



مجلة بحوث الشرق الأوسط

مجلة علمية مُدكَّمة
(مُعتمدة) شهرياً

العدد مائة وعشرة
(أبريل 2025)

السنة الخمسون
تأسست عام 1974

يصدرها
مركز بحوث
الشرق الأوسط

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مجلة بحوث الشرق الأوسط

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العدد مائة وعشرة (أبريل 2025)

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والدراسات المستقبلية - جامعة عين شمس

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الرؤية

السعي لتحقيق الريادة في النشر العلمي المتميز في المحتوى والمضمون والتأثير والمرجعية في مجالات منطقة الشرق الأوسط وأقطاره .

الرسالة

نشر البحوث العلمية الأصيلة والرصينة والمبتكرة في مجالات الشرق الأوسط وأقطاره في مجالات اختصاص المجلة وفق المعايير والقواعد المهنية العالمية المعمول بها في المجالات المُحكَّمة دولياً.

الأهداف

- نشر البحوث العلمية الأصيلة والرصينة والمبتكرة .
- إتاحة المجال أمام العلماء والباحثين في مجالات اختصاص المجلة في التاريخ والجغرافيا والسياسة والاقتصاد والاجتماع والقانون وعلم النفس واللغة العربية وآدابها واللغة الانجليزية وآدابها ، على المستوى المحلى والإقليمي والعالمي لنشر بحوثهم وإنتاجهم العلمي .
- نشر أبحاث كبار الأساتذة وأبحاث الترقية للسادة الأساتذة المساعدين والسادة المدرسين بمختلف الجامعات المصرية والعربية والأجنبية .
- تشجيع ونشر مختلف البحوث المتعلقة بالدراسات المستقبلية والشرق الأوسط وأقطاره .
- الإسهام في تنمية مجتمع المعرفة في مجالات اختصاص المجلة من خلال نشر البحوث العلمية الرصينة والتميزة .



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شروط النشر بالمجلة

- تُعنى المجلة بنشر البحوث المهمة بمجالات العلوم الإنسانية والأدبية ؛
- يعتمد النشر على رأي اثنين من المحكمين المتخصصين ويتم التحكيم إلكترونياً ؛
- تقبل البحوث باللغة العربية أو بإحدى اللغات الأجنبية، وترسل إلى موقع المجلة على بنك المعرفة المصري ويرفق مع البحث ملف بيانات الباحث يحتوي على عنوان البحث باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية واسم الباحث والتايتل والانتماء المؤسسي باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية، ورقم واتساب، وإيميل الباحث الذي تم التسجيل به على موقع المجلة ؛
- يشار إلى أن الهوامش والمراجع في نهاية البحث وليست أسفل الصفحة ؛
- يكتب الباحث ملخص باللغة العربية واللغة الإنجليزية للبحث صفحة واحدة فقط لكل ملخص ؛
- بالنسبة للبحث باللغة العربية يكتب على برنامج "word" ونمط الخط باللغة العربية "Simplified Arabic" وحجم الخط 14 ولا يزيد عدد الأسطر في الصفحة الواحدة عن 25 سطر والهوامش والمراجع خط Simplified Arabic حجم الخط 12 ؛
- بالنسبة للبحث باللغة الإنجليزية يكتب على برنامج word ونمط الخط Times New Roman وحجم الخط 13 ولا يزيد عدد الأسطر عن 25 سطر في الصفحة الواحدة والهوامش والمراجع خط Times New Roman حجم الخط 11 ؛
- (Paper) مقاس الورق (B5) 17.6 × 25 سم، (Margins) الهوامش 2.3 سم يمينًا ويسارًا، 2 سم أعلى وأسفل الصفحة، ليصبح مقاس البحث فعلي (الكلام) 13×21 سم. (Layout) والنسق: (Header) الرأس 1.25 سم، (Footer) تنسيق 2.5 سم ؛
- مواصفات الفقرة للبحث : بداية الفقرة First Line = 1.27 سم، قبل النص = 0.00، بعد النص = 0.00، تباعد قبل الفقرة = 6pt) تباعد بعد الفقرة = 0pt)، تباعد الفقرات (مفرد single) ؛
- مواصفات الفقرة للهوامش والمراجع : يوضع الرقم بين قوسين هلامي مثل : (1)، بداية الفقرة Hanging = 0.6 سم، قبل النص = 0.00، بعد النص = 0.00، تباعد قبل الفقرة = 0.00 تباعد بعد الفقرة = 0.00، تباعد الفقرات (مفرد single) ؛
- الجداول والأشكال: يتم وضع الجداول والأشكال إما في صفحات منفصلة أو وسط النص وفقًا لرؤية الباحث، على أن يكون عرض الجدول أو الشكل لا يزيد عن 13.5 سم بأي حال من الأحوال ؛
- يتم التحقق من صحة الإملاء على مسئولية الباحث لنقادي الأخطاء في المصطلحات الفنية ؛
- مدة التحكيم 15 يوم على الأكثر، مدة تعديل البحث بعد التحكيم 15 يوم على الأكثر ؛
- يخضع تسلسل نشر البحوث في أعداد المجلة حسب ما تراه هيئة التحرير من ضرورات علمية وفنية ؛
- المجلة غير ملزمة بإعادة البحوث إلى أصحابها سواء نشرت أم لم تنشر ؛
- تعتبر البحوث عن آراء أصحابها وليس عن رأي رئيس التحرير وهيئة التحرير ؛
- رسوم التحكيم للمصريين 650 جنيه، ولغير المصريين 155 دولار ؛
- رسوم النشر للصفحة الواحدة للمصريين 25 جنيه، وغير المصريين 12 دولار ؛
- الباحث المصري يسدد الرسوم بالجنيه المصري (بالفيزا) بمقر المركز (المقيم بالقاهرة)، أو على حساب حكومي رقم : (9/450/80772/8) بنك مصر (المقيم خارج القاهرة) ؛
- الباحث غير المصري يسدد الرسوم بالدولار على حساب حكومي رقم : (EG71000100010000004082175917) (البنك العربي الأفريقي) ؛
- استلام إفادة قبول نشر البحث في خلال 15 يوم من تاريخ سداد رسوم النشر مع ضرورة رفع إيصالات السداد على موقع المجلة ؛

• **المراسلات :** توجه المراسلات الخاصة بالمجلة إلى: merc.director@asu.edu.eg

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يسر مركز بحوث الشرق الأوسط والدراسات المستقبلية صدور العدد (110) إبريل 2025 من مجلة المركز "مجلة بحوث الشرق الأوسط". هذه المجلة العربية التي مر على صدورها حوالي 50 عامًا في خدمة البحث العلمي، ويصدر هذا العدد وهو يحمل بين دافتيه عدة دراسات متخصصة: (دراسات قانونية، دراسات اللغة العربية، دراسات اجتماعية، دراسات اقتصادية، دراسات لغوية) ويعد البحث العلمي Scientific Research حجر الزاوية والركيزة الأساسية في الارتقاء بالمجتمعات لكي تكون في مصاف الدول المتقدمة.

ولذا تعتبر الجامعات أن البحث العلمي من أهم أولوياتها لكي تقود مسيرة التطوير والتحديث عن طريق البحث العلمي في المجالات كافة؛ ولذا تهدف مجلة بحوث الشرق الأوسط إلى نشر البحوث العلمية الرصينة والمبتكرة في مختلف مجالات الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية واللغات التي تخدم المعرفة الإنسانية.

والمجلة تطبق معايير النشر العلمي المعتمدة من بنك المعرفة المصري وأكاديمية البحث العلمي، مما جعل الباحثين يتسابقون من كافة الجامعات المصرية ومن الجامعات العربية للنشر في المجلة، وتحرص المجلة على انتقاء الأبحاث العلمية الجادة والرصينة والمبتكرة للنشر في المجلة كإضافة للمكتبة العلمية وتكون دائماً في مقدمة المجالات العلمية المماثلة. ولذا نعد بالاستمرارية من أجل مزيد من الإبداع والتميز العلمي.

