and looks specifically how the novel series influenced the popular culture in North America and around the world. The subchapters look into the business and critical reception of the book series, editions of the books, social media discussions including official websites, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. This chapter also discusses the film adaptations, parody and spoofs, influence on other works like attractions and theme parks, critical and unofficial books based on the series, translations, awards and honours received by the series, and the merchandise and games based on the series. The real life significance of the novel and film series represented through the partnership between the film crew and the World Food Programme and the three-finger salute from the film used as a symbol against the oppressing governments in the Thailand, Myanmar, and Hong Kong protests.

Chapter 4 - Divergent Trilogy and Popular Culture

The fourth chapter is exclusively about the influence of Veronica Roth's Divergent trilogy on popular culture. Just like the third chapter, this chapter also includes the discussion of the business and critical reception of the book series, editions of the books, social media discussions, film adaptations, parody and spoofs, influence on other works, critical and unofficial books based on the series, translations, awards and honours received by the series, and the merchandise and games based on the series. I have also included a small description of *The Maze Runner* series by James Dashner as this series

was also published almost at the same time as the two series in our discussion and was also adapted into a trilogy of films much like these two young adult dystopian novel series.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The last chapter is conclusion and it lists out all the findings and outcomes of the research I had undertaken for the past few years. I have tried my best to summarise the research work reflected through all the chapters of this thesis in the conclusion chapter. All the important facts about the relevance and influence of *The Hunger Games trilogy* and *Divergent trilogy* are highlighted in this chapter through the analysis of the findings from the specific chapters. From the ratings and reviews of the books and the film adaptations and the merchandise based on the series to the importance of the two trilogies in real life protests, social awareness and the usage of the Divergent series in educational research, psychology, and social media research based on sociology are included in the chapters and all these are reflected in the conclusion.

Chapter 6 – Recommendations

This chapter provides a description of the gaps and limitations of the research undertaken by me and the possible suggestions for improvement. The scope of doing research in the field of young adult dystopian and science fiction and the recommendations and ideas for the future research forms the crux of this chapter.