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1. DETAILS

Student no:

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Start Date:

Finish Date:

Faculty: Faculty of Arts and Education

School: School of Communication and Creative Arts

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Thesis Title: Impossible Females: The Problem of the Heroine in Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Literature

Colloquia: First Year Confirmation

Ethics: N/A

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

- How and why do heterotopian spaces in young adult dystopian literature enable multiple representations of girlhood?

SUB QUESTIONS

- How are representations of young female protagonists gendered in contemporary YA dystopian literature?
- How, why, and for whom do Foucault's heterotopias operate as sites of transgression in young adult dystopian fiction?

3. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Young adult dystopian literature is a burgeoning genre in the twenty-first century, emerging in the past two decades to become a phenomenon around the world, an increase in young adult fiction sales of one hundred and fifty per cent over the six year period from 2006 to 2012 was reported by the Daily Mail (Thomas, 2012), with book sales rising from 891,000 to 2.4 million according to Neilson BookScan (Thomas, 2012). Set in future worlds that are recognisable to our own, and containing themes that respond to current concerns surrounding fears for society in the future, these texts provide a showcase of possible future outcomes for humankind, in narratives that engage audiences in vast numbers. The popularity of the genre highlights its significance as a potential vehicle for imparting ideology to the implied reader, particularly adolescent girls and young adult women.

One particular series published during this period emerged as a blockbuster text that redefined the reception of YA dystopian literature; Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010) occupied a place on the *New York Times* bestseller list for more than two hundred consecutive weeks, with more than fifty million copies published in print and digital forms (Ames 2013). Another phenomenon that has emerged from the genre is the adaptation of YA dystopian novels to films, with a recent article in *Vanity Fair* (Lawson 2016) ranking twelve of the most recent releases. The ongoing popularity of the genre immerses young adult readers in narratives ripe with political themes is analysed as a testing ground in which to engage with real world concerns (Ames 2013).

My project engages with a close critical analysis of four bestselling series of young adult dystopian literature and employs French philosopher Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopias (the places and spaces in-between) to argue that while YA dystopian novels are positioned as progressive texts, the experience of young female heroines is informed by modes of power and control that align with traditional patriarchy. The project highlights the significance of heterotopias in providing spaces to challenge narrative outcomes as the female protagonist subverts traditional gender roles and expectations. I contend that heterotopias in the primary texts operate as places and spaces that allow for transgression by female protagonists, and that ultimately the heroine

emerges as a self-contained heterotopia. The female protagonist functions as both the heterotopia of crisis and deviation as theorised by Foucault, which is significant when analysing the rewards and punishments meted out to female characters in the genre since this has broad implications for imparting ideology to the implied reader across a vast audience.

The project will argue that the girls in YA dystopias operate as living heterotopias and that the female protagonists in YA dystopias exist as heterotopias of crisis and deviation as theorised by Foucault (1986). Critical analysis will show that heterotopias in YA dystopian fiction highlight the gendered nature of these texts, and that the young female heroines are required to find alternative spaces and places in which to negotiate identity politics. While a surface reading of these girls in YA narratives posit them as brave, independent agents, they remain subject to modes of power and constraint that are bound up in gender expectations.

This thesis has two central aims:

- To use Foucault's theory of heterotopias (the spaces and places in-between) to interrogate the agency of female protagonists in contemporary YA dystopian literature, arguing that while these novels are positioned as progressive texts, the experience of young female heroines is informed by modes of power and control that align with traditional patriarchy.
- To critically analyse a selection of popular texts from the genre to interrogate identity politics in regard to young female protagonists.

SIGNIFICANCE

While critical engagement with texts in YA dystopian literature has covered a range of theoretical discourse to texts, my project is significant in the application of Foucault's heterotopias to key texts in the genre. Existing critical discourse of YA dystopian fiction engages with broad themes such as, freedom and constraint (Basu, Broad & Hintz 2013), belonging and the fragmentation of society (Kennon 2005), dystopian views of global capitalism (Bullen and Parsons 2007), gender (Nikolajeva 2007, Henthorne 2012, Lem & Hassel 2012, Wilson 2013, Day, Green-Bardeet & Montz 2016), and postmodern society (Bradford, Mallan, Stephens & McCallum 2008).

Much analysis of YA dystopian fiction exists in regard to gender on themes such as female defiance (Lem and Hassel 2012), the female spectacle of rebellion (Montz 2012), the re-inscription of patriarchy through the love triangle (Henthorne 2012), a comparison of female heroines as feminist versus antifeminist (Firestone 2012), perceptions of gender and violence (Taber, Woloshyn & Lane 2013), utopia as romance (Broad 2013), the 'extravagant girl' (Oliver 2014), rebellious subjectivities (Green-Bardeet 2014), and the rise of the female protagonist in contemporary YA dystopias (Day, Green-Bardeet and Montz 2016). My project provides a critical intervention that interrogates the function of spaces and places in YA dystopian narratives to analyse how the female agent subverts boundaries of containment along the course of their journey, and how this is significant to a reading of the treatment of gender in these texts focalised through the experience of the young female protagonist.

The project will critically analyse the chosen primary texts by applying Foucault's theory of heterotopia to interrogate the physical and psychological terrains in which the female protagonist operates. The thesis will employ Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopias, which are defined as 'places of Otherness, sites constituted in relation to other sites by their difference, (...) spaces of alternate ordering' (Hetherington 1997, p. viii). While a superficial reading of these YA dystopian text's positions the implied reader to view the female protagonist as role model for a 'girls can do/be anything' attitude, their heterotopian experiences make a smooth transition to young adulthood impossible.

The thesis will focus on the heroine who is forced to exist in sites that have two purposes, as places of constraint through rules, regulations and observation as well as sites of potential transgression where the protagonist can subvert the rules and boundaries to which she is subject. Central to the analysis is an examination of the agency and identity politics of the young heroines. The thesis will identify where and how heterotopias reside in the primary texts, and how the female protagonist operates within these spaces as a response to their fraught experience which typically sees them fighting for their lives.

The thesis will interrogate the notion of the female protagonist as a heterotopia in her own right, and how this evolves as a response to the prevailing conditions that position her as a combination of Foucault's crisis and deviation heterotopias. The female protagonist of contemporary YA dystopian literature is situated as dangerous and problematic. The application of heterotopias as a theoretical framework enables new understandings of the genre since at least one of the functions of YA texts is to impart ideology to the implied reader, who aligns herself with the young female heroine. These YA dystopian heroines learn to operate within heterotopias to transgress modes of power and control and to negotiate the 'problem' of their nascent identity and agency.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

The thesis will apply French philosopher Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopia to a close textual analysis of primary texts from the canon of young adult dystopian fiction to interrogate the position of the young female protagonist. Close analysis will be applied to four highly successful and critically received series of texts that are a sample of the genre that has emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries as a burgeoning genre of young adult fiction.

The thesis will engage with existing critical discourse of young adult literature (McCallum 1999, Cadden 2000, Trites 2000, Nikolajeva 2007, Bradford et al. 2008, Cart 2011), dystopian young adult fiction (Hintz and Ostry 2002, Kennon 2005, Braithwaite 2010, Basu et al. 2013), as well as gender in YA dystopian fiction (Firestone 2012, Lem and Hassel 2012, Green-Bardeet 2014, Day et al. 2016). My project will apply Foucault's theory of heterotopias as described in his work *Of Other Spaces* (1986) and further explicated in critical discourse (Gennochio 1995, Hetherington 1997, Jenkins 2002, Johnson 2006, 2008) to provide a fresh critical analysis of YA dystopian fiction that interrogates the function of these texts in regard to representations of young women, in a genre that can be seen as reflective of the society that produces and consumes these texts.

Young Adult Literature

The genre of young adult (YA) literature has emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century as a response to prevailing shifts in society and culture. In the contemporary context its importance as a vehicle for critical analysis is underscored by the proliferation of popular and widely consumed texts that have evolved to include a number of sub-genres that share many key

conventions and themes. Contemporary young adult texts are the subject of critical analysis in relation to issues that concern the implied reader, such as subjectivity, agency, power relations, war and conflict, environmental disaster, surveillance, commodification and consumer culture. The emergence of the 'blockbuster text' and its mass consumption underscores the popularity of YA texts as vehicles of transmission that engage their readers through narrative conventions that provide an opportunity to negotiate imagined worlds that are not far removed from our own.

The genre of young adult literature grew out of the emergence of a youth culture that centred on education and a high school social life in the era of the great depression in America. The resulting economic catastrophe pushed previously working teenage youth into high schools in the mid to late nineteen thirties, where scholastic magazines began writing to young men and women on topics specific to their social lives (Cart 2011, p. 5). The emergence of youth culture gave rise to the term *teenager*, first used in 1941 in an issue of *Popular Science Monthly*, then widely adopted in the following decade (Cart, p.6). Writing and publishing for the teenage market evolved throughout this period, with the 1942 publication of Maureen Daly's novel *Seventeenth Summer* heralding the establishment of a new field of writing for adolescents and young adults (Cart, p. 11).