والله من وراء القصد

رئيس التحرير

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**The Fragmentation of Power
between Adults and Young Adults in Selected Young
Adult Dystopias**

**”تنظي القوة بين النشء والراشدين في أعمال مختارة
من روايات أدب الديستوبيا للنشء.”**

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المُلخَص:

يُعد أدب الديستوبيا الموجه للنشء من الأنواع الأدبية الرائجة بين قراء النشء؛ حيث إنه يصور مجتمعات ذات طبيعة مأساوية وغالبًا ما يكون لها علاقة بالتكنولوجيا. تُناقش الورقة البحثية التأثير المتزايد للعلم والتكنولوجيا وعلاقته بالتواصل بين النشء والراشدين؛ حيث تقدم الروايات المختارة مجتمعات متسلطة لكي تمثل التأثير الذي يتمتع به البالغين على حياة النشء؛ لذلك بالتبعية الشخصيات صغيرة السن في هذه الروايات غير راضيين عن الظروف السلبية للمجتمعات التي يعيشون بها. يقوم البحث بتحليل نماذج من أدب الديستوبيا الموجه للنشء لبحث اهتمام هذا النوع من الكتابات الأدبية بتمكين صغار السن عن طريق تبني وجهة نظرهم. بالرغم من حداثة سن الشخصيات في أدب الديستوبيا الموجه للنشء؛ فإنهم يشغلون موقع متوسط بين الطفولة والرشد؛ مما يمكنهم من تدارك أخطاء الأجيال السابقة. على الرغم من تفاوت مقدرة الراشدين مقارنة بالنشء؛ فإن المهارات التي يتمتع بها النشء في الروايات الثلاث المختارة تمكنهم من اكتساب بعضًا من المقدرة اللازمة لدفع المجتمعات التي يعيشون فيها إلى اتجاه أفضل. يستخدم البحث نظريات "ميشيل فوكو" عن القوة و"ديفيد إم روزن" عن تجنيد الأطفال لمناقشة الصراعات التي يختبرها أبطال الروايات المختارة وتمكينهم فيما بعد.



Abstract:

Young adult dystopian fiction is a popular genre for young adult readers as it portrays tragic societies that are often related to technology. The paper discussed the effects of science and technology on the interactions between adults and young adults. The three fictional societies in the selected dystopias are authoritarian representing the power that adults hold over the lives of young adults. By extension, the young protagonists are frustrated with the negative circumstances of their societies. Dystopian young adult fiction empowers young a

dults by adopting their point of view and depicting their dissatisfaction with the current conditions of their fictional society. Although the protagonists of young adult literature are always young, they occupy a middle position between childhood and adulthood that enables them to correct the mistakes made by former generations. Despite the power adults hold over young adults, the young adult protagonists are able to attain a certain degree of power through their technological and gaming skills to change their societies for the better. The struggles and empowerment of the young adult protagonists are examined through Michel Foucault's rendition of power and David M. Rosen's analysis of the figure of the child soldier.

Keywords: Young adult fiction, dystopian fiction, fragmentation, power, child soldiers.



In this paper, the utopian tradition is divided into utopia and dystopia. Dystopian literature will be further divided into the classic adult dystopia and young adult dystopia. Similarities in purpose between the types of dystopian writing will be illustrated along with the main difference between the two. The image of young adults that is usually presented in dystopian writing for the young will be tackled through the figure of the child soldier. Moreover, Michel Foucault's conception of power and the specific intellectual will be analyzed in relation to young .adult literature. The child soldier, traditions of dystopian literature and

power relations will form a round picture of the fragmentation of power in postmodern societies to reveal the increasing fissure between adults and young adults. Finally, the endings of the three selected novels – Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* (1991), Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* (2011), and S. J. Kincaid's *Insignia* (2012) - will demonstrate various methods of reconciliation with the past and the present and provide hope for a better future.

The boundaries between utopia, dystopia and science fiction:

Lyman Tower Sargent describes utopianism as "social dreaming" and defines Dystopia as "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived" (9). According to Keith M. Booker, "Utopianism by its very nature tends to bespeak a certain social and political optimism" (14), hence dystopias, by default, express social and political pessimism. However, they are not antithetical, because both have the same goal which is to correct certain issues that are present in the society of the writer. Dystopian fiction is part of the utopian tradition that is divided into utopia and dystopia. Dystopian literature is utopian in nature, since by avoiding the catastrophic circumstances of dystopia, utopian society can be achieved (Baccolini 520). Both utopia and dystopia have the objective of creating better societies.



The twentieth century witnessed a rejection of utopia since people believed that utopia is an unrealizable state. If utopia is achievable, it will lead to "dehumanizing stagnation". Due to the two world wars in the twentieth century, a major turn took place in utopian writing that led to the rise of dystopian fiction, and it was accompanied by distrust in technology and scientific advances (Booker 17).

Dystopia as a literary genre started in the twentieth century with the publication of works that portrayed pessimistic environments in the future such as Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924), and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). Writers used Dystopia to serve as terrible predictions of what could go wrong in the future of scientific or technologically oriented societies. Dystopia replaced utopia and became a popular means of expression for science fiction writers who developed the genre to criticize what they considered to be flaws in the fabric of contemporary societies that could lead to disastrous futures. Dystopia and science fiction were used together by writers of cyberpunk such as William Gibson to depict the drastic changes in daily life caused by technological advancement and was also used by female SF writers such as Ursula Le Guin and Octavia Butler to present a feminist critique of contemporary societies (Moylan and Baccolini 2- 3).

Science fiction, henceforth referred to as sf, is no longer confused with dystopian fiction despite the entanglement of the two genres. While critics have not agreed so far upon a specific definition of science fiction, dystopian fiction has a clear definition. Although the critic Darko Suvin treats dystopian fiction as a sub-genre of sf, most critics insist that the two genres are separate. The difference between sf and dystopian fiction lies in the fact that utopian writing is very old, dating back to Thomas More's *Utopia* that was written in 1516, while sf is a more recent genre. Another unique feature of sf is that it is closely connected to the "medium" of the cinema which illustrates the novelty of sf in comparison to the old genre of utopian writing (Fitting 137).



The reason behind this confusion is what Jane Donawerth calls "genre blending" because both utopia and dystopia do not have fixed forms (29). The same is expressed by Moylan and Baccolini as "genre blurring". Dystopian fiction tends to incorporate features of different genres into its form to further defy "a hegemonic ideology that reduces everything to a global monoculture"; the result is an intentional "impure genre" that praises "difference, multiplicity, and complexity" (6- 7). Stressing the importance of different, co-existing voices in dystopian fiction is one of the main tenets of postmodernism which makes the genre a suitable vehicle for expressing and criticizing contemporary societies. The selected novels integrate characteristics of different genres, namely, dystopia, sf and young adult literature, hereafter referred to as YA literature.

When a dystopian work is written as sf, it always includes science and technology in its narrative. Works of art combining the two genres give plausible scenarios for the emergence of such futuristic societies and they discuss political issues as well (Hardesty, III 160). For example, Ernest Cline's novel *Ready Player One* (2011) is a combination of both dystopia and sf. The novel specifies the year the events take place which is 2045. It also clarifies how the planet has been impoverished after using most of the fossil fuel, thus people must minimize power usage. The environment has also been destroyed in the process. The novel has a political dimension as it discusses the transference of power from nations to multinational corporations and depicts a digital war between the biggest two corporations, IOI, Innovative Online Industries, and GSS, Gregarious Simulation Systems, to dominate the OASIS, an advanced future version of the internet that uses virtual reality and dominates all aspects of life.

Totalitarianism in dystopian fiction:

The dystopian narrative usually reveals authoritarian regimes and highlights the resistance of specific characters who challenge the status quo and resist existing power schemes (Moylan and Baccolini 5). It is believed that utopia inevitably leads to dystopia, because maintaining a continuing high standard of human conduct calls for "punitive" procedures that advocate a totalitarian society (Claeys, "Origins"108).



Claeys illustrates totalitarianism as a term that has been introduced in 1928 to refer to social formations where the defining principle is the "desire for complete control over the hearts and bodies, minds and souls" of individuals ("Origins" 119).

In other words, totalitarian regimes maintain power over their societies. Claeys mentions several characteristics of totalitarian societies, for instance, a totalitarian regime is a society with "hegemony over the secret police, and a monopoly over economic, cultural and informational sources" ("Origins" 119). The selected novels highlight futuristic technological societies that are totalitarian in nature. For instance, Ernest Cline's novel *Ready Player One* (2011) depicts a futuristic dystopian society that is controlled by IOI, which is one of the two largest corporations controlling nearly all sources of information. The company also has its own law enforcement units and shapes economy the way it sees fit. Powerful parties in dystopias build their power and authority using "coercion and consent. The material force of the economy and the state apparatus controls the social order and keeps it running" (Moynan and Baccolini 5). Economy is the driving force in S. J. Kincaid's *Insignia* (2012) as the world is divided into two coalitions, each consists of several multinational corporations, that wield their power over the entire planet and even parts of outer space. The coalitions force citizens all over the world to accept the status quo and at the same time they give the people televised space games as a sort of distraction to gain consent for their policies.

The totalitarian trend in dystopian fiction is consistent with Althusser's concepts of Ideological State Apparatuses and the Repressive State Apparatus. Althusser defines Ideological State Apparatuses, ISAs, as a "certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions", for example, churches, schools, the family, trade unions, and culture in general (243). The Repressive State Apparatus, on the other hand, includes police and the army and its main function is to support and carry out the judgments of the court (Althusser 162: 166). In the dystopian



societies of the novels, the ISAs and the Repressive State Apparatus are two faces of the same coin. They have the same mission, that is to say, they maintain a totalitarian agenda, but they function differently.

Althusser states that there is a single Repressive State Apparatus and multiple ISAs that spread and promote the same ideology. Both the Repressive State Apparatus and ISAs perform through "violence" and "ideology" with the Repressive State Apparatus using mainly violence, while ISAs mainly use ideology. Nevertheless, Althusser negates the idea of using only violence or ideology to control society. On the contrary, he stresses that both are used together to annex complete domination whether by using force through the Repressive State Apparatus or by promoting the ruling ideology through ISAs. The parties in power use the Repressive State Apparatus to force the conditions and ideology by which the society as well as the ISAs function (Althusser 243: 247). This is apparent in Orson Scott Card's novel *Ender's Game* (1991) as it depicts a dystopian society preparing to defend itself from an invasion by an alien species called the buggers. To protect Earth, selected children and teens from all over the world are trained to serve as soldiers and commanders in the IF, the International Fleet, which is part of the Repressive State Apparatus. The IF uses violence and ideology to achieve its purposes. It uses ideology as it works in collaboration with different ISAs such as schools and the family to find potential leaders among young children and teens and uses violence during different stages of their training in Battle School, Combat School and Command School.

Totalitarian societies organize their power around technology, for example, "media and surveillance techniques" (Claeys, "Origins" 119). Moreover, the French thinker Michelle Foucault discusses the crucial role of surveillance in preserving the status quo. He argues that starting from the seventeenth century, surveillance was utilized to insure the productivity of citizens. Monitoring what individuals can perform maintains societal power which is described by Foucault as manipulative (125). In *Ready Player One*, Wade infiltrates the IOI main headquarters disguised as an indent to prevent its employees from cheating to win the Halliday's egg contest, a gaming object that guarantees controlling the OASIS. He is given a security anklet and a piece of ear gear to constantly watch his moves and restrict his access to certain places in the company.



Similarly, surveillance is persistently used in *Ender's Game*, and it serves two purposes. The first is to watch young children and determine the suitable nominees for the IF. The second reason is to keep track of the students' development in Battle, Combat and Command School.

Another recurrent feature of totalitarian systems is the "willingness to destroy large numbers of domestic 'enemies'" (Claeys, "Origins" 119). Violence is used on a massive scale in *Insignia* as a means of making sure corporations monopolize the global market:

It was the last time United States and Chinese militaries worked together on anything. They carpet bombed most of the Middle East with neutron bombs, weapons of mass death that killed people but left buildings. Every regional resource remained intact, available, ready to be purchased on the free market. The Coalition companies had already divided the resources up among themselves. They cleared the 1.3 billion dead bodies ruining the view. (Kincaid 66)

Although the unreasonable policies of the corporations are the main cause behind this genocide, none of the corporations receive any type of blame. Furthermore, they spread a nonsensical justification that it is the fault of the Middle Eastern countries for not accepting the monopoly of growing food by Dominion Agra and the monopoly of providing water by Harbinger.

Violence is not only exercised against a large group of people, but the individual as well. Claeys confirms that one of the main characteristics of totalitarian societies is the readiness to "annihilate all boundaries" between the private and the public by "politicizing" institutions ("Origins" 119). Similarly, Althusser presents the same idea, but narrows it down to schools as they represent the most important institution within the body of ISAs, because they are always depicted as devoid of ideological practices. Schools are publicized in terms of teaching children the "freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their 'liberating' virtues" (Althusser 252). In *Ender's Game*, school is politicized as it does not only



serve the purpose of educating the young, but it is also used to keep an eye on potential commanders. Battle, Combat and Command schools are not regular schools, but schools that have been essentially established for the political purpose of the war against the buggers. Likewise, *Insignia* merges between the ISAs and the Repressive State Apparatus. The Pentagonal Spire is both part of the military and a school where young combatants receive regular education and training to fight the battles in outer space.

Claeys adds that authoritarian societies promote a "'totalist' philosophy or ideology which demands absolute loyalty and sacrifice" ("Origins" 119-120). Totalitarian thought is apparent in the acquiescence of Ender's parents to the will of the IF and the way children are brought up in their society, because their life revolves around the threat of the war. For instance, the war finds its way to children's games as Peter, Valentine-Ender's siblings- and Ender divide themselves to astronauts and buggers:

Peter opened his bottom drawer and took out the bugger mask. Mother had got upset at him when Peter bought it, but Dad pointed out that the war wouldn't go away just because you hid bugger masks and wouldn't let your kids play with make-believe laser guns. The better to play the war games, and have a better chance of surviving when the buggers came again. (Card 7)

The discussion between Ender's parents and the role-playing games of the children affirm the interference of war in all aspects of life. Hence, their society qualifies to be a dystopian society that exhibits totalitarianism.

Claeys also states that authoritarian societies create an image of a leader that represents the dominant ideology ("Origins" 120). In *Insignia*, only Elliot Rameriz is known by face while the rest of the combatant are known by their call signs. Elliot makes public appearance to give a face to the fight and encourage people to invest their money in the war. The rest of the combatants never appear in televised interviews and their real names are classified. Ender is also used in *Ender's Game* to show the whole world that the IF is training a genius commander in their war against the buggers. Contrastingly, in *Ready Player One*, Cline presents two styles of leadership represented by Wade and Sorrento, each



behaving according to the side they have taken in the competition for Halliday's egg. Wade, or Parzival as he is called in the OASIS, evokes the image of the typical gamer. He is someone who wants to find the egg and fights the Sixers for the sake of rescuing the OASIS and the players' community from commodification, while Nolan Sorrento does not have a cause and fights for financial gain. Each of them is identified with a large community mirroring its premises and goals.