In the following decades YA literature responded to prevailing social conditions, such as the work of Henry Gregor Felson whose novels centred on the reality of teen life and car gangs in *Hot Rod* (1953), *Street Rod* (1953), and *Crash Club* (1958) (Cart, p.18). Emerging popular genres within the field of YA fiction were science fiction, romance, adventure, sports and animals, as well as foreign culture fiction. Cart notes that by 1955 serious attempts at critical analysis of adolescent novels were being attempted. The 1960s saw the publication of the seminal novel *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton (1967), a coming-of-age story concerned with class warfare and gang culture in Oklahoma.

The Outsiders is significant in its use of first-person narrative and reflected the real-life experiences of the author, a sixteen-year-old girl. According to Cart, the author disliked the literature being published for her generation, calling it

“the inane junk lining the teen-age shelf of the library”
(...) [H]er rejection of the established literature for young adults is also consistent with the universal rejection of the status quo, which was such a hallmark of the iconoclastic sixties, a decade that belong to the young. (p.27)

Hinton’s book dealt with themes such as teen violence and lost innocence, conveying the realities of adolescent life that had previously been absent from much of the genre.

In the 1970s, *The Chocolate War* (1974) by journalist and author Robert Cormier established a new direction for YA literature. The story follows a young protagonist who challenges the system by refusing to sell chocolates at a school fund-raiser in ‘a novel of unprecedented thematic weight and substance for young adults, one that dared to disturb the comfortable universe of both adolescents and the adults who continued to protect their tender sensibilities’ (Cart, p. 30). The book was influential in establishing the genre of YA literature that mirrored the everyday experience of the adolescent who emerges under the constraints of society.

The 1970s saw a rush of publications in the field, including *Are You There God? It’s Me Margaret* (1970) by Judy Blume, *Don’t Look and It Won’t Hurt* (1972) by Richard Peck, *I Know What You Did Last Summer* (1973) by Lois Duncan, *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff* (1975) by Walter Dean Myers, and *A Summer to Die* (1977) by Lois Lowry. This was also the decade that YA titles were first considered by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) for inclusion on the Best Books for Young Adults list (Cart, p. 31).

The YA romance novel was popularised in the 1980s, with Francine Pascal’s *Perfect Summer* (1985) from the *Sweet Valley High* series of books the first YA novel to reach the *New York Times* best seller list. The consumption of YA texts during this decade was driven by a new publishing house strategy to market books through the ‘new American consumer paradise’ (Cart, p.40), the shopping mall. This led to the emergence of chain bookshops that had dedicated sections for young readers, spawning a proliferation of texts published as series, with books that featured familiar

characters and predictable plots, such as the *Goosebumps* books by R. L. Stine. Elsewhere, more literary publications by authors such as S. E. Hinton, Robert Cormier, M. E. Kerr, Robert Lipsyte, and Richard Peck added weight to the burgeoning genre.

The first half of the 1990s saw a transition period in YA literature, with a decline in the number of titles published. Those that were produced followed a trend of the marketplace shaping the content of books published, with horror leading the way alongside other sub-genres that provided escape for the reader, such as fantasy and romance. Novels of note during this period are *Nothing But the Truth; A Documentary Novel* (1991) by Avi, *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry, *Staying Fat for Sarah Burns* (1993) by Chris Crutcher, and *Walk Two Moons* (1994) by Sharon Creech. A renaissance in YA literature in the mid to late nineties coincided with that of youth culture in America, fuelled by disposable income in a genre that had expanded to include post-teen readers (Cart, p.64). Popular texts such as *Both Sides of Time* (1995) by Caroline B. Conney, *That Summer* (1996), and *Someone Like You* (1998) by Sarah Dessen, *Holes* (1998) by Louis Sachar, and *Hard Love* (1999) by Ellen Whitling heralded the reinvigoration of the genre that by the decade's end was informed by the emergence of YA fiction series and the 'Blockbuster' text.

In the late 1990s a literary phenomenon emerged, precipitated by John Marsden's eight novels in his *Tomorrow When the War Began* series (1993-2003). The *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling (1997-2007) consolidated a convention in the genre of book series that plot the trajectory of the adolescent/young adult's experience. Other seminal works that exist as blockbuster texts include Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series (2006-2008), Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010), James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* series (2009-2011), and Veronica Roth's *Divergent* series (2011-2013). The status of these texts as blockbuster texts reflects their mass consumption, both in terms of sales as well as in the various mediums across which they are disseminated and consumed.

As a contemporary literary impulse, the genre continues to grow as publishing houses push the boundaries to extend their narratives with the emergence of the prequel and novella-length fiction that is set in the world of the series but does not contribute to the overarching storyline. The

evolution of the genre of YA literature sees new ways of writing, reading and consuming texts, and highlights the shifting literary landscape that seeks to engage readers. This can be recognised as mirroring the changed lived experience of adolescents and young adults in contemporary society and maintaining the relevance of the genre as a literary force.

Much recent critical analysis of children's and young adult literature has focused on practical classroom teaching and literacy perspectives (Cart 2011, Wolf, Coats, Enciso & Jenkins 2011, Garcia 2013, Kaplan & Hayn 2016). Elsewhere critics have used literary theory to analyse the genre (Stephens 1992, McCallum 1999, Bradford et al. 2008, Trites 2000, Hilton & Nikolajeva 2012). A central theme of this scholarship is in relation to form and function, particularly the transmission of ideology, and how narratives engage with notions of subjectivity, agency, constraint and freedom. Stephens (1992) argues that society offers up a network of ideological positions with which to negotiate the world, transmitted through language and the recording of stories. The ideologies imparted through narrative function as an agent of focalisation in a deliberate process of didacticism and that it is the books that seemingly have no obvious intent that are a powerful vehicle for ideology as 'because implicit, and therefore invisible, ideological positions are invested with legitimacy through the implication that things are simply "so"' (Stephens, 1992, pp. 8-9).

The terms 'adolescent' and 'young adult fiction' are defined by Hilton and Nikolajeva (2012) as cultural constructions that share some of contemporary society's anxieties and contradictions. They argue that YA literature and culture articulate an instability and inexperienced sexuality that resides in the emerging young adult, and that the narratives of YA fiction expose readers to different forms of cultural alienation that have emerged from 'colonialism, political injustice, environmental desecration, sexual stereotyping, consumerism, madness and death' (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012, p. 1). Elsewhere, Trites (2000) chronicles the dynamics of power and repression in young adult literature that exist in social institutions, arguing that 'Although the primary purpose of the adolescent novel may appear to be a depiction of growth, growth in this genre is inevitably represented as being linked to what the adolescent has learned about power' (p. x). McCallum (1999) employs a Bakhtinian approach to dialogic conceptions of subjectivity in YA literature, contending that 'subjectivity is intrinsic to the major concerns of adolescent fiction' (p. 3), and

that concepts of personal identity and selfhood 'are formed in a dialogue with society, with language, and with other people' (p. 3).

Bradford et al. (2008) discuss how texts for children and young adults have responded to cultural, political and economic movements in the decade or so from the late 1990s and how utopian and dystopian texts in particular have projected possible futures to their readers. Cart (2011) argues that contemporary children's texts are critically implicated 'in shaping the values of children and young adults within as a field of cultural production that is highly responsive to global politics and social change' (p. 2). He offers a revision of his 1996 text in mapping the rise of young adult literature through a historical revision of the emergence of the teenager in American society as a result of prevailing cultural and social changes since the Depression and how it has evolved as a new literature for a new millennium (p. 75), with a focus on a consumerist marketplace that drives the production of texts across multiple literacies.

The genre of young adult literature speaks to its audience through compelling, fast-paced narratives that situate its protagonists in surroundings that are somehow recognisable to the reader, providing 'jumping off' points that offer engagement between the implied reader and imagined worlds. Generic key themes and conventions of YA fiction include: the coming-of-age narrative that is concerned with questions around identity, values, and societal expectations; romance and sexuality; war, conflict, and death; surveillance, control and constraint of the adolescent/young adult; as well as concerns surrounding environmental disaster; consumer culture, and globalisation. These narrative themes function to 'reinscribe social hierarchies requiring young people to be creative, resilient, and flexible in order to survive times marked by consumerism, globalisation, new technologies, and international conflict' (Bradford et al. 2008 p. 9).

Key conventions of YA narratives include plots that follow a classic three-part arc that contain an ideological quest, with first person narration; this is significant in regard to reader positioning, as the protagonist is aligned with the ethics and values of the implied reader. Other commonly used narrative styles are third person, epistolary or diary form that work to engage the implied reader. Characterisations in these narratives present the reader with young protagonists who are engaged

in struggles with adult power mechanisms, often in hostile territories. The fraught nature of the journeys for the protagonists of YA fiction is highlighted by Whitley (2012), who writes the protagonists' 'search for alternative identities, that would make the uneasy transition towards adulthood authentic and meaningful, render their immediate experience – by turns – confused, painful, alienated, and contradictory' (p. 17). This highlights the appeal of YA texts that appeal to the implied reader who identifies with the anxieties invoked through the plots, narrative voice and characterisation of the narratives.