Most dystopias depict authoritarian societies, because the main aim of dystopian fiction is to warn from what could go wrong in the future. When it is combined with YA literature, dystopian fiction serves as a source of spreading awareness among young adult readers who try to figure out how they fit in their societies and how they can change them. According to Booker, dystopia functions as a valuable social commentary; dystopian fiction uses "defamiliarization" as a literary technique to "provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable" (19). Defamiliarization is a formalist technique introduced by the Russian Critic Victor Shklovsky. Defamiliarization, simply put, is making the familiar unfamiliar and is used as a literary technique to grant readers of literature an unusual look at what may not be obvious in society due to repetitive exposure (Varsam 206). For example, *Ready Player One* warns young readers of the effects of immersing oneself in a virtual world by crafting an advanced version of the internet where users can make all their dreams come true. However, *Insignia* and *Ender's Game* tackle how lies and half-truths are common methods used by adults to manipulate young adults driving them to participate in what they usually would not. The three novels discuss problems that are relevant to today's teens through weaving fictional futuristic worlds that go through the same dilemmas, but in a figurative way.

In addition, defamiliarization makes the fictional world more intriguing and engaging (Booker 150). The exaggerated fictional worlds of dystopias are more appealing to young generations than the ideal



worlds found in utopias. This preference has many interpretations. The first is that dystopias are more expressive of contemporary times in comparison to utopias (Moylan and Baccolini 244). The second is that dystopian fiction often portrays teens questioning the authority adults and society possess over their lives. The third is that YA protagonists are usually astute and talented which attracts young readers, because they outwit their problems against all odds (Howell 18).

Unlike utopian writings of the past that focused on presenting detailed accounts of imagined societies, newer utopian writings shift their focus to the characters themselves who experience the new reality and take it upon themselves to change the status quo toward a better world (Fitting 148). Moreover, YA dystopian fiction shifts back and forth between "education and escape" or the "desire to please and instruct". They educate by delivering worst case scenarios in the future alongside their feasible solutions. In other words, they become similar to a "training manual" that makes them analogous to Victorian novels written for children because of their "blatant didacticism". They also show that teenagers are not helpless youngsters, but diligent contributors capable of making commendable changes in their society (Basu et al 5). In *Ender's Game*, *Ready Player One*, and *Insignia*, the three protagonists succeed in conquering the impossible and changing their societies for the better. They actively participate in their societies to support what they believe to be right, which is the main purpose of YA dystopian fiction.

Contrastingly, some teens satiate an escapist desire when reading YA dystopian fiction which contradicts the aforementioned didacticism of the literature. The reason why teens enjoy this escapism is that YA dystopian novels "provide an island where misfit toys can shine, after traditional weights and measures of success have been discarded" (Basu et al 6). For example, *Ready Player One* portrays Wade as a teen who is excluded from regular social interaction. He does not feel that he belongs anywhere. After the death of his parents, he has to move in with his aunt who harshly treats him, does not care about his education, and even robs him of his food vouchers. Wade is a lonely teenager in real life, but in the virtual reality of the OASIS, he is the famous player Parzival. Everyone knows who he is, and it does not matter if they like him or hate him: "As I walked toward the entrance, the crowd bombarded me with a mix of



insults, autograph requests, death threats, and tearful declarations of undying love" (Cline 182). Escaping to a world where teenagers are given care, attention and a boost to their sense of self-confidence is a strong motive for reading YA dystopian novels. According to Scott Westerfeld,

The system is asking a lot from teenagers and not giving them much respect in return, so it's no wonder that stories about that system exploding, breaking down under its own contradictions, or simply being overrun by zombies are also beloved of teenagers.

What is the apocalypse but an everlasting snow day? An excuse to tear up all those college applications, which suddenly aren't going to determine the rest of your life? ("Dark Side")

As YA dystopian fiction grows in popularity and the number of published dystopic novels increases constantly, the portion of teens who suffer from pressures exerted by contemporary societies increases as well. Together pedagogy and escapism provide young readers with hope that they may at some point be accepted in their society or even change it to a better version (Basu et al 6).

The comparison the readers draw between the dystopian world and their world is both spatial and temporal. They compare between their society and the dystopian one and they compare between two different time frames, the future and the present. Consequently, they view the present as history. Dystopia is a genre that perceives reality not as rigid but as "fluid" and changeable (Varsam 208). Therefore, Dystopia tries to reflect the negative conditions of society that it hopes to change and transform into a better version in the future. In other words, readers connect between their present and the future in dystopian novels to conclude how the future will be affected by their practices in the present and how they can fix the problems that are certain to arise in case they do not decide on alternative courses.

Corporatization and power:



YA dystopian fiction illustrates "corporatization" as an imminent threat to the future of the world, hence it is debated in many novels. YA science fiction that focuses on business relations and the decisions made by multinational corporations sets examples for young readers to exemplify the type of power such companies possess. The value of such criticism stems from the fact that teens and youngsters need to realize the growing power of corporations that affect the "social landscape" of their present as well as the future of their societies (Guerra 276).

In "Truth and Power", Foucault states that history can be analyzed according to existing power relations, type of struggles, and the tactics and strategies in use at a certain point in time (114). In an age of globalization and mass production, power is losing its traditional connotations as belonging only to nations and countries. Consumerism and demand on different commodities place certain companies and mega corporations in power positions that have not been available to them before. For example, in *Ready Player One*, IOI and GSS hold the keys to the global economy. Similarly, *Insignia* cancels the importance of borders between countries which is replaced by two coalitions of companies that control everything: The "Coalition of Multinationals—the twelve most powerful companies in the world... united their power and held financial sway over every major government in the world.... Between them, they could buy and sell every country on the planet" (Kincaid 67). Since sf and dystopias exaggerate the issues they criticize, the power of corporations is magnified as well in such works.

In addition, Foucault refuses the idea that power is "repressive" by definition and explains that power must be "productive" to be followed: It "induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body" (119). The productivity of power is also stressed by Althusser even though he states the important role of repression in maintaining the status quo. In order to ensure their domination, the governing parties must retain their power and guarantee its continuity and "reproduction" (236). The means by which this power is preserved is making sure the dominant ideology is used to secure the compliance of the masses (Althusser 241). In *Ender's Game*, Card demonstrates this idea through the characters of Peter and Valentine Wiggin. He writes that



The facade of peace and cooperation had been undisturbed almost since the bugger wars began. What Peter had detected was a fundamental disturbance in the world order.... Right now there's a vast international fleet and army in existence, with American hegemony. When the bugger wars are over, all that power will vanish, because it's all built on fear of the buggers. And suddenly we'll look around and discover that all the old alliances are gone. (126)

There is usually an idea or an event to unify the people behind the dominant ideology. If this reason ceases to be so will the consent it generates. Even though people may be afraid or threatened by something, they need to be assured that their way of life is not going to stop but will continue by rallying behind a strong power player.

As previously mentioned, power sometimes resides in the hands of companies, but other times national institutions make use of the power model suggested by companies. Guerra states that the influence of corporations extends to include other institutions by "adopting a corporate model", which is known as "corporatization" (277). The IF in Ender's Game uses this corporate model in categorizing children and teens and then trains them to make the best of their abilities. Colonel Graff mentions that he does not care if Ender collapses under pressure several times throughout the novel as long as he becomes the most brilliant military leader in history:

MAJOR ANDERSON. Sometimes I think you enjoy breaking these little geniuses.

COLONEL GRAFF. There is an art to it, and I'm very, very good at it. But enjoy? Well, maybe. When they put back the pieces afterward, and it makes them better. (Card 28)

Colonel Graff does not care about the children's personal lives or emotions; all he cares about is creating the perfect soldier who will see them through their war with the buggers. He evaluates the children and teens he is responsible for in terms of how useful they will be. To him,



they are only commodities that serve a specific purpose which reflects the corporate model that values gain above all else.