The genre of YA fiction contains a number of sub-genres that display many of the key themes and tropes of the genre but are informed by plots that have particular central or over-arching themes, such as the school story, queer lit, and dystopian literature. The texts in these sub-genres share many of the generic YA fiction conventions in regard to narrator/narration, plot arcs and themes (including romance, coming-of-age, and questions around identity and agency) whilst also employing key tropes and conventions from the particular genre that underpins and informs the narrative in relation to setting, characterisation and narrative.

A subgenre that has emerged out of the contemporary YA fiction genre is the 'blockbuster' text that continues to occupy bestseller lists, as well as garnering critical acclaim. Blockbuster texts exist in a marketplace that is driven by the mass consumption of popular texts across multiple mediums that include film adaptations and engagement in online forums including blogs, fandom sites, and gaming platforms. Texts that have been prominent in the phenomenon contain narratives that are consumed as trilogies and series, such as *Harry Potter* (Rowling), *Maze Runner* (Dashner), *Twilight* (Meyer), *The Hunger Games* (Collins), and *Divergent* (Roth), with emerging texts such as the *Red Queen* series (Aveyard) maintaining a trend that sees authors initially signed by publishing houses to produce multiple texts. The importance of these texts in regard to critical analysis of YA fiction is highlighted by both the popularity and mass consumption of these narratives, as well as the themes and attitudes conveyed to the implied reader, particularly with the emergence of the female protagonist as heroine. Although YA literature has always spoken to girls and girlhood in relation to coming-of-age narratives, until the 1990s texts generally contained representations of girls who were passive.

Contemporary YA dystopian fiction has seen the emergence of the young female heroine, who is characterised as gutsy and forthright; these girls act, have more agency than their predecessors, they rescue as much as they are rescued, they have more complex characterisation and complicated feelings, they are risk takers and game players. Day (2016) describes the rebellious girl protagonist as ‘a figure who directly contradicts the common perception that girls are too young or too powerless to question the limitations placed upon them, much less to rebel and, in turn, fuel larger rebellions’ (p. 4). The role of the young female protagonist in YA dystopian texts will inform my project in respect to the spaces that they occupy within the narrative that engage with notions of subjectivity, agency and identity, and how this sub-genre of YA literature allows for a reading of these texts as potential sites for transgression of traditional gender stereotyped roles for girls and young women.

Young Adult Dystopian Literature

Young adult dystopian fiction has emerged from the broader genre of dystopian literature to become an important genre of contemporary young adult texts. Its popularity resides in the themes, settings, and action-based narratives that respond to existing concerns which have emerged out of an increasingly globalised and technologised world. Examinations of YA dystopian literature employ multiple critical lenses in regard to the form, function, and reception of themes that inform the narratives, such as gender, sexuality, identity politics, war and conflict, child/adult power mechanisms, surveillance, consumer culture and commodification, and an increasingly technologised society.

Interrogation of the chosen primary texts will analyse how these broadly consumed and critically received texts will highlight the plight of the female heroine who is forced to negotiate notions of identity and agency through heterotopian spaces that allow for the transgression of totalitarian power mechanisms. Claeys (2010) contends that ‘New dystopian threats swarm upon us, to be met in due course (...) by renewed efforts to imaginatively rework our concepts of other possible, alternative futures’ (p. xii). In this way, the dystopian turn in contemporary YA literature can be seen as re-inscribing concerns for the future, played out in narratives that engage a generation on the cusp of adulthood.

The dystopian impulse in literature is recognised by critic M. Keith Booker (1994) as responding to developments in modern history, constituting ‘a critique of existing social conditions or political systems’ (p. 18). The first recorded use of the word ‘dystopia’ was in 1868, in a parliamentary speech given by John Stuart Mills, used as a term to describe the opposite of utopia, *dys* coming from the Greek *dus* ‘meaning bad, abnormal, diseased’ (Vieira 2010, p.16). Seminal works of the genre emerged from the early twentieth century, such as Jack London’s *The Iron Heel* (1908), Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We* (1921), Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), Vladimir Nabokov’s *Bend Sinister* (1947), George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Anthony Burgess’ works *A Clockwork Orange* and *The Wanting Seed* (1962), Samuel Beckett’s *The Lost Ones* (1971), and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985).

Dystopian literature is recognised as arising as a response in late modernity to ‘confronting genocide, nuclear war and ecological catastrophe’ (Claeys, p. xi). Vieira (2010) argues that two ideas have fed dystopian discourse: the idea of totalitarianism; and ‘the idea of scientific and technological progress, which instead of impelling humanity to prosper, has sometimes been instrumental in the establishment of dictatorships’ (p. 18). These dystopian themes also inform young adult dystopian fiction engaging with child/adult power relations that are centred on struggles against totalitarian governments/ruling factions.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first century has seen the emergence of young adult dystopian literature, a burgeoning genre providing a plethora of texts that have enjoyed mass consumption and critical acclaim, such as Lois Lowry’s *The Giver* quartet (1993-2012), Scott Westerfeld’s *Pretties* series (2005-2007), Susan Pfeffer’s *Last Survivors* series (2006-2013), James Dashner’s *The Maze Runner* series (2009-2016), Ally Condie’s *Matched* series (2010-2012), Marie Lu’s *Legend* series (2011-2013), Roth’s *Divergent* series (2011-2013), Lauren Oliver’s *Delirium* series (2011-2013), and Victoria Aveyard’s *Red Queen* series (2015-2018).

While dystopian YA scholarship is broad in its scope, a key theme of analysis is that of the adolescent/young adult and power relations. Hintz and Ostry (2002, p. 10) position dystopian YA texts as acting as a powerful metaphor for adolescence, with themes of oppression and surveillance

resonating with teens who grapple with increasing limitations to their freedom, power and control in contemporary society.

Contemporary narratives of YA dystopian fiction have the enjoyed mass consumption by the ‘millennial generation’ (Ames 2013). The broad popularity of YA dystopian texts is a response to the prevailing conditions of contemporary society. Basu, Broad and Hintz (2013) argue that these narratives engage with pressing global concerns of liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction and looming catastrophe, and that this in turn raises questions surrounding identity and increasingly fragile boundaries between technology and the self (p. 1). Ames draws a correlation between the popularity of the genre and a post-9/11 world, stating that ‘Analyzing the socio-political commentary present within this popular body of literature provides insights into the concerns this generation may have for the future—concerns which are not always being expressed via traditional democratic processes’ (2013, p. 4). Dystopian texts have been variously analysed as pedagogical, imparting messages regarding social organisation (Hintz and Ostry 2002), as well as contradictory. For all their overt didacticism, the impulse of young adult dystopias is ‘to escape from the strictures of social convention’ (Basu, Broad and Hintz 2013, p. 5).

Nikolajeva (2009) writes that dystopian narratives are built around the ‘double estrangement effect’ where the reader is unfamiliar with the rules of the fictional dystopia and the characters are unaware of the ‘normal’ world, making dystopian fiction ‘an excellent strategy for subverting normativity’ (p. 74). An example of this is the reaping process of Collins’ *The Hunger Games* (2008), where all adolescents are subject to a process of selection that will result in the deaths of all but one ‘tribute’. Within the narrative, the reaping is a practice that is an accepted (albeit fraught) process that occurs as a part of the prevailing control of society, while the reader is confronted by the possibility of such a power mechanism as existing in society.

Dystopian young adult texts propose or imply new social and political arrangements, imagined in world orders that are transformed from the ones with which we are familiar. Hintz and Ostry (2002) discuss the function of dystopian texts as potentially being a young person’s first encounter with narratives ‘that systematically explore collective social organization’ (p. 2) with ‘precise

descriptions of societies, ones in which the ideals for improvement have gone tragically amok' (p. 3). Braithwaite (2010) contends that

the post-disaster scenario foregrounds the young adult protagonist's struggle to achieve these goals often through extreme and life-threatening situations in which innovation, for example, or the lack of it can mean the difference between life and death, and the struggle to achieve 'self-realization and self-expression' can have far-reaching effects on the society as well as the protagonist. (p. 6)

This highlights the trope of YA dystopias whose the narratives are situated in future worlds that are recognisable to the implied reader, who recognises the plight of the protagonist as a potential future projection of the society in which they exist today.

Kennon (2005) discusses how 'optimistic possibilities for emancipator agency' in YA dystopias 'seem intertwined with pessimistic acknowledgement of the limitations for the transformation of society and relationships between generations' (p. 40). Kennon also contends that the genre provides valuable opportunities for reflection by young readers of the complex processes of engagement with authority and power regulation that they encounter in real life (p. 48). This notion plays out in popular texts whose narratives are informed by deep tensions between young adult protagonists who are in a constant struggle to negotiate the limitations placed on their agency through power mechanisms, while retaining hope that they will prevail in establishing new world orders.

Bradford et al. (2008) posit the narratives as 'pivotaly preoccupied with the formation of subjectivity – that is – the development of notions of selfhood' and that the narratives are concerned with personal growth and maturation, with 'stories about relationships between the self, and others and between individuals and society' (p. 12). Further to this, Basu et al. (2013) argue that the tensions between utopia and dystopia in YA dystopias reinforce contradictory messages about identity formation, as protagonists aspire to break the limits of dystopia, but also long to fit in. This reinforces the notion that 'new global "utopias/dystopias" reinscribe social hierarchies

requiring young people to be creative, resilient, and flexible in order to survive times marked by consumerism, globalisation, new technologies, and international conflict' (Bradford et al. 2008 p. 9), and highlights the significance of the nexus between historical, cultural, and political contexts that inform a critical discourse of the genre.

Further critical debate has focused on the goals and efficacy of young adult dystopian texts, as discussed by Sambell (2002), who interrogates the creative writing process in producing dystopian writing. Lauer (2013) discusses the reading of genre in coming-of-age dystopian narratives, while Hughes (2002) offers a YA dystopian author's perspective on the tensions between utopian and dystopian writing. Basu et al. (2013) question whether YA dystopian narratives champion radical political change, or rather mask an inner conservatism behind their liberal exteriors, and whether they function to offer readers hope or despair (p. 2). Von Mossner (2013) discusses the 'dark subject' of climate change that engages with Beck's risk society in the narrative of Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries* (2008-2009) books to interrogate whether the ecological crisis in 'hopeful' dystopian young adult narratives is a contradiction. The multiple lenses through which YA dystopian fiction is analysed provides evidence of the efficacy of these texts as responding to prevailing fears for the future, with narratives whose societies reside in environments that audiences identify as being potential extensions of their own.

Gender in YA Dystopian texts

The recent explosion of the genre of young adult dystopian texts has offered critics and audiences the opportunity to re-imagine young female heroines, with narratives that position the female protagonist as brave, gutsy, capable and determined, and possessing a greater agency than those who went before. Existing discussions of gender in YA dystopian texts cover a range of analysis on topics such as the othering of gender (Nickolajeva 2009), identity gender and transgression (Henthorne 2012), the female protagonist (Firestone 2012, Day, Green-Barteet & Montz 2016, Montz 2016, Green-Barteet 2014), subjectivity and gender stereotypes (Kennon 2005), ambiguity (Oliver 2012), romance (Broad 2013), and fluidity (Mitchell 2012, Lem and Hassel 2012), and perceptions of violence and gender (Taber, Woloshyn and Lane 2013).

This section will discuss the various critical lenses through which heroines are interrogated in YA dystopian literature to argue that the narratives present the heroine as residing in a state of flux that corresponds with societal control that intersects with notions of subjectivity and agency. In order for the heroine to prevail she must embody identities that are both fluid and unstable, this mutability of gender roles creates a tension between perceptions of the ‘new girl’ in YA dystopian narratives and the re-inscribing of stereotypical gender roles that are enforced by hegemonic patriarchy.

Much of the recent scholarship regarding gender representation in YA dystopian fiction is concerned with the female protagonist, resistance and rebellion. Day, Green-Bartlett & Montz (2012) contend that female heroines occupy liminal spaces as they seek to understand their place in the world in order to assert their identities and be self-determining, while also attempting ‘to recreate the worlds in which they live, making their societies more egalitarian, more progressive, and, ultimately, more free’ (p. 3). They argue that the liminal position of the female heroine is double edged as there are both risks and rewards as the protagonists negotiate dangerous situations in an effort to improve their lives and that of society as a whole, pointing out that although protagonists actively resist and rebel, ‘they also tend to accept that they cannot change every aspect of their societies controlling frameworks, particularly as these relate to romance and sexuality’ (2012, p. 4).

Christian-Smith (1990) discusses a binary between the roles of women in romantic texts, whereby the dominant heroine character is the ‘good girl’ who strongly aligns with accepted codes of romance, beautification, and sexuality, recognised as the ‘girl next door’, being ‘meek, kind, and pure of heart’ (p. 81). This is positioned in contrast to the ‘other girl’ who is ‘assertive with boys, and has beauty, poise, and self-confidence. She knows what she wants and knows how to go about realizing her desires’ (p. 81). Christian-Smith notes that there are tensions between these characters and within the femininity they represent in romance narratives. In the context of romance in YA dystopian fiction, the young heroine represents the tensions between what it means to be the ‘good girl’ or the ‘other girl’. This project will highlight the psychic turmoil of the girl who is subject to the judgements of others, while at the same time struggling to negotiate the complexities surrounding subjectivity.

The convention of the romance narrative, and its subset the love triangle, is a feature of contemporary YA dystopias. The plotline of the love interest/triangle undermines the contention that the heroine of contemporary YA dystopias ‘boldly flouts literary stereotypes that keep female protagonists waiting at home’ (Broad, 2013 p. 117). A close reading of some of these texts suggests to girls ‘the importance of growing up to find satisfaction in heterosexual love and the nuclear family (Broad 2013, pp. 117-118). Broad states that it is vital to ‘push back’ against the positioning of heroines as feminist agents that ‘hinge on gender stereotypes (...) further normalising standards for female behaviour and expectations for romance’ (p. 127). In presenting female characters that reproduce and normalise conventional roles and behaviour in regard to romance, YA dystopias reinforce conservative gender stereotypes, rather than providing strong feminist agents.

For example, the protagonist of Collins’ *The Hunger Games* Katniss Everdeen has been lauded as a feminist heroine and an important female role model in contemporary pop culture. However, Katniss’ happiness resides in a heteronormative relationship, love, and the nuclear family. Underpinning the narrative is the romance genre convention of the love triangle. Broad (2013) discusses its significant role in ‘fuelling the narrative progression toward a better world: each boy represents a different path out of dystopia, making the outcome of the romantic choice nothing less than what the future of society will be’ (p. 118). This undermines the notion that YA texts subvert stereotypical heroines, as the romance plot reinforces conservative gender roles.

Elsewhere, critics argue that the heroine of the YA dystopia has greater agency than that of the romance genre. Firestone (p. 209) compares Katniss Everdeen to Bella Swan in the YA romance series *Twilight*. While Katniss has been elevated in popular opinion into a feminist heroine, Bella has been mocked as her feminine antithesis, and comparisons between the two characters position Bella as having traditional female traits, while Katniss is ‘associated with empowerment usually destined for men in the form of activity and perceived agency’ (Firestone, p. 213). The agency of the YA dystopian heroine is challenged in a ‘delicate balance between optimism and pessimism and between the radical assertion of female agency and the patriarchal expectation of feminine compliance and passivity’ (Kennon 2005, p. 44). Kennon argues that despite the empowering message of the potential for female agency in YA dystopian fiction, it remains that

inherited regulatory systems such as the home and patriarchal authority seem to exert an overwhelming ideological pressure on restabilising (...) alternative communities as conservative social and spatial arrangements, embedded in traditional conventions of control and authoritarian power relations. (p. 48)

This is a trope of YA dystopias, where the conclusion of the narratives find the protagonist situated within a version of the traditional patriarchal family unit, re-imagined in future worlds.

Contemporary criticism of young heroines in YA dystopian fiction acknowledges the complicated sets of power relations that inform identity politics in the narratives. Day, Green-Barteet and Montz (2014) argue that the liminal position of heroines in YA dystopias offers both risks and rewards, in sites of rebellion that ‘may both threaten and improve their lives (...) contemporary dystopian young adult novels participate in larger discourses (...) that redefine not only the young women themselves but also their place in their own society’ (p. 12). This project interrogates the risks and rewards for female protagonists in seminal YA dystopian texts to show that gender stereotypes remain entrenched in these narratives, and how the protagonist uses subversive spaces to negotiate notions of self and identity.

Heterotopias

In Foucault’s ‘*Des Espace Autres*’ (Architecture/Movement/Continuite) first published in 1967, he argues that society remains fundamentally anxious about ‘space’, having not yet reached ‘the point of a desanctification’ (1986, p. 23), which he explains as being able to be fully controlled. This is as opposed to time. In the modern era, space remains problematic, not fully desanctified or able to be controlled fully. Modern life is, according to Foucault, still governed by oppositions between private and public spaces that society takes for granted, such as family space/social space, cultural space/useful space, and the space of leisure/space of work. Space in the contemporary moment remains problematic, in some part owing to its multifunctionality. Because space is concerned with so many facets of social and cultural life, it is bound to be complicated and fluid, as every individual within society has a different lived experience.