Instead of facilitating current ways of life or developing them, corporatization leads to the emergence of authoritarian societies. Because "wealth defines power", corporations are inclined to increase their financial gain using all possible means in order to maintain their power over society (Guerra 284). For this reason, IOI exerts a great effort to financially control the OASIS by all possible means in *Ready Player One*: The "moment IOI took it over, the OASIS would cease to be the open-source virtual utopia I'd grown up in. It would become a corporate run dystopia, an overpriced theme park for wealthy elitists" (Cline 33). Wade and all the other players know that if IOI gets hold of the OASIS, it will monetize it by charging a fee instead of being available to everyone. IOI will dictate a new dominant ideology and control the economy of the entire planet, which means it will start a new world order and establish new classes in society. It will increase the gap between the rich and the poor and destroy the chances of many young people of getting a better future, because the virtual reality of the OASIS is not just a video game to the young generation of the novel; it is a whole world with money, jobs, education, and every aspect found in a regular society.

Corporations use force to ensure obedience on the part of the resisting group be it small or big, peaceful or violent. The violence practiced by multinational corporations sometimes takes the form of biotechnology to eliminate rebellion and secure their goals (Guerra 290). Corporations have to guarantee their profits even if they use violence, because they are principally concerned about financial gain. Like Althusser's Repressive State Apparatus, corporations take violent measures and practice repression to make sure everyone succumbs to their policies, which is illustrated by annihilating the entire Middle East and committing mass genocides in *Insignia* and detonating the stacks in *Ready Player One* where Wade and his family live: "So, that brings me to our final proposal.... Tell us how to reach the First Gate. Right now. Or we will kill you. Right now" (Cline 143). Nolan Sorrento proposes different deals to Wade to help IOI find Halliday's egg. First, he uses money and power to convince Wade, but when all fails, Sorrento threatens Wade. This symbolizes the steps corporations usually follow.



They tempt their targets and if it does not work, they eliminate them. Guerra believes that among the "traditional motivations for villainy—revenge, hatred, greed, jealousy, lust, and others—greed alone emerges consistently in these books as the cold, impersonal specter behind corporate evil" (293).

The specific intellectual and the child soldier:

Multinational corporations always seek to increase their power, consequently, they pursue individuals who have the right knowledge to assist them. This resonates with Michel Foucault's figure of the specific intellectual. Foucault refuses the notion of universal intellectuals who are valued for their encompassing knowledge and instead supports the concept of the specific intellectual. He argues that specific intellectuals are usually sought for the role their knowledge and talents can play in changing or maintaining the status quo. As a result, he defines the specific intellectual as the individual who "utilizes his knowledge, his competence and his relation to truth" in cases of dispute (128).

The protagonists in the three novels are perceived as specific intellectuals as each of them is selected by powerful organizations due to their special talents and gaming skills. Ender is chosen in *Ender's Game* mainly because he is the best strategist the IF has detected among the rest of the candidates; Tom is selected in *Insignia*, because he demonstrates "killer instinct" in video games (Kincaid 22); and IOI tries to recruit Wade in *Ready Player One*, because he is believed to be the most eligible player to find Halliday's egg in the OASIS. Selecting young adults in the three novels takes the form of recruitment as soldiers, because the parties in power require full dedication to their cause. According to the anthropologist David M. Rosen, the concept of the child soldier is relatively new as it came to existence in the late twentieth century (x). The United Nations defines a child as anyone under eighteen and prohibits recruiting children under the age of fifteen (Rosen 134). The three novels portray children whose ages range between childhood and adolescence, and they are all chosen for recruitment. IOI attempts to



recruit Wade, in *Ready Player One*, at the age of eighteen. Tom joins the Pentagonal Spire, in *Insignia*, at the age of fourteen while in *Ender's Game*, Ender enlists to join the IF at the age of six and his training ends when he reaches the age of eleven. The three protagonists match the profile of the child soldier, including Wade who is still a high school student in his senior year.

Rosen compares two perspectives of examining the problem of child soldiers: The first is espoused by Human Rights organizations, while the second is adopted by anthropology and history (x). Human Rights advocates the archetype of the abused, defenseless child soldier that is often manipulated by adults, whereas history, anthropology and literature take into consideration other factors such as race and culture (Rosen 176). Since recruiting child soldiers is condemned by international and human rights organizations, portraying child soldiers as heroes is only possible in the realm of history and fantasy (Rosen 131: 132). The novels in question occupy the middle ground between the two discourses.

In the case of Human Rights organizations, children are depicted as expendable objects (Rosen 177), which is portrayed in the three novels. For example, in *Ready Player One*, the High Five, the top five players on the scoreboard, are treated as mere tools that could help IOI finish the quest stages and obtain Halliday's egg. They send the same e-mail to each of the High Five in an attempt to recruit them. IOI cares only about material gain, hence the mega corporation calculates and takes advantage of any chance that increases winning rates including recruiting youngsters. However, the young adults of the novels are always aware of any attempts to use or manipulate them:

Despite the message's reasonable tone, the threat behind it was crystal clear. The Sixers wanted to recruit me. Or they wanted to pay me to tell them how to find the Copper Key and clear the First Gate. And if I refused, they would go after Art3mis, then Aech, Daito, Shoto, and every other gunter who managed to get their name up on the Scoreboard. (Cline 132)

In the selected novels, adults try to recruit the young to fight their battles instead of them using two tactics. Adults either manipulate young adults



by giving them something they desire, or they scare them into accepting tasks that even adults cannot accomplish.

In *Ender's Game*, Colonel Graff persuades Ender to go with him to Battle school and leave his family behind by holding him responsible for the fate of the whole world: "your whole future and the future of the human race depends on how well you learn, how well you fight. It's a hard life, and you won't have a normal childhood" (Card 24). However, Ender reluctantly agrees, because he is driven by the desire to protect his sister Valentine as she has been the one protecting him from the violence of their older brother Peter before joining Battle School.

Rosen discusses the role of family consent in offering necessary protection against child recruitment. Enlisting as a child soldier marks the passage from childhood to adulthood and replaces duties toward the family with duties toward the state (Rosen 33: 39). However, in the three novels, families fail to provide the necessary protection against recruiting their children. In *Ender's Game*, the parents have no say about recruiting Ender, because he is a third child. Families in the novel are only allowed to have two children. A third child might be born for the sole reason of handing him/her to the IF to be trained in Battle School. The three protagonists must depend upon themselves to ensure their own protection, because families are presented as incompetent when it comes to protecting their children.

As the protagonists begin their new lives, they display the typical characteristics of the child soldier. Rosen believes that the term child soldier conveys two contrasting states. The word "child" expresses someone who is vulnerable, weak, and incapable of making conscious decisions, while the word soldier denotes someone who is strong, armed, and capable of violence (xi). The young characters experience conflicts as a result of adopting the role of a soldier. For example, in *Ender's Game*, the children in Battle School and later in Combat School are not treated as children at all, but as soldiers: The "bigger kids don't like Launchies butting in. You might get pushed around. In fact, you will get pushed



around. And when you do, don't come crying to me. Got it? This is Battle School, not nursery school" (Card 40). As long as they stay in Battle School, children have to fend for themselves, because they will not receive any type of protection from their teachers. Consequently, they exercise violence against each other as a sign of showing they are in control. This violence is an inevitable result of the manipulation of the Battle School system. Foucault states that the specific intellectual faces certain dangers including being controlled by those in power or not having enough support for his/her cause (130). It is apparent in the selected novels that the parties in power control and manipulate children and teens to fulfil their agendas. Nevertheless, some of the children, symbolized by Ender, know that they should not hurt each other. For example, the old boys bully the young Launchies Ender trains, and the situation escalates and develops to physical violence. Ender has to fight back to protect himself, but he knows it is wrong and repellent: "I'm hurting people again, just to save myself. Why don't they leave me alone, so I don't have to hurt them?" (Card 115). Although several boys are hospitalized due to this violent incident, no one is punished or even reprimanded. Violence is the unspoken rule among the students in Battle School and Command School, even if some of the children are aware that what is happening to them should not be experienced by children.