Foucault specifies two main types of spaces: utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are sites with no real place and are ‘fundamentally unreal spaces’ whereas heterotopias exist in every culture and civilisation in ‘real places’ that function akin to counter-sites, or ‘a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted’ (1986, p. 24). Foucault argues that whereas we ‘enact’ utopias, they are always elusive; however, heterotopias are real sites in which the *notion* of utopia may be represented in some shape or form. Levitas explains that ‘Utopias, then, are blueprints of the good (or even perfect) society, imagined elsewhere and intended as prescriptions for the near future’ (2003, p. 3). According to Johnson (2006), the notion of heterotopia contrasts and, undermines and unsettles that of utopias since ‘heterotopia contests utopian forms of resistance and transgression based on a space of liberation’ (p. 82).

Foucault defines the principles that govern the form and function of heterotopias:

1. Heterotopias in all cultures can be classified in to two categories: the crisis heterotopia, defined as privileged or sacred places for individuals who exist in a state of crisis such as adolescents, menstruating or pregnant women and the elderly; and the heterotopia of deviation. These contain individuals whose behaviour is considered deviant to the societal norm, such as prisons, psychiatric wards, detainee centres, and nursing homes. Crisis heterotopias are being replaced by heterotopias of deviation in more modern times (1986, pp. 24-26), as society utilises the institution to separate and contain individuals who challenge norms.
2. Over time, a society is able to manipulate the function of heterotopias in precise and determined ways. The rules in heterotopian spaces are subject to change.
3. The heterotopia is able to juxtapose several incompatible spaces within a single real space, bringing together on the one stage a series of places foreign to one another, an example of this is the museum, with each artefact belonging while at the same time being distinct from all others.

4. Heterotopias open onto heterochronies, developmental changes that occur in relation to the timing or rate of events. The heterotopia begins to function 'at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time' (p. 27). Heterochronies separate us from our normal time., leading to changes in size and shape. It has elsewhere been described as 'temporal otherness' (Lim 2014 p. 486). Foucault (1986) provides examples of heterochronies in relation to several sites such as libraries, museums, fairgrounds and also the cemetery, where the individual at first dies and then exists in a kind of 'quasi-eternity in which her permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance' (p. 6).
5. The heterotopia is a site that is not freely accessible; it is subject to entry that is either compulsory, or otherwise subject to the individual submitting to various rites and purifications. The entry to these sites is on condition of rules, permission and certain behaviours.
6. Heterotopias have a function 'in relation to all the space that remains' (p. 29). Foucault (1986) describes this as functioning between two acutely differing poles, either creating a 'space of illusion that exposes every real space (...) Or on the contrary (...) to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled' (p. 29). Two examples of extreme types of heterotopias are brothels and colonies, the brothel being a space of illusion and colonies being the space of compensation (p. 29). The ship is recognised as the 'heterotopia par excellence' (p. 30) as it is a floating piece of space that transits across the ocean, from the brothel to the colony, across time and economic development; it is both 'closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea' (p. 30).

Not all critics agree with Foucault's concept of heterotopia. In 'Unravelling Foucault's "different spaces"', Peter Johnson critiques Foucault's concept of heterotopia through a close textual analysis that acknowledges the opinion that Foucault's framework of heterotopias is 'briefly sketched and somewhat confusing', and refers to 'varied spatial and temporal disruptions that imaginatively interrogate and undermine certain formulations of utopia' (2006, p. 75). Elsewhere, Johnson explains that heterotopias in modernity 'relate more to separating out some form of deviation rather than marking a stage of life' (p. 76). However, this notion fails to consider the complicated set of

power relations that exist in the postmodern landscape, whereby society's notions of what constitutes as deviance have increasingly evolved to encompass all aspects of everyday life.

As new threats emerge in an age of globalisation that is technologised and reported on both the macro and micro level, the reaction of society is to monitor all spaces as a form of preventative safety measure, the result being the influence of the state as affecting the individual in society across all aspects (and stages) of life. In this way, there has been a conflation of the separation out of deviation, which is the aim of society in regard to 'gate-keeping' in an effort to maintain the safety of society, and the effect this has on the individual who is constantly monitored and treated according to their behaviour. By re-considering heterotopias as fluid, this extends Foucault's notion that certain heterotopias such as brothels are spaces that 'adapt and mutate throughout history, thus being consistent with the immutable precariousness in which society exists in a postmodern world' (Johnson 2006, p. 76).

Johnson argues that, like utopias, heterotopias are 'practised, and enacted', but at the same time, heterotopias are 'localised and real, mirroring, reflecting, representing, designating' (2006, p. 78). Heterotopias are complex sites of multiplicity, encompassing a broad range of relations that inform the experience of the individual on both a physical as well as psychological level. When extending this notion to the adolescent or young adult as existing in these spaces, it can be recognised that the heterotopian space is one in which there is the capacity for both control as well as resistance.

Foucault was only engaged with this project for a brief time. Genocchio (1995) and Hetherington (1997) argue that Foucault's term is not substantive. Saldanha (2008) acknowledges that although the concept of heterotopia was abandoned by Foucault soon after its inception back in 1966-67, the 1990s saw it re-emerge, disseminating across human geography, urban theory and cultural studies (p. 2080). Saldanha posits heterotopia as having two distinct meanings: a 'discordant space' that is capable of juxtaposing several sites that are incompatible (according to Foucault's third principle); and circumscribing 'subversive, visionary, or sacred space which *by virtue* of its special qualities, its 'absolute otherness', either keeps a social formation stable (garden), or, more often, forces it to evolve (ship)' (p. 2083). This highlights the function of the heterotopia as a heterogeneous space.

Johnson (2013) argues that

...although the uses of Foucault's accounts of heterotopia are bewilderingly diverse, heterotopias are most productively understood in the context of Foucault's insistence on 'making difference' and their adoption as a tool of analysis to illuminate the multifaceted features of cultural and social spaces and to invent new ones. (p. 790)

Historically, the application of the concept of heterotopia has been cross disciplinary. Topinka (2010) argues that 'by juxtaposing and combining many spaces in one site, heterotopias problematize received knowledge by destabilizing the ground on which knowledge is built' (p. 54). Topinka explores Foucault's two definitions of heterotopia, recognising the tensions between the traditional understandings of heterotopias as sites of resistance, arguing that they obscure the primary function of the heterotopia: making order legible (p. 55). Topinka offers an alternative view to some critics when he declares that 'heterotopias are not primarily sites of resistance to power but instead sites of reordering' (p. 56).

The ordering of modernity is located within the 'in-between space' of the heterotopia. Hetherington (1997) defines heterotopias as 'spaces of alternate ordering' (p. viii) which mark them as Other and provide alternate ways of doing things. Hetherington analyses three key spaces: The Palais Royal, a significant monument during the French Revolution in 1789; eighteenth-century factories in Britain; and Masonic lodges (1997, p. ix). He sees heterotopia as spaces of deferral, where ideas and practices that represent utopian ideals 'can come into being, from nowhere, even if they never actually achieve what they set out to achieve – social order, or control and freedom' (1997, p. ix). The notion of heterotopias achieving these aims is integral to a close reading of their locations in YA dystopian literature.

Heterotopia has been applied to the interrogation of society, gender and space in literary works. Fernald (2014) analyses the work of author Virginia Woolf, described as 'so often depict[ing] bourgeois women coping with modernity' (p. 213). Fernald asserts that the taxicab, which was a crucial and liberating mode of transport for women in modernist era, can be recognised as a type

of heterotopia as its operation relies on the vehicle as a real place which also ‘functions outside of and in relation to, the norms of the rest of the community’ (p. 213).

Fernald discusses the work of critics who are interested in how men and women experienced the modern city, with an initial focus on two entirely differing modes: walking for women, which was deemed to encourage contemplation; and trains for men, which was deemed to encourage observation since trains separate the traveller from the landscape in what de Certeau described as ‘a travelling incarceration’ (cited in Fernald 2014, p. 214). For men the journey is ‘a phallic mastery of space: a purposive, clearly directed drive along a track’ (Fernald 2014, p. 214). In contrast, for women, the journey fulfils a narrative drive, an opportunity to disregard domestic servitude, thus bringing the woman closer to engagement with the world (p. 214). The disparity of these experiences is an interesting point with which to first recognise, then to interrogate, the gender divide in the heterotopian space.

Fernald analyses the function of the taxicab as one of a number of intermediary forms of transport that are centrally located within modern life. Enabling power to the bourgeois woman as a spectator, it is a site for thinking, as well as observation and the contemplation of the woman’s place in the world. The taxicab is framed as ‘both a metaphor for thinking and a place in which to think on the move, unobserved and free to observe’ (Fernald 2014, p. 215). This occurs in a space that is protected from the ‘male gaze’. His essay provides a feminist theoretical approach to critically analysing the concept of heterotopias. The notion of heterotopias that are fluid can be applied to the experience of the protagonist in young adult dystopias who journey through both physical and psychological terrains while encapsulated in modes of transport. The experience of the female protagonist in comparison to the male in the same place/space is also worth interrogating.

The heterotopia of the train in classic children’s utopian fantasies is described by Jenkins as allowing ‘space and time within the narrative for establishment, subversion, and the clashing of logics and values of the other realms of the text’ (2013, p. 23). Jenkins describes how as train travel evolved to become a mainstream experience, the experience of travelling through time and space took on the characteristics of a heterochrony, ‘whereby the train traveller’s condition of isolation,

removed from familiar surroundings, restricted as to movement in space for potentially long periods of time, engenders a sense of temporal unsettlement' (p. 25). Jenkins argues that in applying this to narratives allows for rapid transitions, for both characters and readers.

Jenkins contends that power relations in the space of the train are contradictory; the train offers the ability for movement in a space that is already in motion. The train is both passive and active, creating a third space within it, encasing the individual within 'a bubble of space and time, in which the established logics of both sides of the threshold may be vulnerable' (Jenkins p. 28). The experience of the female protagonist in the space of the train heightens certain anxieties for the reader. There is a sense of entrapment in the space which is 'private and hermetic' (p. 29), a place of potential harassment for vulnerable travellers. Jenkins contends that the train is an intimate space against which the girl revolts, making her susceptible to dangerous possibilities. This is reinforced by Hetherington's (1997) interrogation of the relationship between resistance and transgression and social order in heterotopias that are spaces of alternate social ordering 'set up to fascinate and to horrify, to try and make use of the limits of our imagination, our desires, our fears and our sense of power/powerlessness' (p. 40). The function of heterotopias as sites that allow the opportunity for resistance and the transgression of social order will be employed in critically analysing the primary texts of the thesis. I will contend that heterotopias in contemporary YA dystopian texts function exist as spaces and places that allow the young female protagonist to push back against established mode of power and control, and that they provide the heroine opportunities to embody notions of subjectivity and agency in a critical period of adolescence and young adulthood.

Methodology

This project examines four bestselling dystopian YA series: Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* (2005-2007), Suzanne Collins *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010), Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (2011-2013), and Victoria Aveyard's *Red Queen* (2015-2019). The rationale for selecting the primary texts is that they are all American bestselling texts, with a broad audience readership worldwide, achieving great success. Each series is focalised through a young female protagonist as she embarks upon a crucial coming-of-age journey that intersects with key ideas and conventions of YA dystopian fiction.

The rationale for selecting the primary texts is that they are either a trilogy or series, with female protagonists situated in coming-of-age narratives that span a significant period of the adolescent/young adult journey. The primary texts selected have been specifically chosen as they are best selling works that have been consumed by mass audiences as well as being critically acclaimed. I will argue that the popularity of these texts is significant to an analysis of the narratives of YA dystopian texts operating as vehicles of ideological transmission, focalised through the character of the young female heroine. This will be supported by Foucault's theory that positions the individual within heterotopias as responding to societal concerns that result in the separating out of certain individuals deemed as in crisis or deviant from the mainstream.

Analysis of the primary texts will compare and contrast French theorist Michele Foucault's heterotopias in each series as informing the journey of the female protagonist to contend that heterotopias inform the journey of the female protagonist at key 'jumping-off-points' in these texts. This allows for an investigation of the gendered experience of the protagonist in YA dystopian fiction where heterotopias are spaces that allow individuals to transgress modes of power and surveillance to produce compliant citizens. My close textual analysis focuses on the young female heroine in these texts to argue that they are subjected to rewards and punishments that provoke compliance in young female characters.

Thesis Outline

This thesis will be divided into four chapters that are focused on four contemporary series of young adult dystopian texts. Each chapter will examine one of the sets of texts through a close textual analysis of a particular series that is informed by Foucault's theory of heterotopia. The thesis will have an extended introductory chapter of 10,000 words, and will include an outline of the project, a literature review including previous scholarship, chapter outline, methodology, and outcomes. The chapters concerned with the primary texts will be organised in order of the date of first publication, with the latter being the series most recently published.

Each of the chapters concerned with the primary texts will provide an introduction that includes the rationale for its inclusion as a series in the genre that provides a platform to test the theoretical aims of the thesis. Analysis will focus on each series to interrogate how girls in the YA dystopias are represented with respect to heterotopias: how heterotopias allow girls to challenge and be challenged by power dynamics; and how girlhood is embodied by the female protagonist in heterotopian spaces. Analysis will include comparisons and contrasts between the sets of primary texts. The chapters will be approximately 20,000 words, followed by an overall conclusion. The word count for the thesis is currently estimated to be 95,000 words.

Introduction

The introductory chapter “Impossible Female Protagonists: Heterotopias and Dystopian Young Adult Literature” will foreground the critical analysis of chapters 1-4 by providing a framework for interrogating the female protagonist in YA literature through their experience of Foucault’s heterotopias. The chapter will map the theoretical landscape of previous scholarship and critical analysis that focuses more broadly on criticism of young adult literature (MacCallum 1999, Trites 2000, Cart 2011), and its sub-genre young adult dystopian literature (Hintz and Ostry 2003, Kennon 2005, Nikolajeva 2009, Basu et al. 2013), highlighting the various strands of critical discourse in the field.

Examination of analysis surrounding gender in YA literature is crucial to a reading of the adolescent female protagonist in YA dystopian fiction. This chapter will discuss the work of scholars including Nikolajeva (2009), Henthorne (2012), Day, Green-Barteet and Montz (2012), Lem and Hassel (2012), and Broad (2013), to highlight the complicated nature of the representation of young female protagonists in YA and YA dystopian literature.

Foucault’s theory of heterotopias will underpin the theoretical discourse surrounding the experience of the female heroine of the primary texts. This chapter will provide an introduction and historical background to Foucault’s work, as well as critical discourse surrounding it (Gennochio 1995, Hetherington 1997, Levitas 2003, Johnson 2008; 2013, Saldanha 2008, Topinka 2010), and detail how the central concepts apply to a critical reading of the primary texts to examine how female heroines are represented throughout the narratives of the genre.

Critical analysis of the protagonists will focus in part on young female characters who challenge power relations, the ensuing rewards and punishments, as well as identity politics that include the testing of different versions of girlhood to interrogate the positioning of young heroines in YA dystopian texts. This chapter will position the female heroines of these texts as similarly occupying liminal spaces and places in their coming of age, being outsiders, as different within their family/peer group, and existing on the margins of society.

A central feature of dystopian young adult literature is the strong female protagonist who grapples with the complexities of negotiating her subjectivity in fraught circumstances. Day, Green-Bartlett & Montz (2012) contend that the female heroines occupy liminal spaces as they seek to understand their place in the world in order to assert their identities and be self-determining. Through an analysis of the function of heterotopias in four popular YA series, this thesis will highlight the liminal experience of the female heroine in dystopian YA narratives, as these young women are forced to occupy transitional spaces while on the threshold of young adulthood.

The psychological and physical terrains that the protagonists of the primary texts; Tally Youngblood (*Uglies*), Katniss Everdeen (*The Hunger Games*), Beatrice (Tris) Prior (*Divergent*), and Mare Barrow (*Red Queen*) are forced to negotiate are complicated by heterotopias; these sites provide jumping off points for intersections of power relations and the construction of identity. Foucault (1986) describes the heterotopia of deviation as ‘those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed’ (p. 25). I will examine how heroines are relegated to heterotopian spaces that contain and control them, reinforcing traditional patriarchal attitudes that position the transgressive female as dangerous, and subject to various modes of isolation, discipline and punishment in an attempt to contain and conform them. The heterotopias of deviance that hold the female protagonist captive in dystopian YA literature are spaces and places of mediated encounters which intensify the dissonance between the real and imagined self.

Chapter 1, “Am I Not Pretty Enough? Negotiating Resistance in Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies* Series”

This chapter will examine the *Uglies* series by Scott Westerfeld (2005-2007) to argue that the heterotopias in these novels enable resistance by the female protagonist against their commodification and control as they rebel against the overarching power mechanisms of society. The chapter will discuss the form and function of heterotopian spaces and places that serve as sites of transgression and provide the opportunity to disrupt and undermine established power relations. The heterotopias in the series can be seen as transitional, residing outside of the territories of the government and the compliant citizens who do not question their authority.

The *Uglies* series encompasses four novels (*Uglies* 2005, *Pretties* 2005, *Specials* 2006, *Extras* 2007). The first three novels focus on the female protagonist, soon-to-be sixteen-year-old Tally Youngblood and set in southern California, while the fourth novel centres on fifteen-year-old Aya Fuse set in a futuristic Yokohama, Japan. The series is set in post-apocalyptic society in which teenagers when they reach their sixteenth birthday are required to undergo a surgery that transforms them from their intrinsic physical self in to a 'Pretty', supposedly the best version of what they can look like. The narrative follows the journey of the protagonist Tally, who resists and defies the transformation, putting herself under the threat of the government who attempt to exert their power to those who rebel by forceful means.