Writing about violent acts against children and teens reflects the contemporary scene. Sargent affirms that utopias should be analyzed according to the time frame in which they are written and according to what they convey to the contemporary reader (3). Since utopia and dystopia belong to the same tradition and have the same aim, analyzing utopias according to the background of the societies where they are produced is applicable to dystopias. Introducing savagery in contemporary YA dystopian fiction is analogous with Robert Collins's belief that "re-inventing the present is sometimes the only way to see how bad things already are". He also lists some of the main features of dystopian works including "designer drugs, mass entertainment, brutality, technology", and the "suppression of the individual", most of which are found in the selected novel (Collins "Dystopian").

Children and young adults are not supposed to serve as soldiers, hence they suffer from severe stress. Jones emphasizes that teens are



subjected to stress due to the new experiences that they go through. Their passage from childhood to adulthood means that they see their new responsibilities and new rights in a new light, thus, they become overwhelmed by that transition. Teens undergo two types of stress. The first is tension caused by a series of stressful episodes that build up with time and the second is anxiety induced by a single incident that makes it harder for teens to go on with their daily lives. However, the first type of stress is more challenging for teens (Jones 18). For example, After becoming the top player in the OASIS, Wade is afraid in Ready Player One and feels extensive pressure as he hides from IOI in real life and in the OASIS as well.

Stress ensues from different reasons such as "pressure at school from teachers, coaches, grades, and homework; relationships with friends and family; the pressure and expectations from self and others; financial pressures; and tragedy in the lives of family and friends" (Jones 18). Several of these reasons are traced in the novels in question. For instance, Ender is subjected to continuous stress as he is expected to excel in his training and in leading other young soldiers. In *Insignia*, Tom is also under pressure, because he refuses to tell his teacher of programming, Lieutenant Blackburn, the identity of a hacker to protect his friend Wyatt.

Jones adds that "Teens who are emotionally intelligent and socially skilled are less apt to be perpetrators or recipients of bullying"; on the other hand, emotionally unintelligent and socially unskilled teens are more stressed due to bullying, which is described by Jones as the "most aggressive behavior in youth". Bullying entails "kicking and hitting, taunting and teasing, spreading rumors and telling lies, taking or stealing from others, forcing or pressuring someone to do something he or she does not want to do, and sexual harassment" (18). Bullying is significantly obvious in *Ender's Game* and *Insignia*. Ender is bullied multiple times in the novel and teachers never help him, because "Ender Wiggin must believe that no matter what happens, no adult will ever, ever step in to help him in any way. He must believe, to the core of his soul, that he can only do what he and the other children work out for



themselves. If he does not believe that, then he will never reach the peak of his abilities." (Card 202). Colonel Graff's conviction of completely isolating Ender to be strong enough in their war against the buggers results in Ender murdering Bonzo out of self-defense. Bonzo's murder is kept hidden from Ender, because it could emotionally destroy him. On the other hand, Tom is bullied, in Insignia, by Lieutenant Blackburn to the extent of connecting him to a census device against his will to perform neural culling: "I warned you that the census device pulls up buried memories and dismantles your psychological defenses. This is going to get worse and worse if you don't give up whatever you're hiding" (Kincaid 184). Blackburn explains to Tom the effects of resisting the census device telling him that he will literally lose his mind if he keeps some of his memories hidden.

Bullying involves violence against children and young adults; however, it also teaches them that they must be stronger to defend themselves. Thus, they accentuate their points of view and their resistance. YA dystopias portray teen characters as elements of transformation to remind young readers of the true core of what it means to be human. Features such as "intelligence and imagination... capacity for love, loyalty and altruism" are emphasized through the characterization of young adult protagonists (Sambell 10- 11). Young adults play the role of the specific intellectual that empowers them and enables them to make noticeable changes in their societies. Specific intellectuals do not necessarily follow the dominant discourse; they may be against it seeking reform or change. No matter what stance they take, their expertise has the power to make actual change (Foucault 129). The characters in the selected novels do not necessarily support people in power. They are against what is perceived to be true, and they openly express their points of view. For instance, Dink, like Ender, observes everything and everyone around him and he concludes that what the teachers tell them does not have to be the truth. Children should not be responsible for other children. He also tells Ender that "These other armies, they aren't the enemy. It is the teachers, they're the enemy" (Card 107- 108). Dink is the first student to draw Ender's attention to the fact that adults represented by teachers in the novel do not care about them as children. The teachers have the same goal which is creating the perfect



soldier and it does not matter how many children are damaged in the process. Dink's distrust in adults is a usual stance adopted by YA literature.

The shifting power between adults and young adults in YA dystopias: The rupture between adults and young adults is indicative of fragmentation in postmodern societies. Foucault asserts that power is constantly in a state of flux (119). Hence, the State and its apparatuses do not have monopoly over power, nor can they control the entire power network in society. Power moves back and forth in a complex "network" between different structures in society such as "family", "knowledge" and "technology". This interconnectedness of power relations results in what Foucault calls "meta-power" (122). As children and young adults are used as child soldiers, they are given a certain amount of power in order to be able to perform their assigned tasks. They often use that power to show signs of resistance to adults. In *Ender's Game*, Valentine tells Ender during his vacation on Earth, "We may be young, but we're not powerless. We play by their rules long enough, and it becomes our game" (Card 237). The young characters of the novels are familiar with the deception of adults; hence they do not trust them. On the other hand, the young have faith in their skills and in their ability to make things better.

Young adults know that adults and society may be authoritarian, but neither can fully suppress them. Language plays a central role in resisting control because controlling "language, representation, memory, and interpellation is a crucial weapon and strategy in moving dystopian resistance from an initial consciousness to an action that leads to a climactic event that attempts to change the society" (Moylan and Baccolini 6). For example, in *Ready Player One*, the players' resistance to IOI begins verbally by mocking the Sixers- IOI employees whose avatar names always begin with the number six- and calling them the "'Sux0rz.' (Because they sucked.)" (Cline 33). Later, their resistance turns to virtual violence in the OASIS using vehicles, spells, and weapons. The language of *Ready Player One* indicates rebellion as the names of the characters in the OASIS combine letters and numbers such as Art3mis, or Aech which



is pronounced like the letter "H", and I-r0k which is pronounced as I rock. In a similar way, Tom's resistance to Blackburn's violence starts verbally in programming classes.

Different voices emerge in YA dystopian fiction as teens express their opinions against the status quo. It is essential for dystopian works to offer "multiplicity of voices" to help the protagonist render the "discrepancy between the world as he/she experiences it and the world he/she desires" (Varsam 205). This multiplicity coincides with postmodernism as Ruth Levitas and Lucy Sargisson assert that the core of postmodernism is plurality and diversity. They maintain that knowledge is not absolute, but relative emerging from different perspectives, hence the importance of mediation and compromise (15). Since dystopian literature is a postmodern genre, it conveys the possible existence of several voices in the same society or work of art.

Coexisting voices indicate relativity of perception. Claeys discusses the relative nature of dystopian fiction as he states that "one person's freedom fighter is another's terrorist, one person's utopia is another's dystopia" ("News" 168). This is relevant to Foucault who claims that truth is not ultimate or absolute as it changes according to the society where it originates. Every culture has its own mechanisms of truth by which everything is classified as true or false, acceptable or inappropriate (131). Relativity, which is applied to both utopia and dystopia, is the product of a certain world view and is traced in the selected novels. In *Ender's Game*, Ender discovers the last surviving queen of the buggers. She delivers him a message that changes everything he thinks he knows about the buggers' invasion:

We are like you.... We did not mean to murder, and when we understood, we never came again. We thought we were the only thinking beings in the universe, until we met you, but never did we dream that thought could arise from the lonely animals who cannot dream each other's dreams. How were we to know? We could live with you in peace. Believe us, believe us, believe us. (Card 321)

Because the two species could not communicate, they ended up slaying each other. Although the buggers wanted to colonize Earth, they thought humans were insentient beings which resulted in the murder of a massive



number of humans. On the other hand, humans could not interact with the buggers, so they trained children as military strategists, which culminated with Ender destroying the buggers' planet. Because each side misinterpreted the other side's actions, they were engaged in obliterating each other's way of life.