The *Uglies* series displays the tropes and key concepts of the female protagonist within young adult dystopias throughout its narrative. Tally is positioned as an outsider who does not think or act quite like her family and peers. She is characterized as intelligent, with a propensity for challenging the status quo and for being both physically and mentally strong, qualities that are instrumental in setting up her opposition to the powers that be. In *Uglies*, the trope of the love triangle is represented in the relationship between Tally, her best friend Shay, and the leader of the rebels at the Smoke, David. The love triangle sets up a familiar trope in the genre, as Tally grapples internally with warring emotions when her actions conflict with her moral compass, Day (2016) discusses the framing of the adolescent woman's body in YA literature, stating that 'bodies, gender, and power (...) inform representations of embodiment and awakening' (p. 77).

In this series, heterotopias are for the most part related to travelling through territories that transgress boundaries, both physical and psychically. They are prevalently related to bodies of

water, and modes of transport. The journeys that take place in heterotopias in the *Uglies* series are fraught with uncertainty as there is the constant threat of harm or death, located in landscapes that are unfamiliar and unmapped; this is metaphorical of the adolescent experience.

In comparing the *Uglies* series to the other primary texts of the thesis, there are similarities in regard to key conventions such as: the protagonist is subject to a set of tests; the binary between nature and technology; and the rural and the city that includes the past versus the present; the conflict between a rebelling group and the government; and the trope of the monstrous feminine, represented by Dr Cable in the first novel. Like the other primary texts, *Uglies* is set in a society where citizens are subjected to enforced governmental control, by way of a series of standardised medical procedures that work to produce a compliant population. Analysis of this series will centre on the female protagonist Tally, who rejects the operation that will ensure her metamorphosis to become the ideal beauty, and how the rewards and punishments of female protagonists throughout the series can be read as aligning with contemporary society's attitudes towards beauty ideals and the commodification of self.

Chapter 2, "Let the Games Begin: The Problem of Being Katniss Everdeen in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* Trilogy"

Chapter Two interrogates the fraught experience of the rebellious girl in Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* (2008-2010). This chapter will explore how heterotopias in the series are places and spaces that are the site of complicated identity politics in which the female hero grapples with conflicting representations of self. This chapter will contend that the heterotopias of the woods in District 12, the train, the games' arenas, and various battlefields operate with a dual focus. In this way heterotopias allow the protagonist to embody her 'true self', but at the same time subject her to modes of surveillance, commodification, and performance that challenge that sense of self and disrupt fixed notions of identity.

The Hunger Games is a best-selling trilogy by Suzanne Collins, the three novels *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010) being recognised as 'blockbuster' texts of the YA dystopian genre, at January of 2012 there were 23.5 million books in print in the US domestic market, by February 2012 the trilogy had been listed in *The New York Times*

“Children’s Best Sellers” list for 75 weeks (Pharr and Clark 2012). The protagonist of all the novels is sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, a girl from District 12 in the dystopian territory of Panem, which has arisen ‘out of the ashes of what was once North America’ (Collins 2008 p. 21). The heroine Katniss aligns with the convention of the YA dystopian female protagonist in that she is marked out as special, and because of this must undergo a trial or set of tests that will prove her worthiness whilst testing her survival. When Katniss offers herself to save her little sister at the annual reaping, thereby volunteering to compete in an arena where she and she will fight to the death, her fate as a rebel and threat to the government of the Capitol is sealed.

What follows is a journey that sees Katniss propelled into world in which she has little control over her evolution from a strong willed but private girl from one of the poorest districts to the reluctant figure-head for the rebellion movement. Throughout the trilogy, Katniss’ physical journey is documented in a first-person narrative that provides an insight to the psychic turmoil that she endures as she struggles to negotiate her sense of self in an environment that is increasingly compromised by modes of surveillance and control in which she must rely on her performance during the ‘game’ in order to survive.

The territory of Panem, with its central governing city of the Capitol and the twelve surrounding districts follows a key theme of YA dystopian texts where a new world has emerged after the disintegration of the established order, the result of catastrophic event or events that result in the breakdown of society. The female protagonist exists on the margins, outside of the boundaries of the dominant territory. As a citizen who resides in spaces of marginalization, the heroine is subject to mechanisms of power and control; for Katniss this means containment within the confines of specified spaces and the monitoring of movement through patrols, surveillance, and imprisonment. The trilogy follows the key convention of romance; an integral plotline is the love triangle between Katniss, her fellow tribute from District 12 Peeta, and her childhood friend Gale. This plotline is intrinsic to the interrogation of identity politics as a key convention of the genre since Katniss struggles to separate her true romantic feelings from the performative aspect of the ‘game’ that will work to keep her (and others) alive.

The heterotopias in *The Hunger Games* are spaces and places in which the audience is privy to Katniss' journey from child to womanhood. In the heterotopia of the woods in *The Hunger Games* (2008), we learn of Katniss' relationship with her father and how he taught her the survival techniques that sustained her and the family after he was killed. Throughout the narrative Katniss returns to this heterotopia in both physical and psychic form, and it functions as an almost utopian site of memory and identity formation. Katniss is subjected to the heterotopias of the train and the power mechanism that is the annual Hunger Games, with its reality TV show, body commodification, and games arenas. These places and spaces have a dual purpose; they both contain Katniss and place her under a set of rules for how to conform, but at the same time Katniss learns to negotiate and manipulate the various heterotopias to play the game to her advantage.

The Hunger Games trilogy has many parallels to the other primary texts of the thesis, while also containing some notable contrasts. The female protagonist is positioned as special, and set apart from even her close family. Katniss is set a series of challenges that draws on her innate specialness to ensure her survival as she rebels against the prevailing power mechanisms that use surveillance and containment through physical force and punishment to maintain the status quo. The monstrous feminine appears in the figure of the head of the rebel force that evolves out of District 13, Alma Coin, who can be recognised as a seminal character of the genre, as the older woman who craves power and then abuses it. These women are inevitably punished, their fates condoned by the female heroine and reminiscent of the stereotypical fairy tale evil stepmother versus the young heroine in children's literature.

Chapter 3, "Running out of Space: Female Martyrs in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* Series"

Chapter Three interrogates the rewards and punishments for female characters in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* series to explore the cautionary outcomes for transgressive females in young adult dystopian literature. The *Divergent* trilogy (*Divergent* 2011, *Insurgent* 2012, *Allegiant* 2013) follows the journey of sixteen-year-old protagonist Beatrice (Tris) Prior in post-apocalyptic Chicago. When Beatrice undergoes a standard categorization test to determine where she belongs in society, she discovers that she is one of a select number of people who are 'Divergent', marking her as both special and a threat to the carefully constructed power mechanism that rules their society. Analysis of heterotopian spaces and places in the *Divergent* series will investigate the

ways in which they are inhabited by women in the narrative and how they play a role in the negotiation of dangerous terrains.

The *Divergent* series follows many of the tropes familiar to young adult dystopian texts, including themes surrounding identity, social structure and knowledge, violence and fear, territory and conflict. These themes, along with its setting in a post-apocalyptic Chicago and its status as a ‘blockbuster’ set of texts, have drawn comparisons to Collins’ *The Hunger Games* trilogy. The first novel opens at a seminal coming-of-age moment for the protagonist Tris Prior, who along with her peers must undergo a test that will categorise them into the best suited faction by way of an aptitude test that has the effect of sorting out their strongest trait. For Tris, this test signals the beginning of a fraught journey into young adulthood as her results are inconclusive and she is then marked as ‘Divergent’ and must decide which of the three potential factions she will join.

The territory is governed by a collective of five factions, the citizens of each are divided into the faction that aligns with their innate disposition: Abnegation for the selfless; Amity for the peaceful; Candor for the honest; Erudite for the intellectual; and Dauntless for the brave. There is a sixth faction of people who fail to integrate into their faction successfully, they are the Factionless and live on the fringes of society, fending for themselves. Once her choice of the Dauntless faction is made, Tris must survive the gruelling initiation process that could potentially leave her Factionless, while attempting to conceal her Divergent nature; the bravery that determined her choice is also potentially her downfall. The successful negotiation of Tris in to her faction and beyond relies on her inherent bravery and courage, and this chapter will analyse how these qualities are crucial to her survival, particularly within the trilogy’s heterotopias.

The *Divergent* series follows a key theme of young adult dystopian literature whereby society is kept in order by mechanisms of power and control, however in this narrative governing is carried out under a veneer of civility and bipartisanship between the five ruling factions. Despite this, the existence of an aptitude test which relies on a serum that renders the adolescent prone is an early flag that there are more sinister motives at play in this society. Tris’ result finds her in turmoil, as she must choose a very different faction to the one she has grown up in, and this sees her questioning her identity and character. The inner turmoil experienced by Tris is reminiscent of

Foucault's 'crisis heterotopia', afforded to individuals who exist in a state of crisis, and this is encapsulated in the coming-of-age narrative arc of the novel. Surveillance is another key theme of the genre employed in the narrative, as is the trope of romance, although the contrast with this series is that the love story is played out between the two lead protagonists, unlike the love triangles of the other primary texts of the thesis.