The relativity in perceiving the world, multiple voices, and Foucault's concept of the truth are apparent in writing dystopian works for the young. Foucault replaces the terms "science" and "ideology" with "truth" and "power" (132). He thinks the term ideology should be used carefully, because ideology always counteracts a claimed truth and because it takes a certain aspect as its base such as "economic determinism" (118). He does not approve of the word ideology, because it connotes the existence of a dual power relation between the ruling class and the masses while he prefers to think of power as a network of indefinite interconnected power relations that are always in a state of flux. If "truth" is defined by the group in power, then the inevitable result is a "battle 'for truth'" or "around truth" (Foucault 132). If the system is completely hegemonic there will not be any seeds for resistance. However, Foucault states that power does not stay in one place and remains in a status of flux. In turn, power is fragmented in contemporary societies which allows for coercion and resistance. This is reflected in writing dystopian novels for young adults due to the nature of dystopian literature in general. Despite the fact that dystopian fiction presents a gloomy vision of the future, it always gives a glimpse of hope and encourages positive readings, which is necessary for social commentary and change (Moylan and Baccolini 6).

One of the lessons that dystopia implies is that the negative conditions of the fictional society are the product of the "existing social order and the choices people make within it" and they can be modified only by revising these choices (Moylan and Baccolini 241). Dystopian fiction should be treated as a "focal point for polyphonic confrontations among literature, popular culture, and social criticism" to renew utopian thought and to avoid horrifying futures (Booker 177). YA dystopian



fiction portrays a subjugated society which takes multiple forms- "technological", "economic", etc.- and YA characters struggle to defy and resist the authoritarian societies, which is "often representative of monolithic adult authority that has abrogated its responsibility to the young people it rules" (Basu et al 4). In other words, the quest of YA in these novels is one of freedom from the authority of the adults.

The Bildungsroman:

In their journey to maturity, YA protagonists inhabiting dystopian worlds follow the traditions of the Bildungsroman as they pass several trials that are determined by "political strife, environmental disaster, or other forms of turmoil". YA protagonists gradually discover the truth about their society as the novels progress, hence they "fall from innocence and achieve maturity" (Basu et al 7). One of the major elements that are constantly repeated in YA dystopian fiction is distrust in adults. Children learn to trust adults in the early stages of their lives, to see them as a source of safety which collides with what they experience as they grow and reach adolescence. The new lesson they learn through experience is that they can only depend on themselves. The new world they step in cannot keep them safe. This is embodied in familial relations on a small scale and the whole system on a wide scale. In *Insignia*, distrust in adults is presented in Tom's conversation with General Marsh:

GENERAL MARSH. Don't mouth off. I'm your senior officer until the day you walk out of the Spire, Plebe.

TOM. So seniority matters now? ... It didn't in the Census Chamber! Lieutenant Blackburn got away with threatening you! (Kincaid 194) General Marsh could not protect Tom from getting strapped to lieutenant Blackburn's census device, which symbolizes the inability of adults to protect young adults. This loss of faith in the social structure is the main factor that inflames YA resistance to the status quo represented by the authority of the adults (Basu et al 7).

Kay Sambell believes that writing for children and young adults share some traits, because both age groups have not reached adulthood. Authors who write for youngsters, whether children or teenagers, recognize the discrepancy in power scales between their young readership



and adults (22). This discrepancy is demonstrated in the selected novels between adult and young adult characters, which entails the postmodern notion of power fragmentation. Some authors negatively represent adult characters in their novels which reflect a "general loss of faith in the ability of the present generation of writers to confidently advise children how to behave and what to think" (Sambell 26). This is reflected in the negative attitude of adult characters in the selected novels. If they are not trusted to advise the young, then the young should gain more power.

Warning against prevailing social conditions is evident in YA dystopias, but Kay Sambell adds that a subtle message is hinted at, which is the "bleak aspects of human nature itself" (6). As teens move from childhood to adulthood, their perspective of life changes and this represents a chance for authors of YA dystopias to offer narratives that assist in developing ethical personalities to carve better futures. YA dystopias illustrate the dark side of human nature as the central drawback that leads the future to deterioration, hence they repeatedly utilize "evolutionary thought" (Sambell 12, 16). Sambell explains Darwin's theory of evolution as the biological progress of living beings to cope with unfamiliar new surroundings. Evolution takes time and happens over the course of several generations. In simpler terms, evolution is "natural selection, or the 'survival of the fittest'". Evolutionary thought is used "metaphorically" in YA futuristic literature to examine ethics and integrity. In this case, evolution is used at the "level of the individual" to mean "eat or be eaten". Characters displaying "ruthless, aggressive, selfish" demeanor are depicted as having the best chances of "survival", while laudable characters are not as qualified (Sambell 51- 53).

Authors perpetuating this type of negative thought believe that aggression is a main component of human nature and only laws keep this aggression from surfacing, or else civilization is doomed to fall. Sambell prefers to look at aggression from a different angle. She supports the relativity of violence, that is to say, violence may be the result of a "desire to protect one's young or one's social group" and this is different from assuming that all people are intrinsically aggressive (53). In the



selected novels, the three protagonists try to protect themselves or their beloved ones and sometimes they use violence, in other words, they agreed to play. For example, Ender wants to protect his sister Valentine above all else.

The possibility of change is often depicted through the protagonists as human beings (Basu et al 7). YA protagonists advocate holding on to the good side of human nature. Because teenagers occupy a position in the middle of childhood and adulthood, their perspective echoes their intermediary position. They are "idealistic and optimistic" and at the same time, they are familiar with the grisly nature of the adult world (Sambell 48). Sambell adds that adolescents possess two advantages. The first is that contemporary teens are more experienced than their forbearers and the second is their capacity for change, because in this stage of their lives, they are more willing to change their societies for the better. Teenagers are more flexible than adults; teens seek new ideas, new solutions to their problems or even develop their own methodology to deal with the world around them, which qualifies them in YA literature to revise the positions taken by adults (Sambell 48- 49). The selected novels portray YA as more capable of change, while adults are trapped in an old world and cannot accept new ideas literally or metaphorically. In *Insignia*, neural processors are installed in the brains of adult soldiers at first, but they either die or lose their sanity. Young adults possess better chances in adapting to the neural processors and they show remarkable success. Moreover, in *Ender's Game*, Mazer Rackham tells Ender after the final battle:

And it had to be a child, Ender.... You were faster than me. Better than me. I was too old and cautious. Any decent person who knows what warfare is can never go into battle with a whole heart. But you didn't know. We made sure you didn't know. You were reckless and brilliant and young. It's what you were born for.... You had to be a weapon, Ender. Like a gun ... functioning perfectly but not knowing what you were aimed at. We aimed you. We're responsible. If there was something wrong, we did it. (Card 298)

Ender is deluded to kill an entire species unknowingly. Nevertheless, when he discovers the deception he has been subjected to



by the adults at Command School, he realizes that their moral position has been faulty, and that he would not have made the same violent choice.

Authors abandon their prudence and conservatism, because they feel a sincere desire to reveal the "(sometimes painful) truth, choosing to confront, rather than sidestep, the emotional crises of childhood, which may well include death, loneliness, alienation and involve difficult choices and decisions" (Sambell 26- 27). Ready Player One demonstrates the importance of revealing the truth to the young instead of shocking them later:

So I swallowed all of the dark ages nonsense they fed me. Some time passed. I grew up a little, and I gradually began to figure out that pretty much everyone had been lying to me about pretty much everything since the moment I emerged from my mother's womb.

This was an alarming revelation.

It gave me trust issues later in life. (Cline 16)

Because YA literature expresses contemporary problems of contemporary young readers, it often utilizes the current technological scene by stressing the importance of having open access to information and by relating stopping the free flow of information to the "atmosphere of conspiracy" (Basu et al 4). Therefore, depicting young adult characters that have been "manipulated" by their society only to discover later the true order of things and their subsequent insurgence is a popular line of events that has been frequently presented in YA dystopian fiction.

Moreover, exposing hidden schemes is interpreted as the sole route to obtain one's freedom (Basu et al 4). The selected novels depict the lack of access to information as a crucial factor that motivates YA protagonists to change their societies. According to Stephanie Guerra, the "exposure" is an important element that accompanies "corporatization" (278). Exposure represents an important part of the selected novels. In Ready Player One, Wade realizes that the most effective way to prevent



IOI from taking over the OASIS besides beating them to Halliday's egg is to reveal the information incriminating them including the murder of Daito and the attempted murder of Art3mis and Shoto. Wade finds a separate file for each of the High Five when he hacks the IOI intranet. He discovers that IOI employees have been watching members of the High Five to secure their collaboration or to kill them if they step in the way: "Sorrento proposed sending agents to abduct Art3mis and Shoto from their homes to force them to help IOI open the Third Gate. Once the Sixers had obtained the egg and won the contest, Art3mis and Shoto would 'be disposed of'" (Cline 293). IOI can only be stopped if their schemes are revealed.

The classic adult dystopia versus YA dystopian fiction:

Protagonists of YA dystopian literature are different from the protagonists of regular adult dystopias due to the differences between the two types of fiction. The difference between adult dystopias and YA dystopias is that the YA version of dystopian writing presents hope within the work itself in contrast to adult dystopias which do not display signs of hope (Basu et al 3). Adult dystopias usually end with the failure of the protagonists, but YA dystopias end with their success. Most of the authors writing for YA believe that science will develop to negatively affect societies in the future, hence, they express it in their writings (Sambell 9). The reason behind depicting dark and depressing imagined societies is to show that societies are capable of recovery even if the current situation suggests the opposite (Basu et al 3).

Writing for young adults follows some of the traditions of children's literature, that is why, authors mellow the intensity of their works (Sambell 32). The most conspicuous example is providing a happy ending to YA dystopian novels, which has received mixed criticism. While some critics believe it is essential to include a happy ending in YA dystopias, Sambell states that although YA literature in general follows some of the restrictions of children's literature, departing from the rules of the classic adult dystopia concerning the ending results in degrading the work of art itself. According to Sambell, the quest of the protagonist in the classic adult dystopia is certain to fail. Providing YA dystopian novels with a happy ending is illogical as once the route toward dystopian



circumstances has been taken, there is no going back. In addition, she wants to trust the reader and not the text to "provide a balanced view" (125). Sambell believes that a happy ending is intended to represent a "hope" for a new beginning that is mostly depicted in a "pastoral" setting. However, even if this type of ending signifies a "completely new start for the species itself", it is often portrayed in an "unrealistic and naively evasive" way (128). Sambell prefers an open ending to the complete closure of the text, because an open ending gives the readers a space to think about probable solutions instead of providing an explicit authorial vision (221).

Both YA dystopian fiction and the classic adult dystopia provide hope but in different ways. YA dystopias provide hope within the text, while adult dystopias keep it at bay; they keep hope out of the boundaries of the text to exemplify the seriousness of their criticism. The two types of literature have the same aim, namely warning against worst case scenarios in the future, but applying the rules of writing for adults to YA literature should not always be adopted because of the distinctiveness of the readership. To put it simply, giving hope to young generations by employing happy endings should not be completely rejected. However, Sambell's advocacy of an open ending does contribute to developing young readers' critical thinking. Kincaid's *Insignia* has an open ending. The novel is the first book in a trilogy which may explain the open ending. Nevertheless, it is possible to treat the novel as a stand-alone novel. *Insignia*'s open ending gives readers a mixture of hope and dread. On the one hand, Tom wins his final battle and saves himself. On the other hand, he betrays Medusa, the girl he like, to win. As Sambell expresses it, the ending does not solve all the problems faced by the protagonists. Parts of the ordeal are solved, and others are left for the readers' speculation (33). Readers are reassured by Tom's survival, but they are also instigated to think of the consequences of his choices, and if his relationship with Medusa can be fixed in the future.

Basu et al add that the form of the Bildungsroman sometimes posits a challenge to creating something new by YA protagonists at the



end of the novel. Sometimes, protagonists strike a balance between devising a whole new way of life and acquiesce to the existing state of affairs (Basu et al 7). Kincaid's *Insignia*, for instance, ends by showing that Tom had to play by the system rules, but he tries to make amends with Medusa. She tells him in their final encounter: "You can't pull a move like that, be cutthroat like that, and then come here and be nice" (225). Tom explains that he had to trick her in battle, because his life was endangered. He tries to fix what has been ruined by the system by adopting the middle position between fully succumbing to the rules of the adults and starting completely anew which illustrates the maturity achieved by young protagonists following the traditions of the *Bildungsroman*.

In addition, Guerra states that sometimes "participating in the ruling system" is considered a "more realistic approach" to change the flawed system of corporations from within (292). Ernest Cline adopts the same stance in writing the ending of *Ready Player One* as Wade takes over GSS. Wade fights the power of IOI with the same weapon, that is to say, corporation power. After he obtains Halliday's egg and legally takes over GSS according to Halliday's will, Wade possesses the power to remedy the faults and crimes committed by IOI. Becoming the CEO of a mega corporation in this case does not necessarily mean that Wade becomes a part of the corporate system he has loathed for his whole life. On the contrary, it means he can improve his society using the available resources he has.

Moreover, Baccolini stresses that in order to have a critical dystopia, one that gives hope and aims for change, the writer utilizes the role of memory supported by "awareness and responsibility". Memory allows characters to reflect on their past and reconcile with the present, thus, a better future is possible. She also adds that the open ending that is usually featured in critical dystopias allow the characters to rethink their decisions which leads to "acceptance of responsibility and accountability" with the aid of memory; this element of dystopian writing is what supports reformation and improvement (521). The role of memory is apparent in *Ender's Game* as Orson Scott Card portrays Ender's sense of guilt even after he becomes an adult at the end of the novel. Ender does not forget the mass genocide he has committed against the buggers and



tries to redeem his mistake when he finds a new queen egg. He vows to spread the buggers account of the war along with the buggers' history by writing a book called *Speaker for the Dead* that includes everything he has come to know from the queen. Ender's memory of the genocide and his feelings of guilt are what makes him feel indebted to the buggers. On the level of the individual, he repays them by deciding to protect the queen egg and to deliver it to a safe place where it can start a new colony, hence giving the buggers a second chance to proliferate and protect their race. On the level of the society, he cherishes the queen's confession and her clemency for his crime, namely obliterating the buggers home world. He preserves their history and gives them a tongue to narrate their side of the story to earn the forgiveness of the human race and to grant the two sides a chance to reconcile with their past.

Conclusion:

YA dystopias often present authoritarian societies in an attempt to symbolize the rupture between young adults and the adult community. The decay of society in YA dystopian fiction is often caused by residual problems from the past that the adult generation fails to address or remedy. The task of saving these societies is inherited by young adults, who suddenly find themselves bearing a responsibility that is not necessarily suitable for their age. Hence, YA dystopias usually depict the journey of protagonists in the form of *Bildungsroman*. The notion of coming of age is one of the major themes in YA fiction, because it traces the development of YA protagonists from childhood to maturity. Coupling the growth YA protagonists experience with heavy topics that are imported from adult dystopias to YA dystopias sends positive messages to the young readership that they can use the hardships they experience in their transition from young adults to adults to empower themselves and to create a better future.



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