Heterotopias in the *Divergent* series exist in both the crisis and deviation form; the latter described by Foucault as utilising institutions to separate out and contain individuals who challenge norms. This can be seen in the various power factions developing and using serums to control the population and manipulate desired outcomes. The serums are used to enable 'simulations' in which the individual is under the influence in a hallucinogenic state. As the narrative progresses serums are used across multiple platforms by various faction leaders and governing bodies to achieve conformity and compliance.

Modes of transport offer another significant heterotopian space. The train in particular is important. As well as being the vessel that transports Tris and her fellow rebels in and out of liminal spaces and places, it can also be read as a metaphor for the 'jumping off' process associated with the adolescent/young adult experience. This chapter will analyse the form and function of heterotopias, with a focus on the female experience within and beyond them, to argue that the female heroines of the series (which include Tris Prior, her mother Natalie, the leader of Erudite Jeanine Matthews, and Evelyn Johnson-Eaton) are martyred, reinforcing a patriarchal archetype of the transgressive woman as a threat to society.

Chapter 4, "Blood isn't Always Thicker than Water: Identity Politics in Victoria Aveyard's *The Red Queen* series"

The *Red Queen* series by Victoria Aveyard (*Red Queen* 2015, *Glass Sword* 2016, *King's Cage* 2017) is the most contemporary set of primary texts that will be analysed for the thesis, with a fourth as yet untitled novel scheduled for publication in February 2018. Chapter four will apply a close textual analysis of the primary texts to examine the struggle of young adult protagonist Mare Barrow as she grapples with her sense of identity, negotiating a complex journey of self-determination through fraught territories that are both physical and psychological. Interrogation of

heterotopias in the series, particularly modes of travel and places of incarceration, will mirror the interior and exterior journey of the female heroine.

Whilst some critics have categorized the series in the young adult fantasy and science fiction genres, the narrative displays many of the key themes and features of young adult dystopian literature, including war and conflict, surveillance and oppression, young adult/adult power relations, romance, and the struggle for liberty and self-determination. Seventeen-year-old Mare lives with her family in the Kingdom of Norta, which is ruled by a royal family headed by King Tiberius Calore VI. Mare and her family are 'Reds', a lower class of citizen than the ruling 'Silvers' who possess superpowers that allow them to maintain control of the kingdom. When captured and imprisoned by the ruling faction after committing a petty crime, Mare discovers that she is special and possesses a supernatural power of her own, one more powerful than that of the Silvers. This sets off a chain of events that sees her inextricably linked to the Calore family in a battle to save herself, her family, and the Red citizens from the tyrannical rule of Queen Elara and her son Prince Maven.

A significant sub-plot of the narrative is the romantic 'quadrangle' between the characters of Mare, her childhood friend and potential betrothed Kilorn Warren, Tiberias 'Cal' Calore VI, eldest son and heir to the throne, and his younger stepbrother Maven Calore, second in line to the throne to whom Mare is briefly engaged. Mare's confusion and angst surrounding choices in love is a central theme of the narrative, where protagonists find love whilst confronting the dangers of the dystopian future and 'making the romance plot an important element of the YA dystopian genre' (Basu, Broad & Hintz, 2013, p. 8). In particular, Mare's feelings for Prince/King Maven are one indicator of her inner turmoil as she struggles to understand and accept what her 'true' nature might be. Confusion surrounding her sense of self-worth is also bound up in her familial relationships, as well as her loyalty and feelings of responsibility to the Newbloods (who like her have supernatural powers), her relationship with Kilorn, and the Red bloods of her homeland.

This chapter will posit that heterotopias in this series symbolise Mare's personal journey. I will discuss the electrokinetic special power that Mare possesses to argue that this is a heterotopia that she must learn to navigate to serve as a means of disrupting the ruling power mechanism. The

travel heterotopias, such as motorbikes, trains, and aircraft, are juxtaposed with carceral spaces, such as the castles and prisons of the Calore sovereignty, representing the binaries of freedom and constraint. Mave’s negotiation of these spaces and places is integral to the outcomes in terms of reward and punishment.

Analysis of the series will be ongoing as the publications are released; other key themes for interrogation will be the significance of blood and authenticity, as well as the role of the monstrous feminine in relation to the ‘evil’ Queen Elara Merandus versus the King’s first wife Queen Coriane Jacos, and the Silver blood Evangaline Samos, pitted as Mare’s rival to love interest Cal. It is expected that the outcomes for female characters in terms of rewards and punishments will be situated in notions of what is considered to be ‘good’ and ‘bad’ blood.

Conclusion

In the final chapter, the various claims of each chapter will be reasserted and drawn together to support the overarching research question. This section of the thesis will also address the possibility for further research as the genre of YA dystopian literature evolves, particularly in relation to representations of girlhood, and how the spaces and places that they inhabit in the genres narratives speak to prevailing notions of identity.

Thesis Timeline

The following timeline outlines the framework of the project since commencement, with a breakdown of the work leading up to the confirmation colloquium date. It details the sourcing and analysis of primary and secondary materials, supervisory meetings and planning, draft writing and submission, and a detailed thesis plan post colloquium, including professional development.

First Year (2015-2016)	
August 2015-June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial development of project framework, including scope of investigation, thesis contention. Consultation with primary and secondary supervisors to discuss scope of project and develop framework (includes meetings offsite).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate theoretical framework for project, source primary and secondary critical resources. Groundwork research of Foucault’s theory of heterotopias and critics engaged with the theory (Hetherington, Topinka, Johnson, et al.) • Research primary sets of texts for thesis project, source literary criticism of primary texts and other texts in the genre to determine gaps in critical analysis. Determine which sets of texts for analysis, some initial choices discarded in favour of others as potential thesis question and sub questions are formulated. • Develop main thesis contention and sub questions, source primary and secondary literature of existing critical analysis of theoretical framework (Heterotopias, dystopian young adult literature theory and criticism, gender in YA dystopias).
<p>July 2016-Jan 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit abstract for Australasian Children’s Literature Association for Research (ACLAR) • Write draft presentation for ACLAR conference July 2016. • Attend and present paper at ACLAR conference in Wagga Wagga, NSW. • Map out initial schedule of writing for sections that will make up colloquium document, with submission dates for drafts to supervisors and turnaround time for feedback and revision. • Develop sections to incorporate into colloquium document that will inform the overall thesis project, including: chapter outlines, literature review, methodological framework, main and subsidiary research questions, significance and rationale arguments, potential outcomes of research. • Submit abstract ‘Impossible Female Protagonists: heterotopias and dystopian young adult literature’ for International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCL) biennial conference, to

	<p>be held at York University, Toronto, July 29 – August 2, 2017. (Accepted).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning day with primary and secondary supervisors for further mapping, project development and colloquium structuring. <p>Development of main thesis question “How and why do heterotopian spaces enable multiple representations of girlhood?”</p>
February-April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend HDR Summer School including writing workshops, Geelong, Feb 23-26. • Submit drafts of sections for colloquium confirmation document, including chapter titles and outlines. • Revise draft of confirmation colloquium document • Submit confirmation colloquium document two weeks prior to scheduled date. • Continue with research and writing (ongoing)
May 2017-Jan 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft paper for ‘Impossible Female Protagonists: heterotopias and dystopian young adult literature’ for International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCL) • Revision post colloquium, schedule supervisors meeting for late May/early June. • Schedule visits to Toronto Public Library to view the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books, and the UCLA http://www.library.ucla.edu (August) • Attend International Research Society for Children’s Literature conference in Toronto, Canada, research catalogues at libraries listed above. • Write Chapter 2 (<i>Hunger Games</i>) • End of year supervisors meeting, review of chapter drafts and planning for 2018.

Feb 2018-Dec 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft abstract to submit for ACLAR conference presentation to be held in June/July 2018 (location TBC). • Write Chapter 3 (<i>Divergent</i>) • Draft an article for journal article submission to <i>Papers:</i> • Draft and submit abstract for IRSCL conference 2019.
Jan 2019-Sept 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Chapter 1 (<i>Uglies</i>) • Schedule supervisors meeting. • Develop joint article with Paul Venzo for journal (topic to be decided). • Submit abstract for ACLAR 2020
Oct 2019-March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write Chapter 4 (<i>Red Queen</i>) • Attend ACLAR conference (subject to acceptance). • Draft journal article from chapter 3 for submission. • Submit abstract for IRSCL conference 2021.

April 2020-Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write introduction (10,000 words) and conclusion (5,000). • Schedule supervisor's meeting • Attend IRSCL conference (subject to acceptance). • Revise and edit introductory chapter, submit to supervisors for final feedback.
Oct 2020-March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Chapter 1 into article for submission to <i>International Research in Children's Literature</i> journal. • Schedule supervisors meeting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision and editing of chapters 1-4, submit to supervisors for final feedback. • Write second draft of conclusion.
<p>April 2021-Aug 2021</p> <p>On or before Aug 10, 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite Introduction • Complete final edit of chapters. • Rewrite conclusion. • Schedule final supervisors meeting to go over draft. • Finalise thesis. • Submit thesis.

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